A single hyper acute stroke unit (HASU) to improve stroke care

We are planning to improve stroke services for people living in and around the Bradford, Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven areas to ensure that anyone who has a stroke receives consistent and safe care.

As part of this plan, the existing hyper acute stroke unit (HASU) at Airedale General Hospital (AGH) will move to Bradford Royal Infirmary (BRI) where we will create a single HASU for the whole district.

What is a hyper acute stroke unit?
HASUs provide intensive care for people in the crucial first hours after a stroke. They bring experts and equipment under one roof to provide specialist treatment 24 hours a day, saving lives and preventing long-term disability.

People suspected of having a stroke should be taken immediately to a hospital which provides HASU services. Stroke patients are cared for by a specialist team of doctors, nurses and therapists who have the expertise and equipment to deliver the necessary tests and treatment within a very short timescale.

Current stroke services
In the Bradford, Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven areas, people currently use hyper acute (emergency) stroke services at AGH and BRI. Last year, AGH treated over 300 patients who suffered a stroke, and BRI treated over 600 patients.

The diagram shows the current hospital stroke services.

What is stroke?
A stroke is a serious, life-threatening medical condition that occurs when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off. If the supply of blood is restricted or stopped, brain cells can be damaged or die.

All strokes are different; some are minor but for some people a stroke can be critical and urgent treatment is needed. The sooner a person receives treatment for a stroke, the less damage is likely to happen.

Who is at risk?
Although most people who have a stroke are older, one in four strokes in the UK occur in people under the age of 65 - including in children. Some people are more at risk than others, including those from south Asian, African and Caribbean communities. This is partly due to a natural tendency to develop high blood pressure, diabetes and sickle cell disease which can lead to strokes.

In the UK, there are approximately 152,000 strokes each year - one every three minutes and 27 seconds. Stroke is the fourth single largest cause of death with one in eight strokes fatal in the first 30 days and one in four fatal within a year. There are about 1.2 million stroke survivors living in the UK, half of whom have a disability.
Why have you decided to create a single hyper acute stroke unit (HASU)?
For a HASU to provide the most effective care it is recommended that:
- admit a minimum of 600 confirmed stroke patients each year; and
- have six stroke consultants, trained in thrombolysis, available 24 hours, seven days a week to treat 600 or more suspected strokes per year.

This model is national best practice and has shown improved outcomes for patients when it has been implemented in other areas.

For many months, Airedale General Hospital has had problems providing a HASU service due to a national shortage of stroke consultants. In England, the shortage means that about 46% of consultant posts are vacant. As a result, despite trying to recruit, AGH has not been able to secure a permanent consultant team. Since March 2014, to ensure that a full service is available, BRI – which has a permanent consultant team - has provided HASU services to people living in Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven during evenings, weekends and at bank holidays.

There are no other ways in which a HASU could be provided at AGH which would meet minimum staffing, care and safety recommendations.

Future stroke services
The single HASU at BRI will provide patients with:
- emergency stroke care 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year (and it will be the same care whatever the time of day or night);
- high quality, safe and resilient care;
- access to specialist stroke consultants at all times; and
- quicker scans and treatment for more patients.

This is the way that the service will work for patients who live in Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven (AWC):

All suspected stroke patients previously treated at AGH will receive their initial treatment at BRI.

If you live in Bradford and you need care on a HASU, you will continue to receive services at BRI. If you live in an outlying area, the ambulance crew will take you to the nearest hospital with a HASU. This could be in Leeds, Harrogate or Blackburn, for example.

What is changing?
The two hyper acute stroke beds from AGH will move to BRI to create the single HASU for people living in and around Bradford, Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven area. To meet national recommendations, the unit will have six beds in order to treat the number of confirmed strokes in the district. Acute stroke services and rehabilitation will continue unchanged at both hospitals.

What is thrombolysis?
When strokes are caused by a blood clot, they may be treated with a clot-busting drug to try to disperse the clot and return the blood supply to the brain. Alteplase is the drug used for this, and the process of giving it is called thrombolysis. For most people thrombolysis needs to be given within four and a half hours of stroke symptoms starting.

After spending up to 72 hours on the HASU, stroke patients will be transferred to AGH for their acute stroke care and rehabilitation.

Patients who were not diagnosed as having a stroke will be treated and discharged home or transferred back to AGH for treatment once clinically safe to do so.
Dr Bryan Gill, medical director for Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said: “The development of a single site for the care of stroke patients in the critical first 48 hours will improve outcomes for individual patients and in addition, deliver one of the best stroke services in the UK.”

What will this mean for me?
Anyone suspected of having a stroke will be taken by ambulance directly to the A&E department at BRI and be seen by the specialist stroke team. Patients who need an emergency brain scan (CT) will have one as quick as possible based on their clinical need and urgency. The result of the scan helps doctors to decide what treatment is needed.

How can I respond?
We’d like to hear from you about how this new single service can successfully meet your needs. We hope that you will take this opportunity to share your thoughts and views to help us deliver safe, sustainable and high quality stroke services for people living in the Bradford, Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven areas.

From 13 July to 11 September 2015, for nine weeks, we will be talking to patients, their families and carers and other interested groups. We want to find out what is important to people when using stroke services, with a specific focus on the impact of moving hyper acute stroke services from AGH to BRI.

This is your chance tell us how the creation of a single HASU will affect you and your family. We will look at every comment we receive, and prepare a summary report using your comments and suggestions which will be presented to our Executive/Clinical Boards. We will publish the report on our websites and respond to the comments we receive stating what we have done, plan to do or - where we are unable to do something - the reasons why. If you have provided your contact details, we can send you a copy of the report.

You can:
- complete the short questionnaire overleaf
- email your comments to engage@awcccg.nhs.uk
- write to us at the PALS Freepost address below
- telephone: 01274 237324
- share your views by completing the feedback form at wwwairedalewharfedaleandcravenccg.nhs.uk

Stacey Hunter, director of operations at Airedale NHS Foundation Trust, said: “Having a stroke is life changing but recovery is vastly improved if patients who have suffered a stroke have rapid access to the appropriate treatment in those first critical 48 hours. Once patients are stabilised, usually after a couple of days, they will transfer to Airedale Hospital. The existing stroke unit at the hospital will remain as an acute stroke care and rehabilitation unit - 90% of stroke services will be unaffected.”

This leaflet is also available in Braille, easy read, large print or other languages. If you would like us to send you a copy, please call 01274 237324 or email engage@awcccg.nhs.uk

Comments, concerns and queries about healthcare
If you have a comment, concern or query about healthcare services, you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS):

Freepost RTER-LYHC-EJET
Douglas Mill, Bowling Old Lane, Bradford BD5 7JR
Email: westyorkspals@nhs.net
Freephone: 0800 0525 270

The service is open from 8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday (except Bank Holidays).

You can also contact Healthwatch Bradford and District, if you prefer to speak to an independent organisation. Contact 0300 56 10 987 or email info@healthwatchbradford.co.uk.
Thank you for filling in this form. Your views are important to us. Please post your completed form to the following address by **Monday 7 September 2015**. You do not need to use a stamp.

**Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) - Stroke**  
Freepost RTER-LYHC-EJET  
Douglas Mill, Bowling Old Lane, Bradford BD5 7JR

How will the change to stroke services affect you and your family? What do you think will be the benefits and what will be the challenges? *(Please use a separate piece of paper if you would like to write more)*

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What do you think would help to make the new stroke service run well for patients, carers and families? *(Please use a separate piece of paper if you would like to write more)*

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Have you, or anyone in your family, or anyone you care for, experienced a stroke?  
☐ Yes ☐ No

If you or someone close to you has experienced stroke and would like to complete a more detailed questionnaire on your experience of stroke services, please click here or visit: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/strokeservices](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/strokeservices)  
or contact us on 01274 237324 and we will post a questionnaire to you.

If you prefer to give your feedback over the phone you can phone Healthwatch, the independent health watchdog, who will listen to your experience and complete the questionnaire for you. Your personal details will remain confidential. Healthwatch can be contacted within office hours on 01535 665258.

Please tell us the first part of your postcode (e.g. BD1, BD19)

Please enter here: ___________________________   Prefer not to say ☐

I would like to receive a copy of the summary report by post (see page 3)

Name _______________________________________

Address _____________________________________

Email ________________________________________