

Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee

Committee Inquiry into Stroke services in Wales – Written evidence from Glynn Robinson

Dear Catherine,

RE: Stroke Services in Wales

I am a Stroke Survivor of some 13 years. I am still recovering from the massive stroke I suffered.

If I only knew about Transient Ischaemic Attacks before hand, as I am sure I had one or two of these before hand...

My proper stroke I had at 4am on Monday morning. I was a postman on 'earlies' (early morning shift) delivering parcels in the North-east of Cardiff. My alarm went off, I lurched out off bed, and smashed into the floor....I remember thinking 'I'm too poorly to go into work today' before I slipped back into unconsciousness. My views are pretty sketchy about those early days, although thanks to a workmate (who covered my shift) and good neighbours (who had a key) I was found on Tuesday or Wednesday afternoon. An ambulance whisked me away as I lapsed again into unconsciousness...

Three weeks or a month later, I was incontinent, "totally" disabled in my right side (arm and leg), couldn't speak, had trouble with my eyes and yes, depressed. I stayed 6 months in hospital.

I hear, through our local Stroke Club, that the Welsh Assembly Government is looking at stroke now.... Please make it mandatory in Wales that:

1) A stroke - even a mild Transient Ischaemic Attack - to be treated as a medical emergency, requiring urgent CT scan to determine if the cause of stroke is a clot or bleed

A mild TIA is a warning that a much bigger stroke is imminent and prompt treatment could prevent a larger stroke from happening.

2) If the cause of stroke is a clot, then for a clot busting drug to be given. This treatment, thrombolysis, needs to be given within 3 hours of the onset of symptoms. This will reduce brain damage.

We are requesting this service be extended to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in more hospitals.

As we understand it, only 4 hospitals in Wales offer this service - only during office hours (Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm)

3) For all areas of Wales to have hospitals with a dedicated Stroke Unit, with a team of stroke specialist nurses and therapists.

For a specialist stroke nurse to be in post to identify the stroke patients - so none get missed by specialist stroke team (when they are scattered around the hospital to whatever bed is available after Casualty treatment)

This way ALL stroke patients are assessed and treated by stroke specialists. Treatment can be started straight away in any ward until a bed is available in Stroke Unit

NICE has approved the clot busting drug.....(and in retrospect, my continuing disability - and brain damage - was all down to time....)

The Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust, along with Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan local health boards have agreed a plan to make significant savings this year, apart from the other Bodies in the whole of Wales....

Now the Welsh Assembly Government has 2 choices: To leave it until next year before implementing the new stroke structure - i.e. standing still - or to move forward with the above methods of stroke care and structure.

I plead with the Welsh Assembly Government to move forward, and do these 3 points above to put stroke retrograde.

I'm sorry my verbal skills have been robbed by stroke, and that is why I'll pass on giving oral evidence with the Welsh Assembly Government...

Meanwhile I'm volunteering with Pedal Power Project, a cycle-for-all hire charity <http://www.cardiffpedalpower.org.uk/>, at Pontcanna Caravan Site two days a week (Monday and Saturday)

...and if you want to know what I get up to, my website is <http://community.webshots.com/user/glynnrobinson100>

Take care,

Yours sincerely,

Glynn Robinson
(Stroke Survivor)