

HCVAction

Bringing you the latest hepatitis C news and events

March 2023

Survey – Innovation and Optimisation in UK Hepatitis C Services

Tell us about your innovative approaches to hepatitis C service delivery in our short survey

Across the UK, people are developing a range of new approaches to prevent, diagnose and test for hepatitis C and HCV Action would like to hear about them!

Through [a new survey](#), co-designed with The Hepatitis C Trust, HCV Action is hoping to capture the national picture and support recognition and dissemination of innovative and interesting practice. The survey should take 5-10 minutes to complete.

Respondents are being encouraged to define innovative or interesting practice or optimisation in their own way – the survey is looking for everything outside of the standard models of care. Examples of this might be:

- Taking a new approach to testing or treatment (e.g. contact tracing or 'bring a friend' testing models)
- Finding new ways to prevent hepatitis C (e.g. secondary needle exchange)
- Offering testing in a new way (e.g. self-sampling, peer-to-peer testing, point of care testing)
- Optimising an existing service or initiative, or making it available to new groups (e.g. doing a 'HITT' event in a drug service or hostel, or bringing in improvements to an established service)

Any case studies or specific examples will be checked with people submitting before being published anywhere. You can [complete the survey here](#).

Next HCV Action webinar to be held on micro-elimination



The next HCV Action webinar will take place in April on the theme of [hepatitis C 'micro-elimination'](#), taking an in-depth look at examples of services and areas that have managed to achieve the micro-elimination criteria. The webinar will start at **2pm on April 18th 2023**.

Micro-elimination is the process of rapidly tackling hepatitis C in a well-defined population, such as in a local geographic area or within a single prison facility. This will be a chance to hear from services that have successfully achieved micro-elimination, outlining specific and practical steps towards achieving it and measures that have then been adopted to ensure elimination status is maintained.

The event will be useful for anyone directly or indirectly involved in trying to achieve micro-elimination and/or planning for the maintenance phase of hepatitis C elimination. Anyone with an interest is encouraged to join the event. It will feature the following presentations:

- Micro-elimination in prisons - Sean Cox (Director of Prison Services, [The Hepatitis C Trust](#)) and Georgia Threadgold (Senior Project Manager, Hepatitis C Elimination, [NHS England](#))
- Micro-elimination in drug services - Tracey Kemp (National Hepatitis C Strategy Lead, [Change Grow Live](#))
- Micro-elimination in Tayside - John Dillon (Professor of Hepatology & Gastroenterology, [Dundee University](#))

To join the webinar, [please register for this event here](#) and you will be sent a link to join closer to the time.

UKHSA publishes Shooting Up report on injection drug harms



The [UK Health Security Agency](#) (UKHSA) has published the latest '[Shooting Up](#)' report, which provides an overview of infections and injecting-related harms among people who inject drugs (PWID) in the UK.

The update includes data to the end of 2021 and notes that 14% of people who inject drugs were infected with hepatitis C. While this represented an

overall decrease, new infections and reinfections remain a problem

This also means that hepatitis C remains the most common blood-borne virus (BBV) infection among PWID in the UK. Injecting drug use continues to be the most important risk factor for hepatitis C infection, and prevalence is higher among PWID who have also experienced homelessness or imprisonment.

Regarding injecting risk behaviours, the report suggested that 34% of people who inject drugs said they did not have enough needles and syringes for their injecting needs, 15% of participants reported greater difficulties accessing equipment when compared to 2019, and 40% reported sharing injecting equipment.

The report includes a number of 'focus topics', including one into the role of peer-led engagement and support in hepatitis C testing and linkage to care (noting the work of [The Hepatitis C Trust](#)) and another on work underway in Hackney by the [London Joint Working Group on Substance Use and Hepatitis C \(LJWG\)](#) and peers from The Hepatitis C Trust to scope the feasibility of a "peer-based" harm reduction hub.

News and reports

* On March 22nd, an NHS England conference celebrated progress so far in the national programme to eliminate hepatitis C and acknowledged the "last mile" ahead. We learned that Professor Ashley Brown will be succeeding Professor Graham Foster as the new National Clinical Lead for the elimination programme. NHS England also provided an update on aims for a strategic procurement deal underpinning the programme, as the current arrangement is due to expire in April 2024 - they hope to agree a way forward in the first quarter of 2023/24. [NHS England produced a video](#) with National Medical Director Professor Sir Stephen Powis about the programme and community-level working with charities like [The Hepatitis C Trust](#) and [St Mungo's](#).

* Harm reduction magazine [Filter](#) covered recent recommendations from the [International Network on Health and Hepatitis in Substance Users \(INHSU\)](#) and [Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination \(CGHE\)](#) workshop on [how to address hepatitis C in prisons around the world](#).

* HCV Action Steering Group member Dr Stephen Willott and Rachel Halford of [The Hepatitis C Trust](#) were quoted in a [Lancet Gastroenterology and Hepatology](#) article on progress towards hepatitis C elimination in the UK, in which both highlight the importance of HCV prevention.

* A new blog from [LJWG](#) policy lead Dee Cunniffe for Hep C U Later [explored the need for a peer-based harm reduction hub in London](#).

* [NHS England](#) has reported that, building on the work of NHS England's Hepatitis C Elimination Programme, [vans providing liver scans in high-risk communities](#) have identified 830 people with cirrhosis or advanced fibrosis, a leading cause of liver cancer.

* [In the US, PBS NewsHour explored the country's plans for hepatitis C](#)

[elimination](#), including rapid diagnostic testing, expanding access to proven treatment for patients, and boosting public health strategies to catch, cure and prevent illness.

* The [government of New Zealand has published a national plan on hepatitis C and blood-borne viruses](#), discussing the country's need to tackle undiagnosed hepatitis C infections and the role of monitoring, surveillance and linkage to care and treatment in elimination.

* HCV Action has joined LinkedIn! Follow our [new LinkedIn page](#) for the latest information about our work and to connect with other members of the hepatitis C professional community.

Share 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.



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The Hepatitis C Trust provides secretariat support to HCV Action.*

Please encourage colleagues to join HCV Action for free hepatitis C related updates and tools by emailing their full contact details to hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk.

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