

Freedom of Information Request	FOI 22-422	26 th September 2022
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What plans does the health board have to improve services for stroke sufferers and their outcomes?

The Health Board is committed to improving outcomes for people in our community that have had a stroke. The Health Board works closely with the Welsh Government and the NHS Wales Delivery Unit to monitor its outcomes and performance, which includes data from SSNAP, as well as mortality data and patient experience feedback.

As seen across the UK, the Health Board's urgent and unscheduled care pathways, including stroke care, were and continue to be negatively impacted by the Covid pandemic, with ongoing disruption to pathways, capacity and workforce.

The Health Board has a well-established, Executive led Stroke Delivery Board, which is leading the work to respond to the impact of the pandemic and recover the stroke care performance and outcomes. Key to this has been commissioning an external review by [Getting it Right First Time \(GIRFT\)](#). The GIRFT organisation has worked extensively with NHS organisations across the UK and has an impressive track record and reputation for supporting performance improvement. This review has now been completed and GIRFT are now working with the Health Board to agree an improvement action plan. The Health Board is also engaging with Health Inspectorate Wales with their all-Wales review of stroke pathways, and with the NHS Wales Delivery Unit's review of stroke imaging pathways. In responding to these three different reviews and Welsh Government's emerging national strategy for stroke care, the Health Board has a significant opportunity to recover and improve its stroke performance and outcomes, to create tangible benefits for our stroke patients and their families, right across the pathway.

The Health Board benefits from a close and supportive working relationship with the Stroke Association and the Community Health Council, with both organisations represented and active members of our Stroke Delivery Board. The Health Board welcomes the [Stroke Association's 'Saving Brains' report](#), including the recommendations for Welsh Government and NHS Wales in improving thrombectomy rates, which is an essential and key part of the Health Board's stroke improvement work. The Health Board is encouraged by some minor improvement in our Thrombectomy performance since the 'Saving Brains' report data was published. It is helpful that the Saving Brains report confirms many of the issues and recommendations in our GIRFT review, in particular the need to achieve timely presentation and diagnosis of stroke, better pre-hospital alerts, and avoiding delays with in-hospital pathways. Also, plans shared recently by the Health Board's Thrombectomy provider in Bristol to extend their operating hours (which has been a significant restraint) will increase the opportunity for improving the rate for our Health Board.