



# Strategy for Stroke Nursing in Scotland

2011-2016



*Scottish Stroke  
Nurses Forum*

# Scottish Stroke Nurses Forum

This is the third strategic document of the Scottish Stroke Nurses Forum (SSNF) since it was established in 2001. The document represents the new strategic focus and work plan of the forum for 2011–2016 as it marks its 10th anniversary.

## Scottish Stroke Nurses Forum

The SSNF promotes the essential role that nurses play in stroke, with the sharing of knowledge, skills and expertise that enhances best practice. Since its inception the forum has been supported by Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland (CHSS) and Boehringer Ingelheim. The forum offers free membership to registered nurses with an interest in stroke and now comprises of nearly 300 members. The forum provides mutual support and aims to represent members' views when undertaking activity on behalf of the SSNF. The annual conference is a key calendar event for members to get together. The forum has a web presence and also produces a bi-annual newsletter. The forum actively seeks to increase its membership among registered nurses with an interest in stroke working across Scotland.

*"Nurses are actively involved in all stages of the stroke journey"*

## Strategy for Stroke Nursing

The strategic aims of the forum will be achieved through a work plan of actions and outcome measures. There is a focus on nursing developments and services with a view to enhancing the stroke pathway. The SSNF collaborates at national level with the National Advisory Committee for Stroke (NACS) at the Scottish Government, the parliamentary Cross-Party Working Group, specialist NHS Boards, voluntary organisations and at local level through the Managed Clinical Networks (MCN) for Stroke.

## Clinical Stroke Nursing

Stroke nursing is a specialist area of clinical practice that focuses on meeting the holistic needs of individuals and families arising from the varied consequences of stroke. Nurses are actively involved in all stages of the stroke journey including hyperacute and acute care, rehabilitation, community care and long-term support. The important role of acute stroke nursing has been highlighted in recent years. This has been particularly driven by the focus on the rapid recognition and response to acute stroke and transient ischaemic attack (TIA). The SSNF will contribute to the campaign to promote the early recognition of stroke particularly among generalist nurses. Nurses play a vital role in the acute assessment, observation and monitoring, prevention of complications, therapeutic care and primary and secondary

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prevention of stroke. Nurses are involved in the delivery of thrombolysis treatment and running of assessment clinics. The stroke service standards (NHS Quality Improvement Scotland (QIS), 2009) and the new HEAT performance target (Scottish Government, 2011) have highlighted the importance of early access to stroke units and acute stroke management.

The forum will actively support nurses in their contribution to, and achievement of, the stroke service standards and implementing evidence based nursing; in particular access to a stroke unit, early imaging, swallow screening, and the administration of aspirin. Recent focus has highlighted the nurse's role in acute pain management and end of life care (NHS QIS, 2010/2011). The forum aims to actively support the implementation of the two best practice statements.

Safe and appropriate levels of nursing staff and the correct skill mix of registered nursing staff are required to deliver high quality person-centred care. The forum will campaign to protect nursing levels; for the right number and the right skill mix of nursing staff on stroke units. Nurses are the sole healthcare professional providing 24 hour intervention and as such have a vital role in the continuous therapeutic care and rehabilitation process. Nurses also provide a central coordinating role for the multidisciplinary team.

With reducing lengths of hospital stay, early supported discharges and the continuing shift to providing care in the community, nurses play a central role in supporting stroke patients and their families. Discharge

from hospital is a major transitional period and nurses are involved in providing ongoing support, information and help to access services. There has been increasing recognition of the longer-term support and recovery needs of those affected by stroke. Nurses are playing a key role in promoting recovery strategies such as self management and exercise programmes. The SSNF supports nurses in the implementation of the stroke workbook, a self-management resource. Nurses are working to support the range of longer-term needs in primary care and the forum support the 'Stroke - Self Assessment Web Resource' [www.strokeresource.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.strokeresource.scot.nhs.uk) to aid the longer-term follow-up of patients by practice nurses.

## Stroke Nursing Education

To implement evidence-based nursing practice, stroke nurses need to develop understanding, knowledge, clinical skills and confidence in practice. To support this continuous process of professional development the forum organises and hosts an annual SSNF conference. The conference provides a platform for sharing best practice, and includes keynote speakers, presentations, workshops, exhibitions, demonstrations and poster displays.

The SSNF continues to support 'STARs' (Stroke Training & Awareness Resources) the online interactive e-learning resource covering a wide range of knowledge and skills required to deliver stroke care ([www.StrokeTraining.org](http://www.StrokeTraining.org)). The Scottish Government (2009) highlighted the importance of registered nurses having specific stroke competencies at core level

and developing specialist knowledge and skills. Working with key partners the SSNF will specify the specialist stroke knowledge and skills required of a registered nurse working in a stroke unit. To support the development of practice the forum will offer assistance to implement the Stroke Competency Toolkit (SCoT) as a method for nurses to demonstrate that they have achieved the core and specialist levels.

## Stroke Nursing Research

For the profession to continue to grow future research into nursing practice is needed to expand the current evidence-base. This will lead to increased knowledge, better quality of care and ultimately better outcomes for stroke patients. The forum will promote increased nurse participation in local and national research; and the dissemination and implementation of research findings.

The SSNF commissioned research\* to investigate what the key issues are for stroke nurses in relation to future research. A sample of members working in a variety of stroke care settings throughout Scotland took part in focus groups and identified the following stroke nursing research priorities:

- Nursing roles and structures/culture
- Rehabilitation goal setting
- Nutrition and meal-time care
- Bladder incontinence
- Sexual health

- Complications of stroke
- Complementary therapies
- Information provision
- Secondary prevention

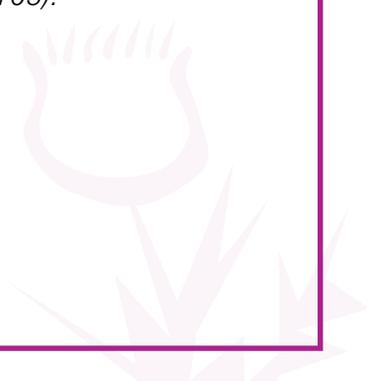
SSNF members are actively involved in a number of research projects which address some of these priority areas.

## Strategic Aims

1. Promote awareness of the SSNF and its activities; and increase membership.
2. Be the voice for stroke nurses/stroke nursing in local and national forums.
3. Improve the quality of nursing care and support the implementation of evidence based practice.
4. Have a key role in the development of stroke educational resources for nurses and in raising awareness of these resources.
5. Contribute to stroke nursing research to develop the evidence base; and promote awareness and implementation of research findings.

*\*(Rowat A; Lawrence M; Horsburgh D; Legg L; Smith L; on behalf of the Scottish Stroke Nurses Forum (2009) Stroke research questions: a nursing perspective British Journal of Nursing 18 (2) 100-105).*

“Going forward together”



# Work Plan

Action	Outcome Measure(s)	SSNF Lead	Timescale
Actively seek new members among registered nurses throughout Scotland to increase overall membership of the SSNF ( <i>strategic aim 1</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Five new registered nurses will be recruited from each of the 12 mainland health boards</li> </ul>	Committee Members from the 12 mainland NHS Boards	End of December 2012
Undertake a 'Think FAST & Save a Life' campaign to raise awareness of stroke among generalist nurses in partnership with CHSS ( <i>strategic aim 2</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop tailored campaign resources for nurses</li> <li>Targeted campaigns to the following nursing groups in Scotland:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emergency Care Nurses</li> <li>- Primary Care Nurses</li> <li>- Student Nurses</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Campbell Chalmers and Margaret Somerville	End of December 2014
Undertake a campaign to protect nursing levels; for the right number and the right skill mix of nursing staff on stroke units to achieve the highest quality care ( <i>strategic aim 2</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a survey of SSNF members focused on:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- quality of patient care</li> <li>- numbers and skill mix of nursing staff</li> <li>- impact on patients</li> <li>- impact on nurses</li> </ul> </li> <li>Compile a report of findings and disseminate to NACS, Stroke MCNs and other key stakeholders</li> </ul>	Anne Rowat and Di Rennie	End of December 2014
Actively support nurses locally in their contribution to, and achievement of, the stroke service standards implementing evidence based nursing practice ( <i>strategic aim 3</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share examples of best practice via a regular feature in the SSNF newsletter and feature within a future conference</li> <li>Undertake a consultation exercise to advise ways the SSNF could influence standards and action as appropriate</li> </ul>	Hazel Fraser and Linda Campbell	End of December 2016
Support the implementation of the two best practice statements in acute pain and end of life care ( <i>strategic aim 3</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distribution of the quick reference guides to SSNF members</li> <li>Hold a SSNF Conference focused on the implementation of the two best practice statements</li> <li>A targeted evaluation of delegates at the conference re-impact on nursing practice</li> <li>Contribute to the development of the related STARs advancing module</li> </ul>	Hazel Fraser, Chair of the Communication & Conference Planning Action Team	End of December 2012

Action	Outcome Measure(s)	SSNF Lead	Timescale
The SSNF supports nurses in the implementation of the stroke workbook, a self management resource ( <i>strategic aim 3</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Representation on the Advisory Group</li> <li>Promote through SSNF conference, exhibitions and newsletter</li> <li>Support local Stroke Liaison Nurses with the implementation process</li> </ul>	Hazel Fraser and Campbell Chalmers	End of December 2014
Develop and implement the specialist stroke knowledge and skills required of a registered nurse working in a stroke unit ( <i>strategic aim 4</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and advise the national project including; online development, local implementation and demonstration sites</li> </ul>	Linda Campbell, Chair of the Education Action Team, and Campbell Chalmers	End of September 2012
Develop and offer assistance to implement the Stroke Competency Toolkit (SCoT) as a method for nurses to demonstrate practice development ( <i>strategic aim 4</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and advise the national project including; online development, local implementation and demonstration sites</li> </ul>	Linda Campbell, Chair of the Education Action Team, and Campbell Chalmers	End of September 2012
Promote nurses participation in local and national research; and the dissemination and implementation of research findings ( <i>strategic aim 5</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a consultation exercise to advise ways the SSNF could enhance stroke nursing research activity and action as appropriate</li> <li>Promotion of the SSNF as a research resource</li> <li>Develop potential research questions based on the identified stroke nurse research priorities</li> <li>Advise and support nurses to undertake stroke research</li> </ul>	Anne Rowat, Chair of the Research Action Team, Jo Booth and Maggie Lawrence	End of December 2016

## Scottish Stroke Nurses Forum Contact Details

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Visit the SSNF webpage at [www.chss.org.uk/links/ssnf/ssnf.shtml](http://www.chss.org.uk/links/ssnf/ssnf.shtml)

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