

[View this email in your browser](#)

# HCVAction

Bringing you the latest hepatitis C news and events

September 2023

---

## Recording and slides available from HCV Action ODN Stakeholder Event



The annual [HCV Action](#) ODN Stakeholder Event took place on 12th September, featuring a day of presentations and discussions among the hepatitis C professional community.

Participants discussed a wide range of topics throughout the day, including eliminating HCV in health and justice settings, bridging the gap to communities who are underserved by health services, and the progress so far in conducting opt-out BBV testing in emergency departments. Across the talks a key theme was the need to keep up momentum as we approach the final two years before the elimination target in England, and how to transition towards a maintenance phase of elimination.

Live polling was conducted throughout the day to measure levels of optimism and awareness around the elimination agenda, and it was encouraging to see

an increase at the end of the day in people saying that they have a better understanding of progress towards elimination. At the start of the day, 43% of participants said they understood the future of the elimination agenda, and 52% said they understood how close England currently is to elimination. At the end of the day, this rose to 94% and 84% of participants respectively.

HCV Action has published recordings of each session that took place throughout the day – available on the [YouTube page](#). The slides used by presenters have been uploaded to the HCV Action website [here](#). Thank you to everyone who took part, either in person or remotely via livestream.

---

## Plans approved for first UK safe drug consumption facility

# Plans for UK's first facility for safer consumption of illegal drugs approved in Glasgow

The proposals were given the go ahead by the Glasgow City Integration Joint Board on Wednesday. The plans are subject to the receipt of Scottish government funding. But the Home Office argues there is "no safe way" for anyone to take illegal drugs.

Glasgow has [approved](#) plans to establish the first safer drug consumption facility (SDCF) - also known as Overdose Prevention Centres - in the UK. The facility is the first of its kind in the country and will run as a pilot study where people can take drugs under supervision, aiming to reduce harm and mortality among people who inject drugs.

The decision was made by Glasgow's [Integration Joint Board](#) which spans the NHS and the [City Council](#), and will draw on funding from the [Scottish Government](#). The facility will be open from summer 2024 and is scheduled to remain open for three years initially. The project has been able to go ahead following a decision by Scotland's leading law officer that existing drug laws will not be enforced at the site (rather than requiring a change in the law, which would have to be implemented by the UK Government). The UK Government has expressed opposition to the plans but has stated that it will not attempt to intervene in the pilot.

The [Hep Mag](#) has [written up](#) findings from [The Lancet](#) on the relationship between HCV testing at safer drug consumption facilities and the rates of treatment uptake, with the research involving sites operating in Canada. The findings of the study suggest that when rapid on-site testing for HCV is made

available at safer drug consumption facilities, there is a greater uptake of treatment by people who inject drugs, and a higher chance of those people being linked to care.

---

## Home Affairs Committee recommends wide-ranging drug policy reform



### House of Commons Home Affairs Committee

---

## Drugs

---

### Third Report of Session 2022–23

The [Home Affairs Select Committee](#) in the UK Parliament has [published a report](#) following its [inquiry](#) into UK drug use policies, which examined the effectiveness of existing legislation and regulation.

The Committee concluded that existing drug laws are outdated and in need of reform and advocated greater use of public health-based drug interventions. The Committee called for a new legislative and funding framework that enables practical risk-reducing interventions (including a pilot drug consumption facility - since approved, as outlined above) and a shift towards a greater emphasis on harm reduction measures, with improved cross-working between police, health and social services.

Citing [The Hepatitis C Trust](#)'s submission to the inquiry, the Committee also noted the vital role played by peers with lived experience.

Chair of the Committee Dame Diana Johnson MP [commented](#): “Drugs continue to cause significant harm to individuals and society. The governmental response must be able to deal with the complex harms drugs can cause and whilst the drug strategy is moving in the right direction, it requires much more meaningful action to tackle the broad range of drug-related problems.”

---

## News and reports

\* To mark World Patient Safety Day 2023, [NHS England](#) has [published a blog post](#) by Mark Gillyon-Powell (Head of Programme – HCV Elimination) and Rachel Halford (Chief Executive of [The Hepatitis C Trust](#)) on the importance of the peer model for case-finding and supporting HCV elimination.

\* [BMS Infectious Diseases](#) has [published a paper](#) reviewing the different approaches to international hepatitis C awareness-raising media campaigns and how effective they have been, to better conduct these campaigns in the future. The barriers to successful campaigns that were identified include a lack of targeted messaging, stigmatising or accusatory messaging, and short-lived or intermittent campaign strategies.

\* The American [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) has published its [Viral Hepatitis Surveillance Report for 2021](#), outlining hepatitis incidence rates in the US in 2021. It also published its [2023 National Viral Hepatitis Progress Report](#). It found that during 2020-2021, acute hepatitis C cases increased by 7% from 2020 to 2021.

\* The [JAMA Network](#) has [published a study](#) from the Emory University School of Medicine, finding that alcohol use and alcohol dependency do not negatively affect cure rates of HCV through direct acting antiviral therapy.

\* [Mayo Clinic](#) has [published a paper](#) on different methods of screening people born after 1965 for hepatitis C. It concludes that passive ‘universal’ screening in routine health settings is insufficient for elimination efforts, and suggests proactive outreach is required.

\* [Health Promotion Practice](#) has [published a collection of papers](#) titled ‘Innovations in HIV/HCV Care’, outlining innovative approaches to providing treatment to co-infected people. The papers have been grouped thematically, including: supporting patients; supporting providers; and changing systems.

\* [Contagion Live](#) has [written up](#) a long-term study [published](#) in the [Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute](#) (MDPI) on the effect of direct-acting antiviral treatment following a liver transplant. It found that the treatment is associated with a long-term improvement in liver function and patient survival rates after a transplant.

---

## 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](mailto:hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk).

---



---

*HCV Action is co-funded by AbbVie, Gilead, and MSD.  
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](mailto:hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk).

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

---

This email was sent to [<<Email Address>>](mailto:)  
[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)  
HCV Action · 27 Crosby Row · London, SE1 3YD · United Kingdom

