

Heart disease and stroke

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Health and Community Care

New plans to further improve outcomes

New Scottish Government plans for heart disease and stroke will aim to reduce health inequalities and improve outcomes for patients.

The Heart Disease and Stroke Action Plan, published in 2009, set out a comprehensive programme for further reducing deaths from both heart disease and stroke. This has been refreshed and separate Heart Disease and Stroke Improvement Plans are being published today. These plans are backed by over £1 million of Scottish Government funding.

Mortality rates from coronary heart disease have fallen by more than 43 per cent between 2003 and 2013. The heart attack mortality rate has also fallen, and by a quicker rate in deprived areas compared with least deprived - 37.6 per cent compared with 29 per cent. For those admitted to hospital as an emergency with their first attack, the chances of surviving at least 30 days have improved over the last ten years from 84.4 per cent to 91.8 per cent.

The 2014 heart disease improvement plan aims to build on these improvements. It focuses on six priority areas and sets out a number of key actions including:

- Developing better strategies for people in deprived communities who are at greater risk of developing cardiovascular disease
- Modernising cardiac rehabilitation services
- Improving patient flow, diagnosis and long term management of heart conditions

Over the past ten years stroke cases have decreased by 21 per cent and mortality rates have fallen by 45.4 per cent for men and 39.2 per cent for women. Since the 2009 Plan, stroke units have been established in all Scottish hospitals, helping to reduce mortality and improve patient outcomes. People who are involved with stroke care have also worked continually to drive improvements.

The new stroke improvement plan identifies eight priority areas. Actions include:

- Further campaigns to raise public awareness of stroke symptoms
- Stroke services to provide immediate access to advice for GPs, accident and emergency departments, and other places where stroke victims present themselves
- Steps to better identify people with atrial fibrillation – a significant risk factor for stroke
- Improved stroke rehabilitation services and post-discharge support

Michael Matheson, Minister for Public Health, said:

“Significant improvements have been made in heart disease and stroke outcomes over the past few years, but we cannot be complacent. We were particularly keen to establish

separate plans for these two life-threatening conditions and I am pleased that has now been achieved.

“Heart disease is an area where health inequalities are especially prevalent, so it is quite right that we are targeting our efforts on building on the progress made. Thankfully, more people are surviving heart attacks, and so our plan to improve rehabilitation will deliver even better recoveries for people who have suffered cardiac arrest.

“Mortality from stroke is also falling, but we want to continue to improve people’s awareness of the danger signs, so that they present themselves to hospital as soon as possible. From there we want to see even better treatments and rehabilitation, both in hospital and after they have returned home.”

Andrea Cail, Director Scotland of the Stroke Association, said:

“The Stroke Improvement Plan is a welcome step forward for stroke care in Scotland which builds on the good work that has already been accomplished. We are especially heartened to see important elements of longer term care now being identified and included in the plan as these are imperative to ongoing recovery after a stroke.”

David Clark, Chief Executive of Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland, said:

“We welcome the publication today of the Scottish Government’s latest improvements plans . Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland have contributed significantly to the progress in both heart disease and stroke, over the past five years, for example through the producing the HEARTE and STARs web based training resources, and the FAST campaign to highlight public awareness of stroke.

We will continue to work in partnership with the Scottish Government and the NHSScotland to help improve services and prevent heart disease and stroke in the future.”

Marjory Burns, Regional Director for Scotland at the British Heart Foundation, said:

“It is unacceptable that each month around 400 people in Scotland under the age of 75 lose their lives to cardiovascular disease (CVD). We have an ambitious plan to reduce the number of early deaths from CVD in the UK, potentially saving the lives of 1,200 Scottish people a year.

“We welcome the Scottish Government’s shared resolve to improve the way we prevent, diagnose and treat heart disease. We have made huge progress in the fight to stop people’s lives being cut short by cardiovascular disease, but together, with this new improvement plan and our life-saving research we can take these advancements even further.”

Background:

The Heart Disease Improvement Plan 2014 can be viewed here:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/08/5434>

The six priority areas are:

- Prevention of cardiovascular disease

- Mental health for heart disease
- Secondary and tertiary care cardiology
- Heart disease management and rehabilitation
- Heart failure
- Arrhythmias

The Stroke Improvement Plan 2014 can be viewed here:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/08/9114>

The eight priority areas are:

- Early recognition of Transient Ischaemic Attack and stroke
- Rapid admission, early diagnosis and treatment
- Stroke care bundle
- Developing a skilled and knowledgeable workforce
- Early diagnosis and treatment for non-admitted patients
- Secondary prevention
- Transition to community
- Supported self-management and living with stroke

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