

WEST MIDLANDS ISDN Newsletter

September 2025 Edition



THROMBOLYSIS IN ACUTE STROKE CARE (TASC)

Thrombolysis in Acute Stroke Care (TASC) is working nationally to improve timely access to thrombolysis and have co-produced a toolkit designed to share best practices for improving thrombolysis rates across acute NHS services. NHS Elect are currently planning a webinar on the practical application of the toolkit. Further details will be shared in due course. There will be opportunities for more teams to get involved with another round of TASC next year (this time including thrombectomy!) so watch this space for more details.

Across the West Midlands, Dudley and Hereford Stroke Teams shared their learning from being on TASC Cohort 2. They updated on how they have increased thrombolysis rates, raised the recognition of stroke across the departments and system, improved workforce training, streamlined pathways and improved scan times including the use of CTP. TASC has given the teams a continued focus and some leverage and support with senior management team to support with changes and to highlight patients and the impact of emergency interventions. Sustainability work from cohort 1 will be shared to sustain improvement and change. Moving forward both teams will use their learning from TASC to:

- Take part in Video Triage
- Update the imaging protocol of streamlining the process for 'straight to scan'
- Patient feedback
- Continue to review monthly thrombolysis data
- Focus on scan times
- Utilise the SAMuel tool when reviewing thrombolysis cases or possible missed cases.



MT REFERRAL PATHWAY WORKSHOP

WEST MIDLANDS MECHANICAL THROMBECTOMY REFERRAL PATHWAY WORKSHOP



Event Date: 14 October 2025
Time: 10:30 – 15:00
Venue: (Hall/Room TBC) Royal Leonardo hotel, 245 Broad St, Birmingham B1 2HQ
[Please click here for venue directions](#)

Event Details and Speakers:

- Facilitated by West Midlands Integrated Stroke Delivery Network and Dr Indira Natarajan, Clinical Director West Midlands ISDN
- Agenda TBC

All stroke teams working in hyper acute stroke units have been invited to attend this workshop. The aim is to agree on a workable MT referral pathway between referring hospitals and UHB hub site. We encourage representation from clinical, operational and stroke nursing teams

Any queries please email us at: westmidlandsisdn@nhs.uhb.uk

THROMBOLYSIS TRAINING EVENT IN DUDLEY

Wednesday 29th October 2025

09:00am – 1:00pm (followed by lunch)

Clinical Education Centre, 1st Floor, South Block, Russell's Hall Hospital, Dudley

The event covers the following subjects:

- Why thrombolysis?
- Interpreting CT head
- NIHSS
- Thrombolysis Pathway
- Thrombectomy
- Case Scenarios inc Management of Complications



If you would like to attend the event, please email karen.smith71@nhs.net to register your interest, with your name, grade and the department in which you work.

CLINICAL STROKE EDUCATIONAL WEBINAR

Clinical Stroke Educational Webinar



West Midlands ISDN will be hosting a stroke education session as follows:

Date: 15th October 2025

Time: 14:00 to 16:00

The session will provide opportunities to share/ discuss good working practice and case studies and is aimed at clinical staff working in stroke/neurology and neuroradiology including consultants, trainee doctors and stroke nurse practitioners.

Topics – Case presentations with good learning points:

- Speakers – TBC



Each topic will be followed by a Q&A session.

If you would like to join the webinar, please contact WestMidlandsISDN@uhb.nhs.uk

The session will also be recorded and available on our FutureNHS platform [West Midlands Integrated Stroke Delivery Network \(ISDN\) - FutureNHS Collaboration Platform](#)

The next webinar will take place in January 2026

Social Handles – Twitter/X @WM_ISDN – LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/wmidisdn/>

PATIENT PUBLIC VOICE GROUP MEETING (PPV)

The West Midlands ISDN held its latest PPV Meeting on 16 September, focusing on the new NICE 2023 stroke rehabilitation guidelines and a presentation in relation to responses from the intensity rehab questionnaires conducted. The group discussed the recommendation of three hours of rehabilitation per day, five days a week. While some welcomed the principle of intensive therapy, most felt it was unrealistic in the early stages due to fatigue, cognitive strain, and the emotional impact of recovery. Views varied by stage of rehabilitation, with calls for greater intensity during inpatient care but more flexibility in the community. Barriers identified included fatigue, mood, and medical stability, alongside service challenges such as resources, staffing, and communication.

Patients valued having the chance of doing home exercise, longer-term follow-up after discharge, and have rehab adapt to changing needs. Opinions were mixed on group sessions, though there was strong interest in virtual reality and technology to support rehabilitation, particularly remote options.

Therapy clinicians highlighted the need to address misconceptions about mandatory three-hour sessions and to ensure care remains patient-centred.

In terms of next steps, we agreed to share good practice across the region and to advocate for rehab space and funding needs. The ISDN will continue to support discussions at the next meeting in November.

We would like to thank our Therapy Leads from the south Warwickshire and Herefordshire community stroke team for delivering the presentation. Thanks also to our patient and therapy staff participation as we had a great turn out!



SEPTEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

- ⇒ The West Midlands ISDN Annual Report 2024/25 has been shared with stakeholders. The report presents the summary of the breadth and depth of work completed in 2024/25 in collaboration with our partners, and our strategic objectives for 2025/26. If you would like to receive a copy please get in touch.
- ⇒ This month's West Midlands Thrombectomy Network meeting focused on two presentations from Russell's Hall Hospital, DGFT and Hereford County Hospital, WVT. Both Trusts shared their updates so far with their participation in TASC 2 programme. It was great to hear that the programme has had positive outcomes including an increase in thrombolysis rates and highlighted areas of focus that needed improvement
- ⇒ We concluded our follow up acute site visits across the region last month, and shared summary reports with SWBH, UHB and UHCW stroke teams. All summary reports have now been shared across our stroke centres in the region.
- ⇒ We continue to work with ADASS to work with social care to support stroke patients in the community. We are developing a joint action plan to move this work forward
- ⇒ We have discussed bedded rehab with our stroke rehab teams as part of the community site follow up visits. This has informed work across the stroke pathway in and out of hospital and rehab care through to life after stroke. We are exploring bedded rehab projects and work nationally to help support conversations at local level
- ⇒ The ISDN attended the national and regional stroke boards this month and raised the risk of the ISDN sustainability and portfolio of work post March 2026
- ⇒ SQulRe project work is on going with a programme of webinars planned for the rest of the year. A plea to teams to complete their outstanding end of project reports and submit as soon as possible

THROMBECTOMY AWARENESS EVENT

Date: Wednesday, 19 November 2025

Time: 09:30 – 16:30

Venue: bet365 Stadium, Stoke-on-Trent

Hosted by: University Hospitals North Midlands Charity

Mechanical Thrombectomy can save thousands of lives but reaches only 4.3% of eligible UK patients due to unequal access. This event brings together stroke survivors, clinicians, policymakers, NHS leaders, and advocates to:

- Highlight thrombectomy's life-saving impact
- Tackle postcode inequalities in access
- Amplify patient voices and call for urgent government action

Programme: Expert panels, patient stories, networking, and discussions with healthcare leaders, politicians and journalists.

Open to patients, professionals, and the public. Lunch and refreshments included.

RSVP & Info: sayhello@premanagement.co.uk



UPCOMING EVENTS

British Heart Foundation (BHF) Healthcare Implementation Fund are now accepting application – **Closing Date : 17 November** – [For details please click here](#)
 World Stroke Day 29th October - please click here [World Stroke Campaign | World Stroke Organization](#)
 National CVD Preventions lunch and learn - 5th November If interested, please email england.clinicalpolicy@nhs.net
 Cholesterol Awareness month in October please click here [National Cholesterol Month 2024](#)

IN THE NEXT EDITION

World Stroke Day | October highlights | Future NHS and much more