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A word from our Chair

Chair report –Spring 2021

It is fair to say that the last year have been like no other that any of us have experienced and I would like to say thanks to the SSNF Committee and all our members coping with the challenges and the all the changes that have been made to ensure that their stroke nursing service continues to meet the needs of our patients and their families. There have been a lot of comments about this at the meetings and we decided it would be make an interesting article for our Newsletter and we would love to hear from you about your experiences in stroke nursing and the adaptations and changes in practice you have made in your areas. So please get in touch.

The Stroke Thrombectomy Service is now up and running and Amanda Johnston has done a great job at delivering the training and getting the North of Scotland stroke nurse ready with the STAT + training days. Amanda has provided an update in the newsletter on the progress to date.

A new Business Case has been submitted to the Scottish Government for the future shaping and delivery of stroke services in Scotland and the SSNF look forward to playing their role in this exciting step forward.

We plan to have our 2021 AGM as a virtual meeting on Microsoft Teams on the 23rd September 2021 so please keep some time free from 13:00- 14:00 to join us. There will be some committee vacancies to fill and nominations will be invited for these positions in August 2021. The SSNF is always happy to have new nurses on board. If you would like to see or join a committee meeting please contact us and this can be arranged.

Finally I would like to say thank-you and good luck to Caroline McGhee who represented Forth Valley on the SSNF she has moved to a new training post in CHSS and to Hazel Hamilton who represents Argyll and Bute. Hazel was one of the founding members of the SSNF and has been the Stroke Coordinator in Lorn and Isles Hospital, Oban for the last 20 years. We wish her a long and happy retirement.

Please enjoy our latest Newsletter and if you would like to contribute please send your article to Linda Campbell (linda.campbell8@nhs.scot)

Linda Campbell, April 2021

 www.facebook.com/ScottishStrokeNursesForum

twitter.com/ScotStrokeNurse



SSNF Committee – who we are and what we do

There are 25 places on the SSNF Committee, with each Health Board area having a representative and a further 10 general members which includes representation from Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland, the Stroke Association.

The role of the committee is multifaceted. The committee oversees the work of the SSNF and produces a 5 year work-plan that reflects the Stroke Improvement Plan, Scottish Stroke Care Audit, Stroke Nurse Education and the role of the stroke nurse in Scotland. We meet 4 times per year, have an annual general meeting and annual conference.

Have you thought about being a committee member? If you are interested but would like to know what is involved then please get in touch and we will arrange for you to join us and see the committee in action. You can then decide if it is for you and can be nominated for a committee place or act as deputy for your Health Board representative. You will need to free up time to attend the meetings and to do any additional work that you volunteer for.

Get in touch if you are interested or would like more information.

Article submitted by Linda Campbell, SSNF Chair.



Scottish Stroke Services and Improvement News Update

In the last few months work has been continuing to pull together a Business Case for future Stroke Services in Scotland for presentation to the Scottish Government.

This plan looks at the whole of the patient journey, Pre-admission, Hyperacute, Acute, Rehabilitation and Life after Stroke and will inform the next Stroke Improvement Plan. A vast amount of work has gone into producing this Business Case and the leads should be commended for pulling this all together into one readable and manageable document.

Many of our members have been involved and contributed to the development of the plan and it has now been approved, in principle by the Scottish Government. Watch out for the announcement and for further information on this.

The Thrombectomy Service Development Plan is also moving forward. The Interventional Radiography Suite in Ninewell, Dundee is now accepting patients from the North of Scotland Area (this includes Grampian, Highland and Tayside). At the time of writing there had been 7 thrombectomies performed. As you will have read in Amanda Johnson's report the STAT + training has been completed in Tayside and in Highland, with Grampian being the next hub to join.

With the introduction of this service funding has been made available to recruit a number of stroke nurses to support the transfer of patients suitable for thrombectomy. Keep an eye out for recruitment adverts and please share them with anyone else you think would be interested.

Further plans to develop / upgrade the centres in Lothian and Glasgow are moving forward and we will keep you up to date with developments.

Article submitted by Linda Campbell, SSNF Chair.



National Thrombectomy Education

Backed by the Scottish Government, a National Thrombectomy service within NHS Scotland will provide a valuable addition to current stroke services. As part of the Stroke Improvement Plan, educating healthcare staff is an integral part of the success of the National Thrombectomy service.

[Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland](#) were successful in a bid to the Scottish Government for a National Thrombectomy Educator. The 2 year post commenced in January 2020 and the role and remit is to develop and offer thrombectomy education to trained nurses who will be involved in the delivery of thrombectomy care in health boards across Scotland.

The Thrombectomy education developed called STAT+, consists of presentations and scenario-based learning developed with input from colleagues in the NHS and the Scottish Ambulance Service. The course is run over a full day and has been delivered within the North Boards however, the impact of COVID 19 has meant that education sessions will currently be provided via TEAMS until restrictions allow a return to face to face training. Prior to attending STAT+ all attendees must have completed [NIHSS online training](#) and STAT training. The STARS '[Hyperacute stroke treatments including Thrombolysis and Thrombectomy](#)' advanced module must also be completed prior to any involvement in Thrombectomy care or inter-hospital transfers.

The roll out of STAT+ commenced in August 2020 and has been very successful within all North Boards. Feedback in the evaluations and discussions during sessions have shown a desire and thirst for thrombectomy education and the importance of delivering a comprehensive education course on the full thrombectomy pathway for stroke nurses who will be involved in the care of a patient receiving a thrombectomy. Further role out to hubs and spokes throughout Scotland will continue within the coming months in agreement with the local thrombectomy lead. Areas can be ready for STAT+ delivery by completing the above pre-requisites and ensuring staff practice the NIHSS and have experience in hyperacute stroke care.

If you have any questions regarding STAT+ education, then please contact your local Thrombectomy Lead who can forward any questions to Amanda Johnson, CHSS National Thrombectomy Educator.

Article submitted by Amanda Johnson, CHSS.



Scottish Stroke Nurse Forum Newsletter

New Link Up & Learn Lunchtime Sessions



[Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland](#) (CHSS) in collaboration with The Scottish Stroke Improvement Programme (SSIP) are now delivering a programme of weekly virtual education and information sessions to nursing and allied health professional (AHP) staff working in stroke care throughout Scotland. These sessions commenced on Tuesday 23rd March and are called 'Link up and Learn' sessions.

The development and delivery of these education sessions was in response to the growing demand to deliver an equitable and accessible education programme across all the Health Boards in Scotland and is an excellent opportunity for nurses and AHPs of all levels to come together on a regular basis to learn, share and network with others.

These education sessions take place remotely using MS Teams, which can be downloaded to any work or personal device, and will consist of presentations delivered by NHS, AHP and CHSS colleagues with time for questions/discussion. Each session will count towards 1 hour of learning for revalidation/CPDs and you will receive a confirmation email of your attendance.

Date and time	Title	Speaker
23/03/21 1pm-2pm	Thrombectomy – The National context and overview	Katrina Brennan & Amanda Johnson
30/03/21 1pm-2pm	A Progressive Stroke Rehabilitation Service	Therese Lebedis
06/04/21 1pm-2pm	Thrombectomy – The SAS perspective	Craig Henderson
13/04/21 1pm-2pm	Thrombectomy – NIHSS awareness	Caroline McGhee
20/04/21 1pm-2pm	Scottish Stroke Care Audit	Neil Muir
27/04/21 1pm-2pm	Bladder rehabilitation after stroke – can we do better?	Jo Booth

*Completed *Pending

If you wish to be added to the email distribution list, then email chsseducation@chss.org.uk. An email will then be sent with the MS Teams link and presentation topic one week prior. These sessions will also be recorded and available to view for 1 week after on your MS Teams platform and you can "link up" from anywhere, work or home, at any time.

If you view the recorded session, then please email chsseducation@chss.org.uk for your revalidation email.

We would appreciate topic suggestions that you feel would be beneficial to your ongoing professional development and care delivery and would ask that any communication regarding suggestions for future sessions or stroke education in general be directed to the CHSS education mailbox. chsseducation@chss.org.uk

We look forward to welcoming you to the link up and learn sessions.
CHSS Education Team.



The changing role of the Stroke Nurse Specialist/Stroke Co-ordinator/Advanced Nurse Practitioner in Stroke

BACKGROUND I qualified in 1982 as a registered general nurse, then as a registered mental nurse in 1984. I returned to general adult nursing in 1987 as a charge nurse working in older people's services in assessment and rehabilitation. In 2001 I was the project lead for a redesign of stroke services in North Argyll, this identified that as the prevalence of stroke in Argyll and Clyde was high, it was recommended throughout the health board to have stroke specialist nurses/stroke co-ordinators on the acute hospital sites of Oban, Royal Alexandra in Paisley, Inverclyde hospital in Greenock and Vale of Leven hospital in Alexandria. In 2002 I took up the role of stroke co-ordinator at the Lorn and Islands Hospital in Oban. The post was to provide a seamless transition from hospital to community for stroke patients and their carers. The post covers a large geographic area, remote and rural, including islands. I had to develop the stroke service in the west of Argyll. This involved in setting up a comprehensive stroke unit, TIA clinic (this was initially funded from the national lottery !!), nurse led clinics, thrombolysis service at the Lorn and Islands Hospital in Oban, auditor for the Scottish stroke care audit, implementation of stroke standards and monitoring of same, teaching and education of staff, patients and carers, adult protection training, anticipatory care planning, development of the stroke strategy in Argyll and Bute, associate lecturer with OU, UHI and UWS, taking part in research projects, working on STARs and involved with managed clinical networks locally and nationally. I also have been one of the dementia champions in Oban. Lastly I have been involved with the Scottish Stroke Nurses Forum since I commenced the post. I have completed the specialist gerontology practitioner, independent nurse prescribing, diploma in stroke and counselling and post graduate certificate in teaching and learning in higher education.

REFLECTION On reflection I cannot believe I have achieved all the above to become an autonomous advanced nurse practitioner. I looked at my first job description and as I recently had to revamp my job description for my post, it was reassuring to note that the fundamental principles of the role of the stroke nurse was relatively unchanged. The principles of independently assessing, planning and implementing high quality nursing care to patients and their families, providing the highly complex and sensitive information/education/advice and providing the psychological and emotional support. The stroke nurse acts the lynch pin to the stroke service as the lead professional. Stroke is still unfortunately a key issue for us, although there have been improvements in the delivery of care, pharmacological interventions, education and training of staff, public awareness campaigns and having stroke standards to aspire to, since the covid pandemic, research is suggesting that stroke care has regressed by many years. Since the beginning of lockdown we all saw the numbers of TIA referrals to be decreased and strokes not being admitted to hospital. Now, we are all seeing the impact of covid and this will be a challenge in years to come. There are a lot of exciting challenges for stroke nurses in the future, with the emergence of the thrombectomy pathway, the RCN careers framework to enhance advanced practice. I have enjoyed most aspects of my nursing career and I have met many interesting people from all walks of life. Some have influenced me in my practice. I wish all members of the Scottish Stroke Nurses Forum a great future. I will miss you all.

Article Submitted by Hazel Hamilton, NHS Highland.



Hazel, everyone at the SSNF wishes you a very long and happy retirement.

Dumfries & Galloway:

Dumfries & Galloway had relatively low numbers of Covid patients in early 2020. It was anticipated that the Stroke nurse team would be redeployed but did not happen. Home visits and clinics were all suspended. We were fortunate that the stroke unit continued to function and beds were not displaced.

The second wave in early 2021 did see the stroke nurses redeployed for 4 weeks to ward areas. D&G at one point had the highest numbers of new covid cases per head of population in Scotland. It has been a very challenging time especially trying to keep in touch with our patients who have also had limited, if any therapy input following discharge. The impact has been felt across all areas but we have adapted to new ways of. Moving forward the service will continue with a blended approach encompassing what we have had to do during this pandemic- Near Me , Microsoft Teams.

Throughout we have also maintained a hyperacute & stroke acute service.

Grampian:

For the Acute Stroke Unit in Aberdeen no visitors has impacted on both patients and relatives in a very big way. Not having the support of their loved ones has affected their mental health and created a sense of loneliness for some.

Staff have had to adapt to working in a completely different environment and there has at times been a sense of fear for some worrying if they are going to catch Covid and take home to their families which is totally understandable.

However, on a positive note I think it has developed a closer working relationship as a team and we have tried to take over the role of the relatives of patients and be there for them when they are feeling lost and lonely.

Lothian:

On behalf of the SSNF congratulations to Trish Elder Gracie on successfully completing the ANP course and becoming a Stroke Advanced Nurse Practitioner within NHS Lothian.





eLearning Resources

Following on from the technical upgrade and relaunch of STARs & HEARTe resources last year, lots of hard work has been going on behind the scenes. Many working groups have been coming together virtually to update the content of these vital resources. Many STARs resources have now been updated or almost completed. Technical support to finalise the update of these resources should see many of the module fully reviewed and updated in the coming few months.

Thereafter update of the 14 HEARTe resources will be prioritised for the 2nd half of the year.

I would like to thank all the working groups who have been coming together over the last several months to review and update these modules. Committing to this in covid times with all of your clinical commitments and many of you are sitting on more than one working group. You are a credit to our profession and it is a happy and humbling experience working with you on updating STARs. With the update of many of the resources now almost complete we are always looking for people to review the updated content. You will be acknowledged as such on the module. So if this is something that would interest you please just get in touch with me at: katrina.mccormick@chss.org.uk

Some STARs Stats:

Did you know that since launch STARs Core competencies has had over **475,000** users and over **44,000** module assessment certificates issued to date. &

STARs Advancing modules has had over **250,000** users and over **106,000** module assessment certificates issued to date.

All **STARs** & **HEARTe** learning resources can be accessed @: <http://chsslearning.org.uk>

Article submitted by: Katrina McCormick, CHSS.



Save The Date!

Stroke Alliance for Europe 2nd Webinar- Thursday 20 May 2021 ***'Intimacy and Sex after Stroke'***

The second in the series of free webinars on Life After Stroke - Intimacy and sex after stroke: how to start the conversation, on 20 May, is now open for registration.

Intimacy and sex are important. However, for many stroke survivors this an uncomfortable subject with many struggling to come to terms with their 'new' body or identity and coping with the implications of this. Additionally, many healthcare professionals do not feel confident or able to talk about sex or to know how to best advise and support patients or their families.

This session will share insights from several perspectives and suggest how we might begin positive and open conversations about intimacy. It also underlines the need for greater awareness about sex and intimacy after stroke.

Registration is free at: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/european-life-after-stroke-forum-webinar-series-tickets-148894053121> If you missed the first event, Priorities, challenges and ways forward, you can now catch up on demand at elasf.org

SSAHPF, GCU and SSNF Conference 2021-Thursday 17 June 2021 ***'Ageing well with stroke in the era of COVID-19'***

What is this conference about?

The theme of this online conference is '**Ageing well with stroke in the era of COVID-19**'. At a time where people affected by stroke have been experiencing unprecedented changes in their care and rehabilitation, this conference aims to create an opportunity to share insights acquired during the pandemic and disseminate research findings and service innovation to facilitate recovery and healthy ageing after stroke.

Conference website: <https://fitwise.eventsair.com/cmspreview/2021-ageing-well-with-stroke/>

UK Stroke Forum Conference 30th November -2nd December 2021

The 16th edition of the UK Stroke Forum will take place virtually, where we will once again come together to share best practice and research across the stroke pathway.

Visit the website for everything you need to know and regular updates about the conference@: <https://stroke.org.uk/professionals> For further information contact: ukstrokeforum@stroke.org.uk

