

5 September 2011

‘Clotbusting’ stroke treatment is open all hours

‘Clot-busting’ drugs for stroke patients are now available around the clock at Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust.

The new 24/7 thrombolysis service was introduced at Worthing Hospital on 1st September. It is a significant improvement to the previous service which operated only during normal office hours at both Worthing and St Richard’s Hospital in Chichester.

The out-of-hours provision means faster treatment, closer to home, for patients across a large part of the coastal West Sussex region.

Agreement to extend thrombolysis into a 24-hour service at Worthing was reached between Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust, which runs Worthing, St Richard’s and Southlands hospitals, the NHS Sussex ‘cluster’ of primary care trusts, and the emerging clinical commissioning group – the Coastal West Sussex Federation.

There will now be specialist stroke consultant cover around the clock to ensure that people can be assessed at any time to establish whether they are suitable for the treatment, and whether they can receive it.

Thrombolysis is not appropriate for most people who have suffered a stroke but can be extremely effective for some patients, if it is given soon enough. One third of the people who receive the clot-busting drugs will recover fully, and another third will experience significantly less disability in the long term.

Dr Phillip Barnes, Medical Director at Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust, said: “The service we offer stroke patients has improved enormously in recent years and this is yet another major step forward.

Press Release

“Although thrombolysis is not appropriate for all stroke patients, making it available around-the-clock means that we can offer potentially life-saving treatment more quickly, without people needing to be taken long distances to get the care they need.

“For some patients suffering a stroke that will mean they get better, faster care which will mean fewer deaths and reduced disability. I am extremely pleased that we have reached agreement with our commissioners to extend this important service.”

The service will cost approximately £300,000 a year. The Trust admits about 1,500 people a year with a suspected stroke (not including TIAs, or ‘mini strokes’), and about 950 of these will receive a confirmed diagnosis. Roughly half of the suspected strokes happen ‘out of hours’.

It is expected that 15 percent of Trust stroke patients will receive thrombolysis after 1st September, compared to approximately 7.5 percent now.

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Media contacts:
Nick Brooks, Communications Manager
01243 831685