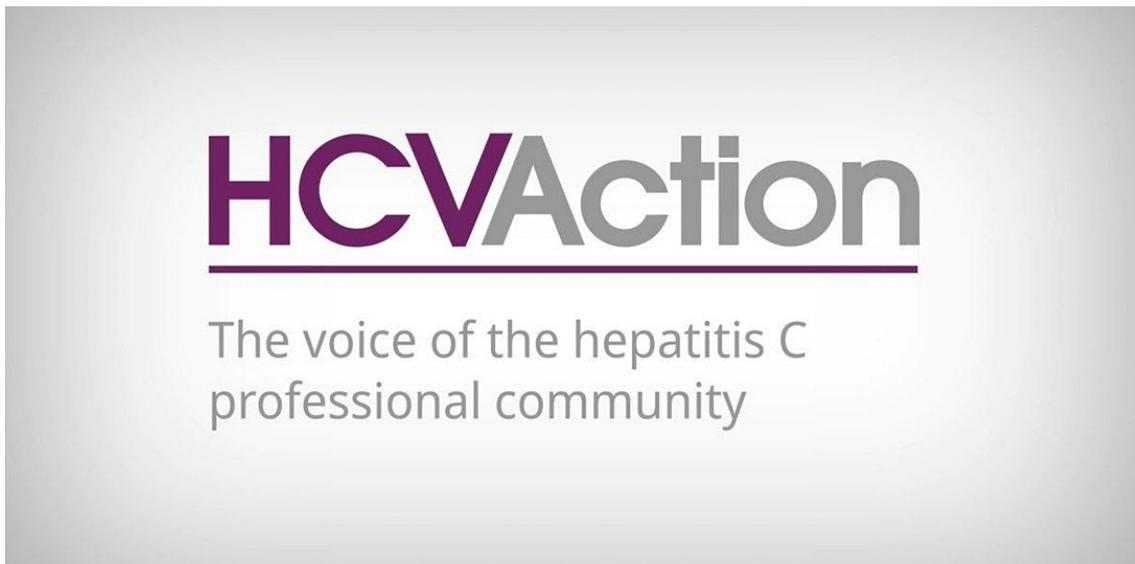


HCVAction

Bringing you the latest hepatitis C news and events

June 2020

HCV Action virtual ODN stakeholder event to be held in October



HCV Action will be holding its [National ODN Stakeholder Event](#) online on October 6th, in partnership with [BASL](#).

Last year 120 Operational Delivery Network (ODN) representatives attended the national event which took place in Warwick.

This year, we are splitting the event, with a half-day webinar effectively replacing the morning of presentations we had last year taking place on October 6th from 13:30 – 17:00.

More interactive workshop sessions will take place across the rest of the week. These will focus on specific issues for hepatitis C services and we will release details of these events shortly. Further information on these events will be available soon.

For the half-day event, organisations which are not ODNs are very welcome to attend but are asked to limit their attendance to 10 individuals.

You can read a provisional agenda and register for the half-day event [here](#). You can read a summary report of last year's event [here](#). Please

email hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk if you have any questions.

On 4th August between 14:30 - 15:30, HCV Action will be holding a webinar on hepatitis C services in Scotland during and beyond the Covid-19 pandemic. The webinar will feature presentations and a Q&A with:

- Professor John Dillon - Clinical Lead for Blood Borne Viruses, [NHS Tayside](#)
- Rachel Halford - CEO, [The Hepatitis C Trust](#)
- Leon Wylie - Lead Officer, [Hepatitis Scotland](#)
- Petra Wright - Scottish Officer, [The Hepatitis C Trust](#)

You can register for the webinar on Scotland [here](#).

World Hepatitis Day: NHS Tayside says it has 'effectively eliminated' hepatitis C



World Hepatitis Day saw NHS Tayside announce that it had 'effectively eliminated' hepatitis C.

Elimination in Tayside is the outcome of a project, developed in collaboration with the University of Dundee, which focuses on treating people who are actively injecting drugs without waiting until they go on to recovery programmes or stop using.

The health board has diagnosed 1,970 people and treated over 1,800 - more than 90% of the estimated prevalence of the virus.

Treatment and testing was offered in nurse-led community clinics, as well as in more than 60 community pharmacies, prisons and drug treatment services across Tayside.

Consultant Hepatologist and Gastroenterologist Professor John Dillon said, “The programme started with a single project in a Dundee needle exchange before expanding to multiple research projects and redesign of services to achieve the milestone we have now reached, which justifies the brave decision to support this approach.”

The achievement was covered by [BBC Scotland](#) and [Drink and Drugs News](#). You can find a more detailed description of the project [here](#).

Other announcements, events and news from World Hepatitis Day included:

- Political leaders, including Mayor of London Sadiq Khan, Scottish Public Health Minister Joe FitzPatrick and Welsh First Minister Mark Drakeford, issued statements of support for hepatitis C elimination which you can read [here](#).
- Rachel Halford, CEO of [The Hepatitis C Trust](#) wrote for [Drink and Drugs News](#) and [LocalGov](#) about hepatitis C elimination and the work done during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Hepatitis Scotland](#) and Scottish health boards have launched a new awareness campaign [#BeHepCFree](#).
- Alcohol and drug service providers committed to supporting hepatitis C elimination with a [joint statement](#) saying they will emerge from the coronavirus pandemic "stronger to tackle hepatitis C".
 - [Humankind announced](#) a new national action plan to tackle hepatitis C.
 - Drink and Drugs News [reported](#) on the work of [We Are With You](#) in tackling hepatitis C in Lanarkshire.
 - Tracey Kemp, [Change Grow Live's](#) National Hepatitis C Coordinator wrote a [blog](#) reflecting on the impact of coronavirus on the organisation's hepatitis C strategy.

The impact of lockdown on hepatitis C services in England: July update

The impact of lockdown: Hepatitis C care in July

This month [HCV Action](#) has worked alongside [Public Health England](#) to update the hepatitis C service overview sent out in our [May](#) e-update. The survey was sent out to [The Hepatitis C Trust's](#) peers, who cover 20 of the 22 ODN areas, and describes the activities that peers have reported is occurring in their ODN regarding outreach, testing, treatment, follow-up, and harm reduction initiatives. Next month, we hope to share analysis of The Hepatitis C Trust's data from their peer programme to offer an overview of how testing and treatment for hepatitis C changed during lockdown and services' progress towards pre-coronavirus levels of engagement.

Testing and outreach

The latest update finds that outreach testing is now occurring in all areas in which The Hepatitis C Trust has peers, up from 82% of areas in May. Most of this outreach work is happening in homeless hostels or temporary accommodation for rough sleepers (in 95% of areas), with the next most-mentioned setting being drug services (30%). Pop-up testing events were also highlighted (15%).

Treatment and outcomes

All areas bar one began people on treatment in July (up from 77% in May), most of whom (58%) gave patients the full course of treatment, rather than incrementally. The majority of areas (60%) reported changes to the way treatments were being delivered, including medication being delivered by peers (35%), nurses (20%), and post/courier service (20%). Some fantastic local initiatives were reported, such as in Coventry, where patients were offered a choice about where to collect their medication: the hospital, local substance misuse service, nominated pharmacy, or peer delivery. 85% of areas stated they were measuring treatment outcomes by SVR12.

Harm reduction

All areas bar one reported delivering harm reduction activities in the past month, mostly in the form of providing information about harm reduction behaviours and preventing reinfection. Several areas reported signposting people to Naloxone, with a few areas reporting direct provision of Naloxone kits by the peer worker.

Harm reduction: Fall in NSP coverage during lockdown and webinar looking at role of prevention in elimination



World Hepatitis Day
28 July 2020

Using prevention and harm reduction to
ensure we hit Scotland's hepatitis C
elimination target

24th July 2020



Hepatitis
SCOTLAND



There has been a marked decrease in coverage of needle and syringe programmes (NSP) during the COVID-19 lockdown. According to research published in the [International Journal of Drug Policy](#), lockdown restrictions resulted in the number of NSP (needle and syringe programme) clients decreasing by 36%, visits to services by 36%, and needles distributed by 29%.

It notes that this likely indicates an increase in the reuse of equipment which could lead to an increase in blood-borne virus infections.

The article suggests that other approaches "such as home delivery, provision by post, peer supported distribution, and vending machines need to be considered to improve equipment availability." Read the full article [here](#).

[NHS SMPA](#) published an example of good practice from the Isle of Wight where services have been taking orders for needle and syringe packs via telephone and a van has been used to deliver these, harm reduction advice and clinical interventions where needed. You can read more about this [here](#).

The [Scottish Drugs Forum](#) and [Hepatitis Scotland](#) recently held a webinar on using harm reduction and prevention to make sure we reach Scotland's hepatitis C elimination target. The webinar featured discussion and information useful for audiences across the UK including for people who are familiar with harm reduction and prevention, or people who usually work in other areas.

The webinar, chaired by Leon Wylie from [Hepatitis Scotland](#), featured presentations from:

- Dr Jenny Scott; Senior Lecturer in Pharmacy Practice, University of Bath and Pharmacist Prescriber, [Turning Point](#)
- Dr Magdalena Harris; Associate Professor, [London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine](#)
- Dave Liddell; CEO, [Scottish Drugs Forum](#)

You can watch a recording of the webinar [here](#).

News and reports

* Tracey Kemp, [Change Grow Live's](#) National Hepatitis C Coordinator, wrote this month that lockdown and the temporary pause in hepatitis C testing has been an opportunity to reflect and explore new ways of working, with the organisation's new blood-borne virus pathway close to launching. Read more in Tracey's blog [here](#).

* Ignatius Harling, Hepatitis C Peer Educator at [We Are With You](#), wrote about his role for World Hepatitis Day. He says that: "It has a wider impact on people that goes beyond a simple test in the fight to eliminate this virus. It is a psychological step to opening up — a footstep on the road of self-care, a toe back in the water to test whether the medical world will accept them now. It's the invisible benefit of doing this kind of work and it's hugely motivating." Read his full blog post [here](#).

* A period of investment to achieve hepatitis C elimination could generate a net economic benefit of \$22.7 billion globally by 2030, according to an article published in [The Lancet Gastroenterology & Hepatology](#). Elimination would also lead to considerable reductions in transmission and mortality. You can read the full article [here](#).

* A policy paper in the [The Lancet Gastroenterology and Hepatology](#) outlines a global investment framework outlining national and international activities that will enable reductions in hepatitis C incidence and mortality and identifies potential sources of funding and tools to help countries build the economic case for investing in national elimination activities. Read the full article [here](#).

* Researchers at the [University of Bristol](#) published a video outlining the lessons learnt from the HepCATT (Hepatitis C Assessment Through to Treatment) Randomised Controlled Trial which involved working with primary care. Watch the video [here](#). One of the researchers, Dr Clare Thomas, wrote about the study and HCV elimination for World Hepatitis Day. You can read the blog [here](#).

* The percentage of the 75,000 people in Australia who inject drugs with an active HCV infection fell from 44% in October 2015 to 17% in October 2019, according to an article in the [International Journal of Drug Policy](#). The authors call the progress made "remarkable". Read the full article [here](#).

* Research published in the [International Journal of Drug Policy](#) showed that bundled opt-out HIV/HCV testing substantially increased the percentage of SSP (syringe service programme) clients who received HIV and HCV rapid tests at enrollment into a programme based in Florida in the United States. Read the full article [here](#).

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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