

31 January 2012

Praise for RUH's stroke care

Patient John Cridland has praised the Royal United Hospital's standard of care after returning back home just four days after suffering a severe stroke.

Mr Cridland was at his daughter Jo's home in Paulton when he began to feel unwell, and when she came back she recognised the signs of a stroke and immediately dialled 999 for an ambulance.

The 76-year-old was taken for a scan which confirmed he was suffering a stroke and he was given clot-busting drugs (thrombolysis) within half-an-hour of his arrival.

Just four days later Mr Cridland was discharged to his home in Highbridge, Burnham-on-Sea, after making an incredible full recovery.

Mr Cridland says: "While my daughter was out I was doing a couple of puzzles when I suddenly felt a bit funny. I didn't really know what was going on and felt very uncomfortable but thought it would pass.

"My daughter took one look at me when she got back and said it was a job for 999. A paramedic turned up very quickly and off I went to the RUH in an ambulance.

"I did not really know very much about what was going on. When I came around the next morning I looked at myself in the mirror and I felt over the moon, like I'd had a very lucky escape. The care I received at hospital was amazing and I couldn't believe how quickly I was going home."

Mr Cridland's daughter, Jo Whale, adds: "Everyone should make themselves aware of the signs and symptoms of stroke as you never know when it could happen to someone you know.

"The treatment my Dad received at the RUH was fantastic and we are amazed at the recovery he has made, which might not have been the case if we had not spotted there was something wrong with him."

The significant improvements the RUH has made in caring for patients who have suffered a stroke were recognised in the recent hospital guide by health analysts Dr Foster, which gave us the best results for patient outcome following a stroke in the entire country.

The RUH was one of only 11 hospitals cited in the Guide for having better than expected outcomes for stroke patients and, of these 11, only the RUH scored better than expected in three of the five measures against which hospitals are assessed.

Consultant Stroke Physician Dr Louise Shaw said Mr Cridland had suffered a severe stroke which left him unable to speak or move his right arm when he arrived at the hospital on 20 January.

She says: "The advances we have made in stroke care are great and we are providing excellent stroke care – but it is still essential that people know what the signs and symptoms are so that they can get to us as soon as possible.

“Many people are waiting too long before coming to hospital and I would urge everyone to make themselves aware of the FAST test for recognizing strokes. Mr Cridland went home quickly with no signs of any permanent damage because his daughter remembered the FAST test.

“Every second counts with strokes, and clot busting drugs can be very effective but they can only be given within four-and-a-half hours of symptoms.”

Notes to Editors

Dr Foster Guide

How the RUH performed, according to the Dr Foster Guide, against five measures of patient care for patients who have suffered a stroke:

- Mortality ratio – within expected
- Long length of stay – below expected
- Emergency readmission rate (28 days) – within expected
- Pneumonia due to swallowing difficulty – below expected
- Discharge home within 56 days – below expected

The FAST test

The FAST test is a simple assessment of three specific symptoms of stroke which anyone can carry out:

Facial weakness - can the person smile? Has their mouth or eye drooped?

Arm weakness - can the person raise both arms?

Speech problems - can the person speak clearly and understand what you say?

Time to call **999**