

PE2048/X: Review the FAST stroke awareness campaign

Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland written submission, 17 April 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence to the Committee on Wednesday 19 February 2025 on the above petition. I am happy to provide the following supplementary information, which I touched on during the session.

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland provides high quality, evidence based education and training for staff in patient facing roles, including on stroke awareness. Since the launch of our FAST campaign in October 2024, we have developed and launched an accompanying education package on stroke recognition and FAST awareness which is fully funded by the Scottish Government. We provide an online training session for patient facing staff in Emergency Departments, GP Practices, and Scottish Ambulance Service, across Scotland.

Our initial target was to reach 1000 attendees in 2025, and we are delighted to report that we reached this within the first four months. Between January and April 2025, we reached 1039 healthcare professionals over 9 sessions. Of these, 63% worked in primary care, 26% worked in the Scottish Ambulance Service, and 9% worked in an Emergency Department.

Our stroke education aims to:

- Increase healthcare professionals' knowledge and confidence of stroke symptoms, including the use of FAST
- Have an impact on practice of healthcare professionals
- Improve accuracy in stroke recognition

The training session includes:

- What FAST means – including Time, the importance of urgent action
- Why we use FAST as an acronym for stroke awareness, including the Royal College of Physicians assessment of FAST as the most effective screening tool
- The limitations of FAST, including in relation to posterior strokes
- Other symptoms of stroke, such as ataxia (balance issues) and visual field loss
- The importance of taking on board concerns of family and carers, including with FAST negative strokes.

Feedback from respondents so far has been positive. After attending our education session, 97% of evaluation form respondents were able to recall FAST signs, compared to 85% prior to the session. Furthermore, over 85% of respondents reported that our FAST Education had an impact on their practice. Evaluation forms have included numerous positive comments about the value of learning posterior or 'other' symptoms within the training session, demonstrating the need for a continuation of education on this topic.

The feedback provided demonstrates a clear appetite from healthcare practitioners for this training, increasing awareness of all kinds of stroke symptoms.

We are of course happy to provide more information to the Committee if there are more details you would like.