

Scottish Government submission of 17 October 2023

PE2048/A: Review the FAST stroke awareness campaign

Thank you for your request for a response to petition PE2048, calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to increase awareness of the symptoms of stroke by reviewing its promotion of the FAST (Face, Arm, Speech, Time) stroke campaign, and ensuring that awareness campaigns include all the symptoms of a potential stroke.

The Scottish Government is sorry to hear of the loss of Mr Bundy and extends its sincere sympathies to his family.

We published our refreshed Stroke Improvement Plan in June 2023, which sets out our vision for minimising preventable strokes and ensuring timely and equitable access to life-saving treatment.

The Plan recognises that timely access to care following a stroke is vital and that the rapid identification of symptoms of stroke is of crucial importance. That is why, in Priority two of the Stroke Improvement Plan, the Scottish Government has committed to establishing the current degree of public understanding of the symptoms of stroke, and whether certain at-risk groups require different messaging.

We will work with third sector organisations and wider stakeholders to consider the most effective way of raising public awareness of stroke symptoms, including the delivery of FAST campaigns. In addition to FAST campaigns, we will also consider how awareness of the less common symptoms of stroke can be increased.

The Scottish Government has also committed to supporting the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) in exploring the feasibility of using video call technology to diagnose hyperacute strokes more accurately. In addition, the SAS is also progressing the development of a quality improvement initiative for operational ambulance crews to receive clinical feedback regarding diagnostic accuracy and the application of FAST.

I hope this reply is helpful to the Committee.

Yours faithfully

Jenni Minto, MSP
Minister for Public Health and Women's Health