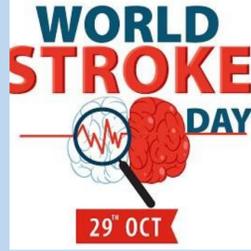


WEST MIDLANDS ISDN Newsletter

November 2025 Edition



WORLD STROKE DAY



Stroke Association would like to thank everyone who supported **World Stroke Day** helping them to reach almost 200 media outlets! Stroke Association Medical Director Professor Deb Lowe was on BBC1 Morning Live on 29th October for a piece on the lesser-known symptoms of stroke. Professor Lowe talked about how to recognise symptoms of a stroke, why symptoms can vary, what people should look out for, and action to take should someone have a suspected stroke. If you missed it you can catch up on BBC iplayer [BBC Morning Live](#) and select this date,

MT REFERRAL PATHWAY WORKSHOP

On 25th November, West Midlands ISDN hosted a regional workshop dedicated to the thrombectomy referral pathway across all our stroke centres. The aim was to have an open discussion with each stroke team sharing examples of good practice and highlighting key challenges. A consensus was reached on a practical and effective referral process to increase thrombectomy rates. The event was well attended, with representation from nearly all stroke centres in the region, which we were delighted to see. It proved to be a highly productive session, generating valuable learning outcomes and concrete action plans. Feedback from participants reflected strong satisfaction with the workshop.

Key learning points:

- Greater understanding of the limitations faced by tertiary centres
- Identification of hurdles within thrombectomy referral pathways
- Recognition of the collective commitment to improving outcomes for stroke patients across the region
- Sharing of good practices from NHS Trusts, highlighting collaborative progress

General feedback:

- "The ISDN has been integral to improvements in stroke care delivery over recent years."
- "An excellent, positive, and well-organised event."
- "Fantastically organised event with focussed actions and outcomes."

We extend our sincere thanks to our lead facilitators – Dr Jatt Khaira, ISDN Clinical Lead, and Dr Indira Natarajan, NWM ISDN Clinical Director for delivering such a well-structured and interactive day. We are also grateful to everyone who attended and contributed, helping us shape the actions that will guide our next steps. A summary report, including the agreed action plan, will be shared once finalised.



GIRFT LEADERSHIP ACADEMY- STROKE SPECIFIC PROGRAMME

GIRFT Stroke Leadership Academy - stroke specific programme

Mariska Clossick, Countywide Clinical Stroke Coordinator for Hereford & Worcester, was selected for this year's GIRFT Leadership programme from the West Midlands and has shared her reflections of her journey:

"Inspired by colleagues' positive experiences and its focus on stroke service development, I applied to the GIRFT Leadership Academy Stroke Specific Programme and was delighted to have been selected. With only one participant selected per ISDN, the current cohort brings together 30 professionals from across the UK, representing diverse roles along the stroke pathway. Delivered through four residential sessions at The Spine in Liverpool over 10 months, the programme encouraged community, collaboration, and reflection on leadership practice. A key feature is the development of QI projects, pitched to experts early in the course, with selected teams now progressing through their groundwork phase. Participants also benefit from one-to-one mentorship, ensuring projects continue beyond the programme's conclusion in April.

Previous cohorts have seen projects evolve into national initiatives, highlighting the programme's impact on stroke service improvement. For those in leadership roles, particularly in modern or integrated positions, this course offers an invaluable opportunity to strengthen leadership skills while advancing stroke care."



ENGAGEMENT EVENT 4TH MARCH 2026

West Midlands Integrated Stroke Delivery Network Engagement Event 4th March 2026

Venue: Edgbaston Cricket Stadium Birmingham
Registration is now open: [Click here to register](#)



NOVEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

- ⇒ The resident doctors strike took place on Friday 14 November to Wednesday 19 November. Stroke teams mitigated the minimal disruptions and continued to provide excellent patient care. Thank you to all teams for all your hard work and dedication.
- ⇒ This month's West Midlands Thrombectomy Network meeting was stood down due to clinical priority to support during the industrial strike. However, conversations continued in the West Midlands MT Referral workshop as showcased above
- ⇒ The West Midlands ISDN submitted two case studies as part of the Modern Service Framework consultation to help deliver the 10 year health plan, one focussing on AI and the other on Health Inequalities. Many teams across the country have contributed to this consultation work, and we eagerly await updates and next steps
- ⇒ UK Stroke Forum is taking place 25th to 27th November [UK Stroke Forum 25](#) and we look forward to hear all about it from those attending. Please share updates and photos to keep everyone informed
- ⇒ Stroke Association launched its powerful Christmas TV campaign this month. If you missed it, please watch here [Change stroke survivors' lives this Christmas \(Still Christmas film\)](#)
- ⇒ UHNM Charity hosted an MT awareness event on 19th November at Bet 365 Stadium, Stoke-on-Trent. It was a great event calling all to take action to ensure all eligible patients receive MT in a timely manner and to reduce the postcode lottery inequity. The agenda was jammed pack with great speakers and Q&A panel talks to keep the day focussed and on point
- ⇒ Both the WM Community and Acute SSNAP groups took place this month with a focus on SSNAP domains and performance. The Post-organisational audit was also discussed with support extended from the ISDN to address challenges and share learning

PATIENT & PUBLIC VOICE MEETING

Our Patient and Public Voice (PPV) group met on 13th November for another productive session. We focused on the future direction of the group and its membership. Key themes included the need to clearly communicate the group's purpose: **improving stroke services and enabling peer connection**. Members agreed that an increased presence of stroke survivors and carers, alongside a balanced representation of therapy staff, will help the group move forward. We reflected on how far the group has evolved in the past two years to become a much-improved forum for collaboration and patient voice.

Practical ideas discussed include:

- Adding PPV leaflets to discharge packs
- Using survivor stories and quotes to enhance engagement events
- Promoting digital tools to support rehabilitation and mental health
- We also explored the continuity and sustainability of the group should the ISDN not continue after March 2026

Following this feedback, please see our flyer below. We would welcome more stroke survivors to join the group, particularly from Coventry & Warwickshire, Hereford & Worcestershire, the Black Country, Sandwell, and West Birmingham to help shape the future of stroke services.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- UK and ROI Acute Stroke Simulation Course 2026 - [Please click this link for more information on registration and dates](#)
- West Midlands ICB Engagement Event - 9th Dec 2025
- ASU site visits in Birmingham - 2nd Dec 2025
- CVDP Lunch and Learns - 4th Feb 2026 - [Please click this link for more information](#)

IN THE NEXT EDITION

UKSF 2025 | December highlights| Future NHS and much more