



Public consultation

Summary: Improving acute hospital based stroke services in Somerset

Have your say: Date of consultation –
Monday 30 January 2023 – Monday 24 April 2023
www.somersetics.org.uk/stroke



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What is a stroke?

A stroke is a life-threatening medical condition that happens when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off by a clot or bleeding from a blood vessel.

Stroke is a sudden and life-changing event. The sooner you are treated, the better your chance of recovery.

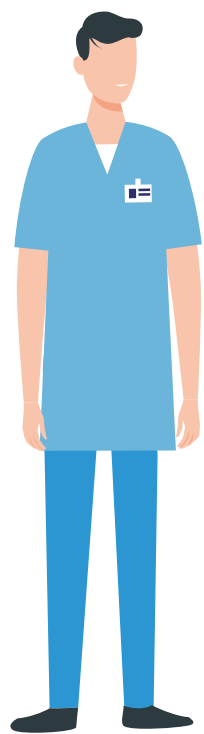
What is happening?

NHS organisations in Somerset are working together to improve acute hospital based stroke care. This is the specialist care people get in an acute hospital in the first few days and weeks after they have a stroke.

We are not proposing any changes to stroke rehabilitation services provided in your own home or stroke rehabilitation services provided in the community at South Petherton Community Hospital or Williton Community Hospital.

We're holding a public consultation, **from Monday 30 January 2023 to Monday 24 April 2023** to find out what you think about the plans for acute hospital based stroke services.

During this time, you can find out more about the proposals and share your views. We'll use this feedback to make a final decision.



Why is change needed?

The way stroke services in Somerset are currently organised means we can't always meet national guidelines, or make the most of specialist staff.

There's a shortage of stroke nurses, therapists, and doctors, and our local expertise is currently stretched across two different hospital sites – Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton and Yeovil District Hospital.

It's difficult to give patients the care they need all of the time, especially during the critical 72-hours immediately after a stroke – called hyper acute stroke care.

We want to give people the best chance of getting specialist treatments as soon as possible. This means making sure that stroke patients see specialist stroke staff who can make fast decisions about their treatment and have access to the scanning equipment needed to help make these decisions.

Stroke care is a priority in the NHS Long Term Plan, there is national evidence that some specialist treatments are best delivered from bigger, centralised services.

How people have been involved so far

Local NHS staff, voluntary stroke support organisations, people who have experienced a stroke and their families and carers, took part in workshops and meetings to work through potential solutions for local acute hospital based stroke services.

The feedback we received has been used to develop our consultation plans.

How local stroke services look now

At the moment, two hospitals in Somerset provide acute hospital stroke care.

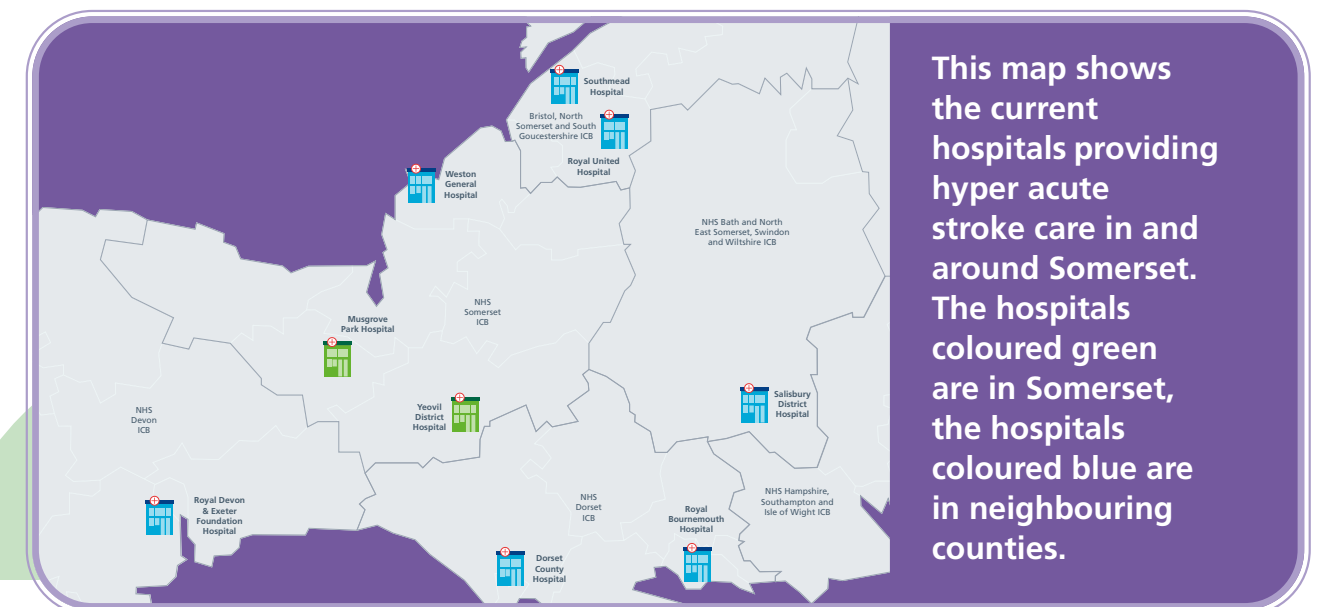
- Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton
- Yeovil District Hospital, Yeovil.

Both acute hospitals have a hyper acute stroke unit and an acute stroke unit.

- Hyper acute stroke unit – is the ward where you receive care for the first 72 hours after having a stroke when you need more specialist critical care. There is fast access to specialist assessment, scanning, diagnosis and treatment.
- Acute stroke unit – is the ward you go to after the hyper acute stroke unit. This is where you have acute rehabilitation in the hospital with daily specialist input from medical, nursing and therapy staff.

Not all people who have a stroke in Somerset will go to a hyper acute stroke unit in an acute hospital based in Somerset. Paramedics will decide which hospital it is best to take a patient to. For example, there may be another acute hospital in a neighbouring county which is closer to where you live or you may need even more specialist treatment which can only be provided at another hospital out of Somerset such as Southmead Hospital in Bristol.

Some people treated for a stroke at Yeovil District Hospital live in Dorset and are taken to the hyper acute stroke unit in Yeovil - if this is their closest hyper acute stroke unit.



What are we proposing?

An evaluation process by doctors, nurses, staff, people with lived experience and community and voluntary sector organisations, identified that hyper acute stroke services would be better delivered from one hospital site in Somerset, instead of two.

They also concluded that if hyper acute services were in future delivered from a hyper acute stroke unit at only one hospital in Somerset, Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton would be the only solution that could deliver a high quality, safe, and sustainable hyper acute service.

The evaluation also identified two potential options for future acute stroke services in Somerset. On that basis, we have shortlisted two potential options for the future.

| Option A | Option B |
|--|---|
| A single hyper acute stroke unit at Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton | |
| An acute stroke unit at both Musgrove Park Hospital and Yeovil District Hospital. | A single acute stroke unit at Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton. |

What would this change mean?

The proposed changes would mean more patients would receive high-quality care that meets national standards – including access to stroke specialists 24-hours a day, 7-days a week.

Giving people specialist stroke care as soon as they arrive at hospital, allows rapid diagnosis to decide on the best course of treatment.

Having hyper acute stroke services at one acute hospital would mean the stroke team would treat a higher number of patients than are currently seen at each individual hospital.

This fits with national guidance which says that centres providing hyper acute stroke care should see a minimum number of patients.

This means the hyper acute stroke unit would be more clinically sustainable by:

- ✓ Being able to have the right levels of specialist stroke staff at one unit.
- ✓ Our workforce being better able to keep their skills as they would see more patients.
- ✓ One unit would be better able to provide specialist urgent treatment and provide the highest quality of care for patients.



Option A

A single hyper acute stroke unit at Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton and an acute stroke unit at both Musgrove Park Hospital and Yeovil District Hospital

Under option A, there would be one hyper acute stroke unit in Somerset. When a stroke is confirmed, the first 72 hours of care would take place at a specialist hyper acute stroke unit at Musgrove Park Hospital.

People who live closer to hyper acute stroke units out of Somerset would be taken to their closest unit, for example at Dorset County Hospital, Dorchester.

An acute stroke unit would remain at both Musgrove Park Hospital and Yeovil District Hospital.

Yeovil District Hospital would no longer provide hyper acute stroke services but they would continue to provide acute stroke care.

This means that patients who receive their hyper acute stroke care at another hospital could have their next stage of treatment closer to home.

Some patients who live closer to Dorset County Hospital may be taken to the stroke unit at Dorset County Hospital instead of Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton. Patients who have their hyper acute stroke care at Dorset County Hospital may be transferred to Yeovil District Hospital for their follow up stroke care if this is closer to their home.

Option B

A single hyper acute stroke unit and a single acute stroke unit at Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton

Under option B, both the hyper acute stroke care unit and the acute stroke unit would be at Musgrove Park Hospital only.

People who live closer to hyper acute stroke units out of Somerset would be taken to their closest unit, for example at Dorset County Hospital, Dorchester.

When a stroke is confirmed, the first 72 hours of care would take place at a specialist hyper acute stroke unit at Musgrove Park Hospital.

Patients who have their hyper acute stroke care at Musgrove Park Hospital and are not ready to leave hospital would move to the acute stroke unit at Musgrove Park Hospital.

Some patients who live closer to Dorset County Hospital may be taken to the stroke unit at Dorset County Hospital instead of Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton. Patients who have their hyper acute stroke care at Dorset County Hospital would also have their acute stroke care at Dorset County Hospital.

Dorset County Hospital have been active members of our review and are supportive of the changes these proposals would bring to Dorset County Hospital, Dorchester.

What would the change mean for journey times?

At the moment, someone who is thought to be having a stroke will usually be taken to the closest hospital that offers emergency stroke care. In Somerset, for most people this is Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton or Yeovil District Hospital in Yeovil.

If these proposals went ahead, in the future most patients would go to Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton. Some patients who live close to the border of surrounding counties would go to their nearest hospital which could be in a neighbouring county such as Dorset County Hospital in Dorchester.

For some people this would mean that their initial journey to hospital by ambulance could take longer.

Getting to hospital quickly is really important when you have a stroke, but it's also really important to be seen by specialist staff quickly when you arrive and to have access to the best treatment available.

One hyper acute stroke unit at Musgrove Park Hospital would be better able to support this care.

This means that even if some journeys to hospital were slightly longer, there would still be an overall benefit to patients.

Family and friends play a really important part in a patient's recovery. As some patients would have to travel further if these changes went ahead, travel times for some visitors would also increase.

We understand that for some people, including those who rely on public transport, the idea of a longer journey to visit someone in hospital might be a concern.

We believe the benefits of reducing deaths and long-term disability caused by strokes outweigh the short-term inconvenience for people visiting stroke patients in hospital.

What would this cost?


The proposals would not result in a reduction in the amount of money spent on stroke care, but would actually mean more investment in acute hospital based stroke services in Somerset.

If we were to make no changes to our acute hospital based stroke services there would be no additional cost. However, we would still need to invest in stroke services at both Musgrove Park Hospital and Yeovil District Hospital to bring the services up to the required national standards and introduce 24/7 consultant cover. To do this would cost an additional £2.163 million.

Not only would this cost more than the proposed options, it also would not solve the staffing challenges and we still would not meet the stroke admissions criteria of more than 600 admissions a year at each hospital.



The financial impact of the changes of the proposed solutions would be:

| | Option A | Option B |
|---|--|--|
|  | A single hyper acute stroke unit at Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton and an acute stroke unit at both Musgrove Park Hospital and Yeovil District Hospital | A single hyper acute stroke unit and a single acute stroke unit at Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton |
| Extra cost to deliver compared to services now | + £1.015 million | -£0.255 million |

How can you share your views?

We want to know what you think about our proposals for acute hospital based stroke services in Somerset before we make any final decisions.

Our consultation runs from **Monday 30 January 2023** for 12 weeks, and you can share your views with us until midnight on **Monday 24 April 2023**.

You can fill out a paper questionnaire which can be found in one of our consultation documents or complete the questionnaire online at: www.somersetics.org.uk/stroke.

You can also provide your feedback, or ask for printed information, by contacting us:

Email: somicb.fitformyfuture@nhs.net

Telephone: 01935 384 124

Find out more at: www.somersetics.org.uk/stroke

What happens next?

After the consultation closes all the feedback gathered will be analysed by an independent research organisation.

They will prepare a report for the NHS Somerset Board setting out what people have said about the proposals. The Board will consider the feedback, along with a wide range of other information and evidence to make a decision.

We will continue to share information and updates about this programme of work and will publish the consultation findings report.

The final decision-making meeting will be held in public to allow those interested to hear the discussion and how the decision is made. Details of the public Board meeting will be published on the NHS Somerset website www.nhssomerset.nhs.uk



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