

Wirral DAAT Hep C Strategy

August 2008

The National Treatment Agency's (NTA) aspirational target is for each DAAT partnership to achieve 100% of their previous/current injecting drug user (IDU) population to have been tested for Hepatitis C. Many DAATs across the country have struggled to achieve this target and Wirral DAAT's performance at the end of 2007/08 is at 20%.

At this time, Wirral DAAT has commissioned a Specialist Hep C Nurse Post for several years. This post was tasked to work with a local Consultant in Gastroenterology to develop the Hepatitis C Treatment Pathway, providing the link between the Harm Reduction Team at Cheshire Wirral Partnership (CWP) Drug Service and Wirral University Teaching Hospital (WUTH). Once developed the Harm Reduction Nurse Team would refer any IDUs who had been screened to the Specialist Hep C Nurse Post who would then facilitate the individual's treatment journey. This pathway proved to be very effective, with 77% of treatment completers clearing the virus in the three subsequent years up.

With an effective treatment pathway in place, it seemed that the blockage related to a lack of people taking up the offer of screening. There was also some issues with data quality and reporting across the relevant service providers. Hence, Wirral DAAT established a Hep C Task/Finish Group to focus on improving performance and data quality.

October 2008

The Hep C Task/Finish Group commence with the development of the local Hep C strategy and the associated action plan.

January 2009

Blackpool DAAT is seen to be performing well against the NTA's Hep C performance indicator. Wirral DAAT adopted their integration of Hep C/B and HIV screening under an 'opt out' arrangement. BBV Screening Referral and Consent Form devised and work undertaken to establish mechanism for updating NDTMS data once tests have taken place. Service providers revise their paperwork to include prompts at care plan review to re-raise the offer of BBV screening.

February 2009

National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS) Workshops held with local service providers to address compliance issues with local data reporting.

NTA commissioned 'Harm Reduction Works' marketing materials ordered and circulated amongst all local providers.

Wirral DAAT meet with Wirral Health Informatics Service (WHIS) to develop Hep C Film to be aired on the community-based LIFE Channel. Funding to make the film was approved but airtime on NHS Wirral contract was not permissible based on other conflicting NHS Wirral priorities. Project put on hold for the interim.

March 2009

Hep C Training commissioned from HIT Training Provider to address training needs of local workforce.

May 2009

Wirral DAAT hosts the first Hep C Awareness Raising Event in the LIFE Centre, Bromborough to promote Hep C screening and treatment. Speakers include:

- Dr Riyaz Faizallah, local Consultant in Gastroenterology, Wirral University Teaching Hospital.
- Mark Harris, Deputy Regional Manager, NTA North West
- Sharon Matthews, DAAT-commissioned Specialist Hep C Nurse
- Steven Gavin, DAAT Project Manager for Quality and Clinical Governance.

Afternoon workshop sessions showed service users wanting accurate, up-to-date information about Hep C and practical advice and support mechanisms.

June 2009

Hep C Treatment Pathway agreed and documented. Work commenced to develop a format suitable for publication to Map of Medicine.

September 2009 to May 2010

Lead professionals within each local treatment or support service to act as Hep C Champions. Specific Hep C Training Programme developed for Hep C Champions about the local context, the Hep C virus, genotype, routes of transmission and the treatment pathway, etc. Hep C Champions to act as 'experts' and support for their colleagues.

January 2010

Wirral DAAT worked with Wirral CVS to adapt the current 1-2-1 Mentoring Service to include specialism for supporting Hep C positive individuals. People passing through treatment or who had lived with Hep C were actively living with Hep C were encouraged to undertake Mentoring Training. Although the service now includes a high proportion of mentors with personal experience of Hep C, it remains vastly underutilized with poor take from service users.

March 2010

The Hep C Task/Finish Group worked to review progress to date and update the local action plan. This was then used to inform the refresh of NHS Wirral Health Protection Strategy.

September 2010

The Hep C Task/Finish Group start to work on a preparatory course to support local service users who are thinking about Hep C screening or treatment. It is intended that this will provide a forum for service users to talk with people in a similar situation to access further information and support whilst working through some of the emotional/practical issues

January to March 2011

Local Service User Support Group 'C The Difference' re-invigorated and regular meetings held at CWP Drug Service. Promotional materials designed and printed and distributed to services, GP surgeries, dentists, pharmacists. Limited take up by local service users initially before the re-development of the St Catherine's Hospital, CWP Drug Service site leads to the group having to move the meeting venue. The group enjoyed some short-lived time being accommodated by other services but has since fell away and re-establishing a local service user support group must be made a priority.

March 2011

CWP Drug Service initiates a Dried Bloodspot (DBS) Testing pilot which is scheduled to run to September 2011. This was perhaps influenced by a similar DBS pilot carried out by NHS Fife, Scotland.

July 2011

Wirral DAAT hosts an awareness-raising event at Birkenhead Rugby Club to coincide with World Hepatitis Day on 28th July. The event was attended by 150 to 200 healthcare professionals, service users and carers. Speakers included:

- Dr Alistair Miller: Hep C Lead and Consultant Physician at the Tropical Infectious Disease Unit (colleague of Nick Beeching)
- Siobhan Fahey: Greater Manchester PCT's Hepatitis C Strategy Programme Manager.
- Danny Morris: Drug Training and Consultancy.

In addition to promoting Hep C screening and treatment, the event sought to target a wider promotion of health. These elements included:

- DBS Testing.
- Smoking Cessation.
- Healthy Eating
- Alternative Therapies
- NHS Wirral Communities Fitness Programme – Bootcamp, Tai Chi sessions

We were fortunate that in addition to the illustrious speakers, we have representation from British Liver Trust, Hep C Trust, Terence Higgins Trust, Sahir House (local HIV charitable organisation) and Exchange Supplies amongst many others.

Throughout the week of this Hep C Event, Gary Hemphill from the Hep C Trust conducted a total of 7 Peer Education Sessions across all of our services which received really excellent feedback. This has prompted an invitation for Gary to return to Wirral in December 2011.

September 2011

CWP Drug Service provided Wirral DAAT with an interim evaluation of the DBS Pilot. Over a 6 month period, 180 tests were conducted which also included tests for Hepatitis B and HIV. This resulted in 32 positives for Hep C, 1 positive for Hep B and none for HIV.

September/October 2011

Wirral DAAT and CWP Drug Service are talking to the Hep C Trust to discuss ideas about recruiting local Peer Educators. This is the first collaborative venture of this type for the Hep C Trust as they seek to expand their Peer Educator network. CWP have identified a possible 4 candidates for this role from their Recovery Champions. It is felt that the Hep C Trust would provide the training while CWP Drug Service would manage the Peer Educators locally. Further discussions are to take place about quality assuring the quality of delivery.

October 2011

Application made to the NHS Wirral Public Health Innovation Fund to extend the 6 month pilot programme to 12 months to enable further evaluation to be made. This application was approved and contingency plans made for continuation funding thereafter, subject to a positive evaluation.

November 2011

The DAAT Hep C Task/Finish Group is due to meet for the first time since July's Hep C Event. Part of the agenda will involve a de-brief re learning, a discussion about refreshing the local service user support group and also discuss next steps re a new 2/3 year local Hep C Strategy.

The first Expert Patient Programme (EPP) will be run specifically for people who are Hep C positive and are contemplating treatment

December 2011

December will mark the 4th annual Wirral Recovery Convention (500 to 600 delegates anticipated). This has grown from humble beginnings and it has been agreed with the planners that the promotion of Hep C screening and treatment will be given a very high profile. Gary Hemphill from the Hep C Trust will speak alongside myself as the first speakers after introductions have been made. Both Gary and Emma will represent the Hep C Trust in the marketplace and DBS will be available throughout the day.

We have arranged for Gary to deliver further Peer Education Sessions in both Wirral and Liverpool throughout the week of the Recovery Convention.

Next Steps

Wirral partnership performance currently lies at 50% of all IDUs having been tested for Hep C. Longstanding data reporting issues (currently in the process of being addressed) suggest that this likely to be higher, hence I expect a significant increase in the coming year.

Specific projects to be developed:

- Refresh of the local Hep C strategy.
- Development of the Hep C Peer Educators Programme in Wirral.
- Re-invigorate the local Hep C Service User Group.
- Full implementation of the DBS Testing Programme.
- Development of the Expert Patient Programme to be utilized for those individuals thinking about Hep C screening and/or treatment.

Whilst Wirral continue to move towards the aspirational target of all previous/current IDUs having been tested, perhaps the greatest challenge is translating Hep C positive tests into Hep C treatment commencements. Development of the local support mechanisms to assist this process will be fundamental. However, above and beyond the groups targeted under the current National Drugs Strategy, consideration needs to be given to the needs of the Performance & Image Enhancing Drug User and Powder Cocaine User cohorts.