Stroke care in

England, Wales and Northern Ireland

This report is for stroke survivors and their families

Based on patients treated between July-September 2021
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## Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atrial fibrillation (AF)</td>
<td>An abnormal heartbeat which can result in the formation of blood clots.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cognitive Screening</td>
<td>A test to assess a patient’s mental processes such as memory and concentration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continence Plan</td>
<td>A plan to help a patient increase their control over bowel and bladder function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malnourishment</td>
<td>A condition which is caused by not having enough of or the right nutrients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Therapy</td>
<td>Therapy to help patients relearn activities of everyday life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiotherapy</td>
<td>Therapy to restore movement and function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech and Language Therapy</td>
<td>Therapy to help patients recover from communication or swallowing difficulties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrombolysis</td>
<td>The use of medicine to break down a blood clot.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction to the SSNAP Easy Access Version Report

This is a report about a project called the Sentinel Stroke National Audit Programme (SSNAP).

This information is written in a way that is easy to understand.

You may want someone to help you when you read this report.

What is SSNAP?

SSNAP measures stroke care. It does this to improve the quality of stroke care.

SSNAP collects information from hospitals about the care provided to stroke patients from the time they arrive at hospital up until 6 months after their stroke.

This means that SSNAP can report on both the early stages of stroke care in hospital and later stages of care in the community.

The aim is that the information and results from the audit are used to improve care for stroke patients.

The report shows how well hospitals treated stroke patients.

The information is about the care given between July-September 2021.

This report can help people to talk about their stroke care with local hospitals.

We will write this report every 3 months.
Thank you to

- **Speakeasy**, a charity based in Bury, which supports people with aphasia
- The **South London Stroke Research Patient and Family Group**
- The **stroke survivors** on the stroke working party

They helped to make this report easy to read.

For more detailed reports

[https://www.strokeaudit.org/results](https://www.strokeaudit.org/results)
How to read this report

This report gives information about **10 aspects of stroke care**.

There are **standards** within each aspect of care.

Each hospital must do well in **all standards**.

In this report we explain:

- **What** should be done?
- **How** quickly it should be done?
- **Why** it should be done?

National Summary

These boxes give a summary of national performance for each aspect of stroke care.

This box will highlight the **aspects of care** that are **performing well**.

This box will highlight the **aspects of care** where **improvements are needed**.
Understanding the results

National maps
These show how well hospitals have performed in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

There is a box beside each map. It shows which shapes are for each level from A – E.

A is the best level and E is the worst.

Source: SSNAP Jul-Sep 2021
The black x cross shows which hospitals did not submit information about enough of their patients to be included in the results for this period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shape</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Each area of care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♦</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Hospital meets highest standards for almost all patients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>▲</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>●</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Hospital does not meet highest standards for many patients</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hospitals included in this report**

This report includes **22,140** stroke patients admitted to hospital between July-September 2021.

**222 hospitals** in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are included in this report.

Most of these teams submitted more than **90% of their stroke patients to SSNAP**.

We want all hospitals to send in their information so that they can use the results to **improve care** for patients.
SSNAP participation

Source: SSNAP Jul-Sep 2021
### 1. Brain Scanning

#### What should be done?

All patients with stroke symptoms should have a **brain scan**

#### How quickly should this be done?

Patients who are very sick should have a scan **within 1 hour** of arriving at hospital.

All patients should have a brain scan **within 12 hours**

#### Why should this be done?

To show the doctor what **treatment** the patient needs. Fast treatment can **reduce** the **damage** caused by stroke.
Stroke patients have **better access to scanning** than ever before.

Over 9/10 stroke patients are **scanned within 12 hours**.

**Fewer** stroke patients are scanned at **weekends** and at **night-time** than during the week.

Source: SSNAP Jul-Sep 2021 (Team Centred)
2. Stroke unit

**What** should be done?

Patients should get to a stroke unit very quickly.

Patients should spend at least **90% of their time** in hospital on a stroke unit.

**How quickly** should this be done?

Patients should get to a stroke unit **within 4 hours** of arriving at hospital.

**Why** should this be done?

Stroke units give the **best care** to stroke patients. This can save lives and reduce disability.
**National Results**

Stroke Unit: Domain 2

Source: SSNAP Jul-Sep 2021 (Team Centred)

**National Summary**

**Direct admission** to a stroke unit is **very important**.

Almost **all** patients spend **some** of their **time** in hospital on a **stroke unit**.

Almost **half of** patients are **not taken** to a stroke unit **immediately**.

This needs to be **improved** urgently.
What should be done?

Between 15-20% of patients should receive a clot-busting drug.

Patients who have a stroke caused by a clot and who get to hospital quickly can be given this drug.

These patients should receive clot busting treatment at the earliest possible time after arriving at hospital.

How quickly should this be done?

It should be given up to 4 and a half hours after a stroke.

Why should this be done?

Clot-busting drug treatment can reduce disability.
National Results

Thrombolysis: Domain 3

National Summary

4 out of 5 stroke patients who should be given clot busting drugs are given them.

This is higher than nearly every other country.

Some hospitals do not provide this treatment at all times.

It often takes too long for patients to get to hospital and so it is too late for this treatment to be effective.

Source: SSNAP Jul-Sep 2021 (Team Centred)
4. Specialist Assessments

**What** should be done?

Patients should

- see a stroke consultant
- see a stroke nurse
- be screened for swallow safety
- have a swallow assessment if needed

**How quickly** should this be done?

- Within 4 hours: swallow screen
- Within 1 day: stroke nurse and stroke consultant
- Within 3 days: swallow assessment

**Why** should this be done?

*Stroke specialist professionals* give patients the care they need. This will *improve their recovery*.

Swallow screening checks *if the patient can swallow food and drink safely* and therefore reduce the risk of choking.
National Results

Specialist Assessments: Domain 4

Hospitals are **performing well** in providing **swallow assessments** to patients who need them.

There are **too many** patients who are not being assessed to find out what kind of **swallowing** difficulties they have rapidly.

**Almost 1 out of 5** patients are **not seen** by a stroke consultant within **24 hours** of admission.

Source: SSNAP Jul-Sep 2021 (Team Centred)
5. Occupational Therapy (OT)

**What** should be done?

All patients (who are well enough and need it) should get

- at least 45 minutes of occupational therapy
- on at least 5 days a week
- for the duration of their stroke care

**Why** should this be done?

Occupational therapy helps people to re-learn everyday activities and skills following a stroke.

This may include tasks such as getting dressed or hobbies such as painting.
National Summary

This aspect of care is being performed well.

Almost all stroke patients who need it are assessed by an occupational therapist during their hospital stay.

It is encouraging that so many patients are assessed at weekends.

Many patients needing an assessment do not receive one within 3 days.

More minutes of therapy should be given on more days to patients who need it.
6. Physiotherapy

**What** should be done?

All *patients* (who are well enough and need it) should get

- at least **45 minutes** of physiotherapy
- on at least **5 days a week**
- for the duration of their stroke care

**Why** should this be done?

Physiotherapy helps people to *overcome or adapt to weakness* on one side of the body.

It also helps people to *improve* their *balance* and *movement*. 
National Results

Physiotherapy: Domain 6

National Summary

This aspect of care is being **performed well**.

It is **encouraging** that so many patients are assessed at **weekends**.

More minutes of **therapy** should be given on more **days** to patients who **need** it.
7. Speech and Language Therapy

**What** should be done?

All *patients* (who are well enough and need it) should get

- at least **45 minutes** of speech and language therapy
- on at least **5 days a week**
- for the duration of their stroke care

**Why** should this be done?

Speech and language therapy helps people to recover from communication problems following a stroke.
National Results

Speech and Language Therapy: Domain 7

National Summary

Most patients who require an assessment for communication difficulties receive one during their hospital stay.

Fewer patients are being assessed at weekends by speech therapists than the other therapies.

More minutes of therapy should be given on more days to patients who need it.
8. Team Working

**What** should be done?

Patients should

- see a stroke nurse
- be assessed if needed by all relevant therapists (for example a speech and language therapist)
- agree rehabilitation goals with the staff

**How quickly** should this be done?

Within **1 day**: stroke nurse and at least **1 therapist**

Within **3 days**: all relevant therapists.

Within **5 days**: all rehabilitation goals agreed

**Why** should this be done?

Each member of the stroke team can give patients the care that they need to improve their recovery.
National Results

Multidisciplinary Team Work: Domain 8

Source: SSNAP Jul-Sep 2021 (Team Centred)

National Summary

**Nearly all** patients who need it are **assessed** by a **physiotherapist** and **occupational therapist** within **3 days of admission to hospital**.

More patients are agreeing **rehabilitation goals** within **5 days** than 5 years ago.

**1 out of 10** patients are **not assessed** by a **speech therapist** within **3 days**.
9. Standards met by Discharge

**What** should be done?
If needed, before leaving hospital a patient should
- be **screened for nutrition** and seen by a dietitian
- have a **continence plan** drawn up. This should be done **within 3 weeks** of arriving at hospital
- be **screened for mood and cognition**

**How quickly** should this be done?
- **By discharge:** nutrition screening
- **Within 3 weeks:** continence plan
- **By discharge:** mood screening

**Why** should this be done?
Nutrition screening checks if the patient is at **risk of malnourishment**.

Patients say **continence management** is one of the **most important** areas of care.

**Mood screening** identifies feeling of **distress** or **lack of confidence**.

**Cognitive screening** identifies difficulties **thinking, concentrating** or **remembering** after a stroke.
National Results

Standards by Discharge: Domain 9

There have been consistent improvements in these aspects of care as reported on SSNAP:

- continence planning
- mood and cognition screening
- assessments by dietitians

Too many hospitals are still failing to meet these standards for all patients. There is no excuse for not treating patients in these important aspects of care.
10. Discharge Processes

**What** should be done?

When leaving hospital, patients should

- have received a **joint health and social care plan**
- be given the name of a **person they can contact**

Some patients may be well enough to leave hospital early. These patients should be **provided with further rehabilitation** at home if they need it.

An **Early Supported Discharge (ESD)** team can provide this rehabilitation.

About **40% of patients** could benefit from ESD.

Patients with an **irregular heartbeat** should be given **medication to prevent blood from clotting**.

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**Why** should this be done?

Health and social care services should work together in a way that **best suits the needs of patients**.

Rehabilitation in the community means getting **treatment** including **rehabilitation** in a **home environment**.

It can **improve recovery**.

Blood clotting medication **improves blood flow**.

It **reduces the chance of another stroke occurring**.
National Results

Discharge Processes: Domain 10

Source: SSNAP Jul-Sep 2021 (Team Centred)

National Summary

There have been improvements in these aspects of care:

- patients treated by a stroke skilled Early Supported Discharge (ESD) team
- giving patients and carers a named person to contact when leaving hospital

Almost all patients with an irregular heartbeat are given suitable medication.
For more detailed SSNAP reports go to:

www.strokeaudit.org/results

1) Summary Results

- This report gives a **summary of performance** for individual hospitals
- It is a **starting point** for understanding how good a hospital is at treating stroke patients
- Each **aspect of stroke** care is covered
- Hospitals are given a **level from A-E** for each aspect of stroke care

2) Full Results Portfolio

- This is a **very detailed** report
- It contains national and hospital level results for **every stroke measure** collected by SSNAP
- It allows readers to look further into **specific aspects** of stroke care

3) Regional slideshows

- This report is a **PowerPoint slideshow of key results** for each region participating in SSNAP
- You can see **how hospitals in your area compare against each other**
- Graphs and charts are provided to **show changes over time**
Further information on stroke care for patients and carers

- This booklet is a shorter version of the ‘National Clinical Guideline for Stroke’ (2016).
- It is written for stroke survivors and their carers but is also useful for anyone who has an interest in stroke care and management.
- It gives information and advice on the care and treatment of adults after a stroke or TIA (mini stroke).
- It also has listings of organisations and support groups who can help stroke patients and their families or carers.
- The patient version of the Guideline is available here: [https://www.strokeaudit.org/Guideline/Patient-Guideline.aspx](https://www.strokeaudit.org/Guideline/Patient-Guideline.aspx)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Useful contacts and websites</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Stroke Association</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpline: 0303 303 3100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Textphone: 18001 0303 3033 100</td>
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<tr>
<td>stroke.org.uk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:info@stroke.org.uk">info@stroke.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Niamh Mental Wellbeing (Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Enquiries: 028 9032 8474</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.niamhwellbeing.org">www.niamhwellbeing.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:info@niamhwellbeing.org">info@niamhwellbeing.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Ireland Chest Heart &amp; Stroke</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Helpline: 028 9032 0184</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.nichs.org.uk">www.nichs.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:mail@nichs.org.uk">mail@nichs.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Different Strokes (run by and for younger stroke survivors)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Helpline: 0345 130 7172</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.differentstrokes.co.uk">www.differentstrokes.co.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:info@differentstrokes.co.uk">info@differentstrokes.co.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NHS Choices (Medical advice and information on health services)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>NHS non-emergency number: 111</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.nhs.uk">www.nhs.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Headway (Charity for people who have had a brain injury)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Helpline: 0808 800 2244</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.headway.org.uk">www.headway.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:helpline@headway.org.uk">helpline@headway.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Brain and Spine Foundation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Helpline: 0808 808 100</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.brainandspine.org.uk">www.brainandspine.org.uk</a></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:helpline@brainandspine.org.uk">helpline@brainandspine.org.uk</a></td>
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We hope you found this report helpful and useful

If you have any questions about this report please contact the Stroke Programme at the King’s College London:

Tel: 0116 464 9901
Email: ssnap@kcl.ac.uk

We want to know......

What do you think of this report? Have you found it useful?

Please email ssnap@kcl.ac.uk and let us know.