

Appendix A: Interview topic guides (staff and patient)

Interview topic guide (staff)

- Can you explain your role?
- How long have you worked on a stroke unit for? (Different ones? Is this different from other ones?)
- How does your role on the SU differ from your role in other settings?
- Can you describe a typical working day to me?
- How do you manage your time? Do you use a timetable and plan sessions in advance? Is it up to you how you manage your time or are there structures in place?

- Are you aware of the guidelines regarding therapy intensity for stroke patients? (And SSNAP)
- Can you tell me your understanding of them? (What are they? What do you think the rationale for them is? Evidence based?)
- Do you think your practice has changed at all because of the guidelines or SSNAP audit? (How – trying to do a better job / pressure from above / reputation of hospital...?)
- What do you think about the 45 minute guideline? (Do you think the guideline is good / appropriate? Why / why not?)

- The SSNAP audit asks you to say whether you think a patient was appropriate / applicable / required therapy. Can you describe how you decide whether or not therapy is applicable?

- If you had unlimited resources, how would you decide how much therapy each patient should receive?

- Do you think your SSNAP score reflects the quality of your service?

- The audit data shows a lot of variation in the proportion of patients considered applicable for therapy, and the intensity provided. What are your thoughts about that?

- If you could change the therapy guidelines (if you wanted to), what would you have instead of the current 45 minute recommendation?

- If you could wave a magic wand and set up stroke unit therapy in the way you thought was best for the patients, what would that look like? What do you think prevents that from being reality?

Interview topic guide (patients)

- Can you tell me a bit about what happened to you and why you are on the stroke unit?
- What did you know about strokes /rehab / therapy before this happened to you?
- Have you seen an OT / PT / SLT on the stroke unit?
- What sorts of things do they do?
- How much therapy have you been getting?
- Do you think that is the right amount? Or too much? Or too little? Please explain...

- Do you know when you are going to be having therapy (i.e. do you have a timetable?)?

- Do you think most people get the same, or have you noticed that some patients seem to get more than others? Have you got any thoughts about that? Do you think everyone should get the same?

- Are you aware that there are guidelines regarding therapy intensity for stroke patients? (And SSNAP) [If not, I will explain]
- Do you think the guideline and audit is good / appropriate? Why / why not?
- How does it compare with your experience?
- Did anyone ever ask you what you thought you needed, in terms of therapy?

- If resources were not an issue, how much therapy would you want? What would you like it to involve?

- If you could change the therapy guidelines, what would you have instead of the current 45 minute recommendation?

- If you could wave a magic wand and set up stroke unit therapy in the way you thought was best for the patients, what would that look like? What do you think prevents that from being reality?