

# Advanced Practitioner

Susan Fletcher – Advanced Clinical Practitioner in Stroke Services

## Susan Fletcher is an experienced Advanced Clinical Practitioner at Northern Care Alliance in Greater Manchester



Susan Fletcher is an experienced Occupational Therapist (OT), having qualified in 2006. She has worked in: inpatient medicine, community paediatrics and wheelchair services undertaking postural assessments. She also has extensive experience of working in Stroke Services at Salford Royal since 2010. Susan led the OT service through expansion of the comprehensive stroke centre.

Susan began her Advanced Clinical Practice (ACP) training in 2017 after it was highlighted that there was a gap in the stroke services workforce, and more stability and continuity was needed at Salford Royal. She seized the opportunity to begin her advanced practice training, she was attracted to the role as it advocated working across the **4 pillars of practice**, while allocating an 80/20 split so that non-clinical time was protected.

In her ACP role, she works alongside a range of health care professions such as physiotherapy, speech and language therapists, dieticians, OTs, and other ACP colleagues.

Susan is based on a 16-bed stroke rehabilitation unit, alongside the Stroke Consultant who undertakes bi-weekly ward rounds. She oversees the care of patients following a stroke with a junior medical colleague and leads on family case conferences and prioritisation of care across the unit.

Susan brings a holistic approach to her review of patients, utilising her growing medical knowledge of health with her core occupational performance lens of practice. She will often bring a different perspective to the ward rounds on the management of issues through physical therapy and goal setting with the wider MDT, such as post-stroke pain and complex discharge planning. Susan helps patients by facilitating limb activation, advice on orthotics, and supporting 24hour positioning regimes. This helps her to develop a more therapeutic relationship with patients, often resulting in better appreciation of their emotional mindset following a stroke.

Susan completed the Clinical Leadership and Research Health Council (CLARHC) internship in 2017, developing her research skills. This led to an in-house pathway redesign and improved screening processes at Northern Care Alliance.



Susan's background in OT combined with her increasing knowledge and expertise of the medical management of Stroke has been sought after since she commenced her trainee ACP role. She has offered both formal and informal supervision and training to members of the stroke therapy team on a regular basis which has encouraged both myself and other members of the team to strive to increase our understanding and knowledge base."

Senior OT Colleague

## North west

1. Lancashire and South Cumbria
2. Greater Manchester
3. Cheshire and Merseyside



Salford

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With an aging population ACP's are well placed to address 'with an aging population ACPs are well suited to address their complex needs through comprehensive assessments, which help to facilitate safe and timely discharge plans”

Susan has also been at the forefront of managing a project to improve Atrial Fibrillation detection within the stroke pathway for local residents and attended an Improvement Science workshop, known as HAELO, to develop her change management skills.

The wider multidisciplinary team (MDT) often liaise with Susan as an ACP as a first point of contact, due to her accountability in patient care, hence they trust her advice and input. New clinical fellows often remark on how helpful Susan and other ACPs are in inducting them to the service, the teamworking ethos and their knowledge of **evidence-based stroke care**.

She believes that ACPs provide continuity, stability and therefore **make the patient journey more efficient**. As a result of this, she suggests that ACPs become experts in their field of practice, to deliver up to date, evidence-based practice.



### JOB ROLES FOR CLINICAL PILLAR

- Manage caseload and undertake assessment and treatment plans (all systems; spasticity / tone, cognition / perceptual issues)
- Complete Specialty referrals.
- Review acutely unwell patients.
- Lead on family meetings and complex discharges.

CLINICAL



### JOB ROLES FOR LEADERSHIP PILLAR

- Coordinate the medical team daily.
- Act as source of expertise on complex cognitive/perceptual issues and discharge planning.
- Lead on innovation and service improvement.

LEADERSHIP



### JOB ROLES FOR EDUCATION PILLAR

- Contribute to therapy and medical in-service training.
- Provide Education of staff through role modelling on a day-to-day basis.

EDUCATION



### JOB ROLES FOR RESEARCH PILLAR

- Involved in quality improvement (QI) work supporting stroke consultant with a specialist interest in improving AF detection across the stroke pathway.
- Attend journal clubs with wider medical team.

RESEARCH

## Susan works across the four pillars of Advanced Practice