

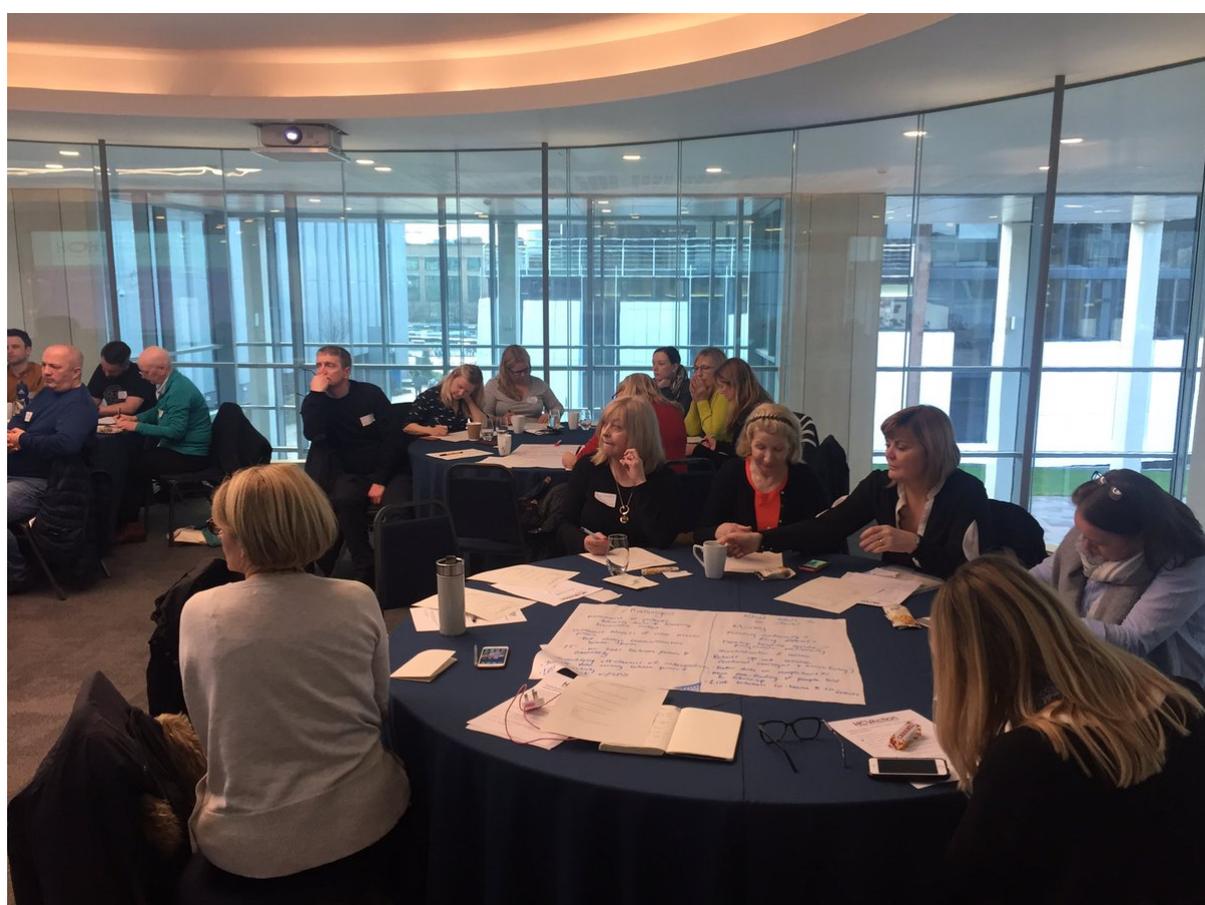
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# HCVAction

Bringing you the latest hepatitis C news and events

December 2018

## HCV Action hosts hepatitis C in Scottish prisons roadshow



The final [HCV Action](#) roadshow of 2018 took place in Glasgow in early December, focusing on hepatitis C in Scottish prisons. With an estimated 19% of people in Scottish prisons living with the virus, prisons are a key setting for hepatitis C testing and treatment.

The Scottish Government's Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Framework for 2015-2020 included a commitment to the introduction of opt-out testing for blood borne viruses (BBVs), including hepatitis C. However, in practice implementation of opt-out testing for hepatitis C in prisons is highly varied due to an array of

barriers. Similarly, significant challenges remain to ensuring all those who are diagnosed with hepatitis C in prison complete a full course of treatment to get successfully cured of the virus.

In this context, the roadshow aimed to showcase and share good practice in tackling hepatitis C in prisons, as well as identify specific issues and potential solutions to improve prevention, testing, and treatment. The event was attended by around 40 people, including prison healthcare staff, public health professionals, third sector staff working with prisons or BBVs, and patients.

A summary report from the roadshow is available [here](#), and presentation slides can be accessed [here](#).

## London Joint Working Group hosts conference on moving towards hepatitis C elimination in London



[The London Joint Working Group on Substance Use and Hepatitis C](#) held its annual conference at the beginning of December, focusing on the prospect of achieving hepatitis C elimination in London by 2025.

The conference brought together over 200 healthcare professionals and others working around hepatitis C for a series of presentations and workshops. Presentations focused on the changing landscape and future of hepatitis C

treatment, hepatitis C as a health inequalities issue and the cost-effectiveness of case-finding interventions. Workshop discussions focused on the barriers and solutions to tackling hepatitis C in drug services, pharmacies and prisons, as well as how best to reach those who are not in touch with services.

A news story providing a round-up of the event can be accessed [here](#). All of the presentation and workshop slides from the event, along with a summary report, featuring key themes of the conference and main points from the workshop, are available on the London Joint Working Group website [here](#). Videos of the presentations and three short awareness films about the impact of hepatitis C can also be viewed [here](#).

## Hepatitis C Coalition hosts hepatitis C in prisons roundtable meeting



This month the [Hepatitis C Coalition](#) hosted a roundtable discussion on hepatitis C in English prisons, looking at the progress that has been made and challenges still to address.

Speakers at the event included Kate Davies, Director of Health and Justice at [NHS England Health & Justice](#), Mark Gillyon-Powell, National Lead for Public Health (Secure and Detained) at [NHS England](#), and Eamonn O'Moore, Director for Health & Justice at [Public Health England](#).

Among the areas covered during a discussion on current challenges for testing and treating prisoners were how best to implement opt-out testing, the challenge of initiating short-stay inmates onto treatment, and the importance of ensuring appropriate support is in place for patients upon release, including by forging links with probation services.

During the second part of the meeting, potential solutions and best practice examples were highlighted, including building on the [NAT's 'Tackling Blood Borne Viruses'](#) report (available in the [HCV Action](#) resource library [here](#)). Measures taken towards tackling hepatitis C in prisons in London were highlighted as a case study, with Emily Thomas, Governor of [HMP & YOI Isis](#) also providing her perspective on increasing testing and treatment rates in prisons.

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## **News & Reports**

\* [The Hepatitis C Trust](#) is advertising vacancies for two peer support positions, with positions available for a Peer Support Lead in Leicestershire & Northamptonshire and a Scottish Peer Support Officer in Forth Valley. Applications for both roles close on Friday 11th January, with full details available [here](#).

\* The [World Hepatitis Alliance](#) has released its World Hepatitis Day 2018 Global Summary Report, providing a comprehensive summary of international activity for World Hepatitis Day 2018. 144 countries, 93 governments and 53 WHO Country Offices took part across the six regions. Over 1,600 events were organised, 318,914 people attended events in their local community or country, and millions were reached online. The report is available in the [HCV Action](#) resource library [here](#).

\* Results of the 'HepFREE' trial were this month published in [The Lancet Gastroenterology and Hepatology](#). The study aimed to determine whether incentivising and supporting primary care physicians in areas with a high density of migrants increases the numbers of adult migrants screened for viral hepatitis. The project found higher hepatitis C prevalence rates among migrants, albeit lower than currently estimated. Incentivising GP testing was found to be cost-effective and found patients who engaged with treatment, although community treatment was not found to be cost-effective for this cohort. The full study paper can be accessed [here](#).

\* Researchers from the [Wellcome Sanger Institute](#) in Cambridge and the [University of Glasgow](#) have found three new strains of hepatitis C in patients in Uganda. The study screened the blood of 7,751 people from the general population in Uganda and found hepatitis C in 20 of these patients. They then sequenced the genomes of these samples, finding three previously unknown strains. They also found that many of the strains carry mutations in genes known to be associated with resistance to some commonly used antiviral drugs. The results of the study,

published in the [Hepatology](#) journal, are available [here](#) and a summary of the findings was published in The Telegraph [here](#).

\* Sir Brian Langstaff, the Chair of the [Infected Blood Inquiry](#), this month wrote to the heads of health services in the UK for a second time reminding them of the need to help people to access their medical records quickly and easily, following reports from people participating in the Inquiry that they have experienced delays when requesting their medical records. The letters can be read on the [Infected Blood Inquiry](#) website [here](#). The [Infected Blood Inquiry](#) team have also announced that they will be visiting locations across the UK in January-March 2019 to hold meetings for those infected/affected and who want to learn more about the Inquiry. The full schedule can be accessed [here](#).

\* A short documentary on the infected blood scandal was released by [Huffington Post](#) this month, featuring testimony about the impact on those who were infected with hepatitis C and HIV, and on their loved ones. The film can be viewed [here](#).

\* A new US study has found that treatment for hepatitis C is correlated with a significantly lower risk for cardiovascular disease, regardless of whether that treatment was with direct acting antivirals (DAAs) or pegylated interferon. The full study paper can be accessed in the [Gastroenterology](#) journal [here](#), with a summary news report [here](#).

\* The [Public Health England](#) Hepatitis C Virus Resistance Group this month released a report, 'Antiviral resistance testing in the management of hepatitis C virus infection', with the intention of supporting clinicians treating people with hepatitis C where the issue of resistance may be a factor in clinical decision-making. The report can be accessed in the [HCV Action](#) resource library [here](#).

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## Share your good practice...

If you would like your service to be featured as a good practice case study on the HCV Action website, have any news to share with colleagues, or would be interested in being an [HCV Action Ambassador](#), please send an email to [hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk](mailto:hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk).



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