

March 2015

*HCV Action brings together hepatitis C health professionals from across the patient pathway with the pharmaceutical industry and patient representatives to share expertise and good practice.*

### News & articles...

\* [The Hepatitis C Trust](#) have joined with 56 other members of the [Specialised Healthcare Alliance](#) to write to each party leader ahead of the General Election, requesting them to commit to maintaining national funding and care standards for [NHS](#) specialised services. Each of the parties has committed to maintaining national commissioning of specialised services, but the letter expresses concern that *“otherwise desirable collaboration with local commissioners could in future jeopardise consistent national standards of care across the country.”*

\* [The London Joint Working Group on Substance Use and Hepatitis C](#) have this month released two booklets, produced in conjunction with [Addaction](#) and the [London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine](#), for people at risk of and living with hepatitis C. The first booklet, ‘Understanding hepatitis C and staying safe’, can be viewed [here](#). The second, titled ‘Living with hepatitis C and treatment options’, can be viewed [here](#).

\* New research has been published exploring the strategies required to provide hepatitis B & C screening and treatment to at-risk immigrant groups in the UK. The report, ‘Informing the design of a national screening and treatment programme for chronic viral hepatitis in primary care’, which can be viewed [here](#), looks at the ways in which the knowledge, beliefs and attitudes of at-risk immigrant communities in relation to the viruses can inform the design of strategies to provide

## Penrose Inquiry report published with key testing recommendation



The [Penrose Inquiry](#) report into hepatitis C and HIV acquired infection from NHS treatment in Scotland was published on 25<sup>th</sup> March, almost seven years since the inquiry was established by the Scottish Government.

The report estimated that 2,978 people were infected with hepatitis C in Scotland via infected blood, concluding that more should have been done to screen blood for hepatitis C in the early 1990s, and that the collection of blood from prisoners should have stopped sooner than it did.

In response to the report, both the Scottish and UK Governments offered formal apologies to those affected. The Scottish Government also [accepted](#) the report’s recommendation that it take all reasonable steps to offer hepatitis C tests to every person who had a blood transfusion before 1991 and who has not already been tested for hepatitis C.

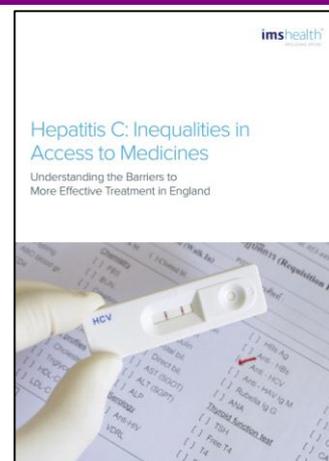
[Charles Gore](#), Chief Executive of [The Hepatitis C Trust](#), [said](#) of the report: *“We are happy with the recommendation to introduce screening for all people who received blood transfusions pre-1991. We urge the UK Government, and all of the devolved governments, to now re-double efforts to find, diagnose and treat all of those people with hepatitis C across the UK.”*

## New report highlights concerns over inequalities in access to hepatitis C treatment

A new report from [IMS Health](#), entitled [‘Hepatitis C: Inequalities in Access to Medicines: Understanding the Barriers to More Effective Treatment in England’](#), has concluded that inequalities in access to hepatitis C treatments in England are becoming more pronounced.

The report, which analysed the hepatitis C treatment journeys of 7161 people, found that treatment rates are falling among the most deprived patient groups, and that fewer than 1 in 5 people are receiving treatment within 12 months of being diagnosed.

Among the report’s key messages is a recommendation for *“more intensified action at a local level to overcome the barriers to effective diagnosis and treatment”*, as well as for new service delivery models to be developed which



screening and treatment to these groups.

\* **Bristol-Myers Squibb** have released a short report entitled 'Maintaining the drive for innovation in hepatitis C treatment and services in Scotland', based on the discussions held at a recent parliamentary roundtable event. The report, which can be read [here](#), contains a number of recommendations made by attendees at the event, including that services be designed to ensure that care is delivered in the most appropriate settings for patients; that GPs should be incentivised to deliver hepatitis C tests; that opt-out BBV testing should be introduced in Scottish prisons, and that a commitment should be made to eliminating hepatitis C within 15 years.

\* Five people tested positive for hepatitis C in Nottinghamshire this month after the largest NHS patient recall in history. The recall was prompted by an investigation into the poor hygienic standards employed by a dentist based at the Daybrook Dental Practice in Nottinghamshire. 4,526 people were tested for hepatitis C as part of the recall, with a spokesperson from Public Health England saying that a small number of positive results would be expected when testing such a large number of people. More on the story can be read [here](#).

\* After the success of the **HCV Action** and Public Health England hepatitis C good practice roadshow in Liverpool on the 6<sup>th</sup> March, preparations are underway for the staging of the next roadshow. Details on where and when the roadshow will be staged will be announced very shortly. Keep up to date with the latest news by following us on Twitter @HCVAction.

#### Share your good practice...

Please share your good practice by filling in the quick online form [here](#).

We want to keep HCV Action's membership updated on news and events from across the country.

**If you have any news you would like to share with colleagues or would like to publicise an event** please email details to [hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk](mailto:hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk).

focus on addressing existing shortfalls and on ensuring that services are made more easily accessible to those who need them.

## Department of Health publishes tools to help local authorities tackle hepatitis C & TB

Following on from last month's ministerial summit on hepatitis C and TB, led by **Jane Ellison MP**, the Department of Health has published a range of follow-up documents, which can be viewed [here](#) and are intended to help local authorities effectively tackle the two conditions.



The tools include examples of hepatitis C good practice. Services highlighted include the **Addaction** Cornwall hepatitis C treatment project, which involves a nurse-led roaming treatment service and which has previously been featured as an **HCV Action** good practice example (which can be read [here](#)). Other examples included the Stoke on Trent Viral Hepatitis Community Service and **Addaction's** workforce development programme (an **HCV Action** good practice film on the this can be viewed [here](#).)

*HCV Action is co-funded by Abbvie, BI, BMS, Gilead, Janssen, MSD and Roche.  
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