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# HCVAction

Bringing you the latest hepatitis C news and events

November 2018

## HCV Action hosting 'Tackling Hepatitis C in Scottish prisons' event



[HCV Action](#) will conclude its 2018 roadshow programme with a special event focused on tackling hepatitis C in Scottish prisons. The roadshow will take place in Glasgow on Thursday 6th December 2018, and will focus on showcasing and sharing good practice in the prevention, testing, diagnosis and treatment of hepatitis C in prisons. The event aims to identify specific issues and potential solutions for tackling hepatitis C within Scottish prisons.

The event will be chaired by Rachel Halford, Chief Executive of [The Hepatitis C Trust](#), and will feature talks on developing guidance to support opt-out BBV testing,

the peer support model in prisons and healthcare links between prisons and the community in Glasgow. Examples of good practice will also be highlighted, with presentations on hepatitis C testing and treatment in Lothian prisons and opt-out testing and the BBV service in HMP Barlinnie. Following a patient perspective talk, the programme will conclude with a group discussion.

The full programme, including timings and speakers, is available on the [event registration website here](#), where you can also book your place to attend. Tickets are free and are allocated on a first-come-first-served basis.

## **PHE and NHS England launch hepatitis C patient re-engagement exercise**



[Public Health England](#) (PHE) and [NHS England](#) have this month launched a patient re-engagement exercise, which will see patients diagnosed in the past but never treated contacted and offered access to direct acting antiviral (DAA) treatments.

As part of the exercise, PHE has identified over 55,000 patients to be contacted by Operational Delivery Networks (ODNs), the [NHS England](#) clinical bodies in charge of hepatitis C treatment in England. Many of the patients who will be contacted were diagnosed before the arrival of DAA treatments, which have high cure rates and very few side-effects, and may not be aware that new treatments are available. Further details about the exercise can be found in PHE's news story [here](#).

Alongside the launch of the patient re-engagement exercise, PHE has also released a new report, '*Hepatitis C treatment monitoring in England*', which contains data and findings from the hepatitis C patient registry and treatment outcome system. Data from the registry shows that 24,592 people received DAA treatments in England between April 2015 and April 2018, curing 95% of patients who received them.

The vast majority of treatment continues to take place within secondary care, with just 13% of treatments undertaken in drug services, prisons or other outreach settings. Most referrals for treatment came from primary care (44%), with just 16% coming directly from drug services or prisons. The full report can be accessed in the HCV Action resource library [here](#).

## HCV Action hosts lively #HCVchat on Twitter

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# HCVAction

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This month saw [HCV Action](#)'s latest #HCVchat, with John Fox, Peer Support Lead for West Yorkshire at [The Hepatitis C Trust](#), taking over the [HCV Action](#) Twitter account to answer questions and host a discussion on the peer support model in hepatitis C care.

A lively discussion took place, with a range of organisations and individuals contributing. Amongst the topics covered during the chat were:

- Why peer-to-peer support is a particularly effective way of helping people to engage with treatment.
- How to engage peer volunteers and the contribution volunteering can make to building skills.
- How best to tackle stigma around hepatitis C and other BBVs.
- Overcoming barriers to developing peer support services.

You can catch up on the Twitter chat [here](#) (tweets will appear in reverse chronological order) and follow and tweet HCV Action [here](#). Thanks to all who took part in November's #HCVchat. More will take place in 2019 and will be announced via [HCV Action](#)'s e-updates and Twitter account.

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## **News & Reports**

\* The November edition of the [Health Europa Quarterly](#) journal features an article from [The Hepatitis C Trust](#)'s Chief Executive Rachel Halford outlining some of the steps needed for hepatitis C to be eliminated by 2030 at the latest. The steps identified include a national hepatitis C awareness campaign, better provision of harm reduction services, the introduction of opt-out testing in drug services and greater availability of treatment in a range of services. The article can be read [here](#).

\* The [Collective Voice](#) blog this month featured a piece by Dee Cunniffe, Policy Lead for the [London Joint Working Group on Substance Use and Hepatitis C](#), on her personal passion for the cause of eliminating hepatitis C and the work LJWG is doing to eliminate hepatitis C in London,

including their pilot project providing testing in pharmacies. The blog can be read [here](#).

\* An international pilot project to assess the impact of outreach hepatitis C testing and treatment in pharmacies was announced this month. The project will cover 40 pharmacies in Scotland, Wales and Australia and aims to determine whether a 'Test and Treat' outreach model in pharmacies will result in higher treatment and cure rates, and whether the model will be more cost-effective than the conventional pathway. Read more about the project [here](#).

\* [The Hepatitis C Trust](#) is currently recruiting for Prison Peer Educator roles across England. Five roles are available in Greater London & Thames Valley, Yorkshire, and Manchester & Merseyside. Key duties of the roles include delivering workshops and training sessions to service users and staff. Full details on the roles and how to apply can be found [here](#).

\* A new analysis of international data published in [The Lancet Infectious Diseases](#) found that people who inject drugs (PWID) recently released from prison have a substantially increased risk of infection with hepatitis C or HIV. Recent incarceration was associated with a 62% increase in risk of hepatitis C infection across the countries analysed, which included the UK. The full article can be read [here](#), with a summary news story available [here](#).

\* The Lancet Commission on Liver Disease this month published its latest annual report. The report highlighted the extraordinary opportunity offered by the new direct acting antiviral treatments to achieve the elimination of hepatitis C, but noted that there is a pressing need to identify patients living with an undiagnosed infection. The full report can be accessed [here](#). Also in November, [The Lancet HIV](#) published an editorial on the prospect of eliminating hepatitis C in HIV patients, which can be read [here](#).

\* The House of Commons [Health and Social Care Select Committee](#) this month released a report on 'Prison Health', following an inquiry conducted in the first half of 2018. The report notes that hepatitis C is more prevalent amongst people in prison compared to the general population, making it a significant prison health issue, and highlights the opportunity for prisons to address serious health inequalities. The full report can be read [here](#).

\* The [Scottish Parliament Health and Sport Committee](#) published its report on 'Preventative Action and Public Health' in early November. The report notes that the introduction of screening for hepatitis C for pregnant women and opt-out BBV testing in prisons are currently being considered in Scotland. The Committee's report also calls on the Scottish Government to provide its assessment of the potential to eliminate hepatitis C in Scotland and says it would "welcome any plans from the Scottish Government to introduce an elimination plan". The full report can be read 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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The Hepatitis C Trust provides secretariat support to HCV Action.*

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