

# Addenbrookes stroke team scores an A!

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Patients attending the stroke services unit at Addenbrooke's Hospital can be assured they are getting first class care after it scored an A-grade on the national stroke audit.



The Sentinel Stroke National Audit Programme (SSNAP) is a major national healthcare quality improvement programme. This audit measures the quality and organisation of stroke care in the NHS and is the single source of stroke data in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The score goes from A being the best to E being the worst.

The top grade was awarded after the team was recognised for delivering the very highest levels of care for the 750 patients who attend the unit annually following a stroke and another 1000 seen in the TIA (mini stroke) clinic.

Patients surviving stroke can be left with life-changing conditions such as poor balance, reduced coordination, poor memory, fatigue and difficulty in reading and writing.

Delivering the right care in the first few hours and being offered optimal treatments and follow-up therapies can all have a really positive impact on patient outcomes.

At Addenbrooke's, the team has worked extra hard to deliver a gold standard service, which has included:

- Providing timely thrombolysis treatment which can dissolve and disperse a blood clot that is preventing adequate blood flow to the brain. Currently between 15-18 per cent of stroke patients receive this treatment.

- Ensuring acute stroke bleed nurses are available 24/7, for early assessment of urgent scans and treatment. Our average time to assessment is nine minutes from arrival in hospital.
- Getting patients who arrive in A&E to dedicated beds in the specialist stroke unit as soon as possible, so they can receive expert multidisciplinary care.
- Being able to assess what therapy patients need seven days a week, and offering physio, occupational health and speech therapy sessions six / seven days a week.
- Working closely with other hospitals, so patients who come to Addenbrooke's from outside the Cambridge area can be quickly repatriated back to their local hospital to receive care closer to home.

Efforts put in by the team have resulted in 60 per cent of patients being referred to the Early Discharge Team, against a target of 40 per cent.

This means the average length of stay on the stroke is often less than a week, with some patients able to return home within 24 hours.

Diana Day, consultant nurse, said: "We are absolutely delighted with the results. It's been a lot of hard work – but the fact we have achieved this is a credit to all the nurses, doctors, therapist, radiologists and our data collection team. By working together as one multidisciplinary team we are able to offer a gold standard of care for all our patients."

To further enhance its service, the trust is also working towards providing thrombectomies for patients.

Thrombectomies have been a major development in acute stroke care in the last four years. They involve the direct removal of a clot in a blocked artery in the brain using a mechanical device passed along a guide wire to restore bloodflow.

If undertaken within the first few hours of a stroke, the outcome for patients improves dramatically with around one in three able to walk away without any significant side effects.

Nigel Poulter had a stroke nine years ago. He was treated at Addenbrooke's and for the past three years has been returning to volunteer with the Stroke Association.

He said: "I have seen the stroke unit improve dramatically, particularly over the last four years. When I first started coming here services were only Monday to Friday and I went home at weekends. I would have happily stayed if there were physio appointments or things I could have been doing to help my recovery. The fact that services are now available at weekends is invaluable to those who have had a stroke and their families.

“I’m not surprised the team have scored an A in the national stroke audit. They are wonderful and the service they provide is first class. This score finally gives them the credit they deserve.”

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