

HEP C U Later

August 2023

Quarterly Newsletter

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In this edition

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Please let us know your thoughts, comments and suggestions for further newsletters.

- Hep C U Later programme across drug treatment services is an initiative of the NHS Addictions Provider Alliance (NHS APA) and a joint working initiative with Gilead Sciences.
- The NHS APA is a collective of NHS addictions service providers who working collaboratively with service users, carers and other organisations and are committed to contributing positively to the on-going development of the addictions field including within drug and alcohol, gambling and gaming treatment.
- The Hep C U Later Engagement Programme (aimed at providing awareness, training and resources to professionals) is an additional Hep C U Later initiative provided by Inclusion, Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (as part of the NHSAPA collaboration).



Friday 28th July 2023

It's not too late to make a plan for World Hepatitis Day.

There are so many ways to be involved – whether big or small – and we've outlined some of them below.

Awareness

Raising awareness of hepatitis C is a simple but very effective way of supporting hepatitis C elimination...from sharing simple facts amongst colleagues, to making sure everyone knows where to access more information.

We've developed a Hepatitis C Factsheet [HCUL-Factsheet-v3.pdf](#) which can be shared within organisations or in meetings.

These key websites are a useful resource for all healthcare professionals:

- 1. Hep C U Later – for resources and more information: [Home - HEP C U later](#)***
- 2. The Hepatitis C Trust – for resources and support: [Home - Hepatitis C Trust \(hepctrust.org.uk\)](#)***
- 3. The British Liver Trust – for information and booklets on liver disease: [British Liver Trust - Pioneering Liver Health](#)***

Education

Completing education modules online is a great way of staying up to date. INHSU offer a great set of online modules here: [Hepatitis C in Primary Care and Drug and Alcohol Settings \(inhsu.org\)](#)

Or if you are a member of the NHS Addictions Provider Alliance get in touch to arrange a bespoke hepatitis C training package at your service: tony.mullaney@mpft.nhs.uk

Testing and treatment

If you want to encourage people to get tested outside of drug and alcohol services why not direct them to the national hepatitis C testing portal? Anyone in England can order a free at home finger-prick test – they can order a test through our website: [Get tested - HEP C U later](#)

Testing events are a great way to offer testing to lots of people. If you are a member of the NHS Addictions Provider Alliance please speak to your Hep C U Later coordinator to see how they can support you.

Want to know how to engage people into testing? Explore our Engaging People in Testing Document [Top-Tips-For-Engaging-People-In-Testing-V4.pdf](#)

There are many ways that the health needs of individuals can be addressed alongside their need for testing or treatment. A great example of this is linking in with other healthcare providers to provide health and wellbeing events. Here's an example of good practice from Inclusion Thurrock's drug and alcohol service [HepCULater_Good-Example_Document.pdf](#)

Data

Looking through data is an effective way of potentially finding people who may have been at risk of hepatitis C in the past.

If you work in drug and alcohol services there are many things you can do to look at NDTMS data and improve the data quality within your services. If you would like to speak to the Hep C U Later team about what data related interventions might benefit your services then reach out to us at hepc.ulater@mpft.nhs.uk

Social Media

Why not show your support with our Hep C U Later [selfie frame](#) and tag #HepCULater?

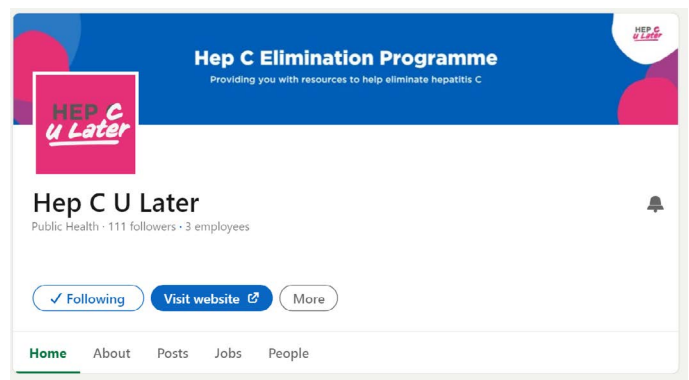
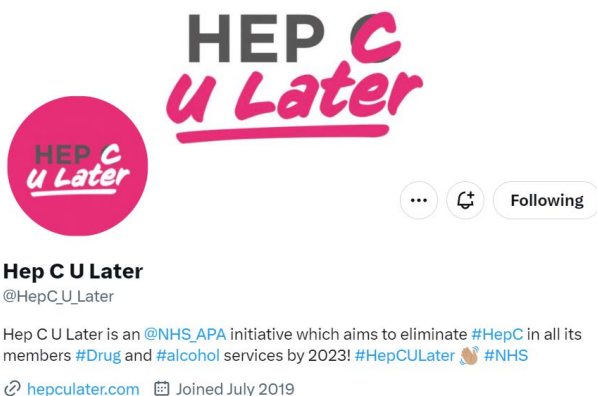
Follow us on social media:

[Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

Tell us what you're doing for World Hepatitis Day - let us know and we can shout about the positive steps you are taking to ensure England eliminates hepatitis C by 2025!



Read our latest Impact Report

We have now published our most recent impact report: [***April 2022 – March 2023***](#)

This year's impact report shows the progress of testing and treatment over a three year period. Testing has increased year on year, and the number of those treated continues to increase, leading to a positive impact on people who access drug and alcohol services.

We are incredibly proud of our partnerships and the commitment of every organisation and individual which has led to the successes we have seen in the last year.

Micro-elimination announcements

HepCULater are pleased to announce that since our last newsletter more services have achieved micro-elimination.

The following services have now achieved micro-eliminated with the National Hepatitis C Drug Treatment Service Provider Forum Criteria:

- Inclusion Thurrock
- Inclusion Gosport
- Inclusion Fareham
- Nottingham Clean Slate
- CNWL Hounslow
- Merseycare Brook Place
- Inclusion Telford STARS

It is an incredible achievement to reach the milestone of micro-elimination, with lots of work that goes on in the background to ensure that those most at risk have been tested and treated.

Engagement Programme Resources

Hep C U Later have been commissioned by NHSE to provide an additional programme of work focused on providing awareness, training, resources and engagement with professionals across Primary Care, Emergency Departments, and Antenatal Services.

We have a number of resources which have been created for professionals on our website:

- TV Screen Graphics for Primary Care (with a link to the web testing portal):
[***HCUL EP TV Screens***](#)
- Hepatitis C Poster for primary care (with a link to the web testing portal):
[***HCUL-GP-Poster-v4.pdf***](#)
- Hepatitis C Factsheet:
[***HCUL-Factsheet-v3.pdf***](#)
- We are now on LinkedIn: Follow the Hep C U Later [***LinkedIn page***](#)
- You can find our case studies and resources as we add them here:
[***Resources - HEP C U later***](#)

We are currently working on more resources (wallet sized cards for pharmacies, leaflets, explainers) and a CPD accredited training workbook.

Want to stay in touch with the engagement programme?

If you want to stay up to date with resources, information and future training for this programme of work you can sign up to our mailing list [Sign up here](#)

If you want to discuss the programme contact us at: Connect.HepCULater@mpft.nhs.uk

Hep C U Later Resources for Drug and Alcohol Services

Our resources can be accessed on our website: [Resources - HEP C U later](#)

Do you have a TV screen in your drug and alcohol service? Hep C U Later have developed a TV screen graphic for you to use: [HCUL D&A TV Screens](#)

Could you have hepatitis C?
Hepatitis C is spread by blood-to-blood contact with someone who has the hepatitis C virus.

Have you....

- Shared equipment when using drugs?
- Had a blood transfusion before Sep' 1991 or a blood product before 1986?
- Had dental or medical treatment abroad in unsterile conditions?
- Not been tested after a needle stick injury?
- Had a piercing, tattoo, electrolysis, semi-permanent make up or acupuncture using equipment not sterilised?
- Had unprotected sex (with possibility of blood-to-blood contact) with someone who may have had hepatitis C

Hepatitis C can lead to liver disease, can be cured with simple

To find out more information on risks of getting hepatitis C virus, or to order a free, at home test kit visit:

www.HepCULater.com

Speak to your key worker about a hep C test today.

INHSU Hepatitis C Point of Care Testing Forum and The Global Hepatitis Summit – Paris, 2023

Back in April Louise, one of our coordinators, was privileged to be invited to the INHSU hepatitis C point of care testing forum program ahead of the Global Hepatitis Summit.

She joined speakers from around the world to give an overview of point of care testing innovations, examine the global testing guidance, and to highlight the investment case for hepatitis C diagnostic testing. Good practice examples were shared from around the world, with lively and informative discussions.

Louise was invited to present on Community and Stakeholder Engagement and she shared experiences of Hep C U Later Cepheid machines from across the NHS Addictions Provide Alliance (on loan via an MSD elimination partnership with Cepheid). Louise shared the data and learning from across our network and the forum were impressed by the mobilisation and how the NHSAPA have utilised the machines.



On the second day, the forum broke into small group discussion points, highlighting some of the challenges of implementing testing programmes and coming with innovative solutions.

Louise thoroughly enjoyed being involved and would highly recommend our readers check out the 11th International Conference on Health and Hepatitis in Substance Users (INHSU) based in Geneva, Switzerland from

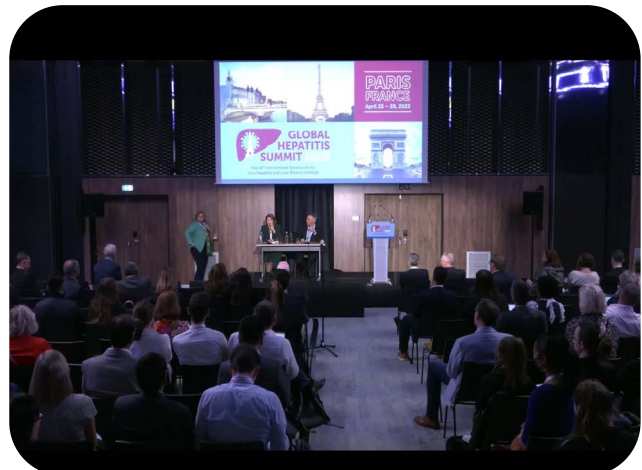
the 17th to the 20th October 2023 which can be attended virtually [***INHSU 2023***](#)

Global Hepatitis Summit

Our coordinator Louise also attended the Global Hepatitis Summit 2023.

The program was jam packed with excellent speakers and industry symposiums. There were 3 streams to the conference: Clinical Science, Basic Science and Public Health. The take home messages were how privileged we are in the UK to have the resources we do, and how close we are to elimination compared to other countries.

However we cannot rest on our laurels



and there is more to do with emerging viruses such as hepatitis D and increased hepatitis B infections. There were lots of discussions around finding people who have undiagnosed hepatitis C, and reducing disparities in testing and treatment. There was new research presented around treatment outcomes, clinically challenges in treating different groups of people, and the long term outcomes of people who have successfully completed hepatitis C treatment. We look forward to the publications being available at which point we will disseminate across the network.

Needs Assessment Year 2 – Louise's Top Tips

The NHSE Needs Assessment Project (year 2) starts in September 2023 and continues until the end of March 2024.

The aim is to retest all participants from year 1. However, if tests were rejected by the laboratory for labelling errors, or they were insufficient samples or aspiration errors then these people do not need to be retested. So, in essence participants from year 1 need to have at least one hepatitis C test result in the first year; either an antibody or an RNA in order for us to follow them up.

Below are some of Louise Hansford's top tips for the Needs Assessment Project Part 2:

- Make sure you have a robust plan and prepare your retesting lists as soon as possible to allow your drug services time to go through it.
- Secure a bar code scanner to avoid admin errors.
- Ask participants how we can deliver results if we cannot contact them directly by phone.
- Plan for additional people wanting to be tested when word gets out there is testing and a £10 voucher.
- Allow a break in between testing days to catch up with the admin.
- Consider scheduling the testing in the first 3 months to allow a 'mop-up' testing session in the New Year, considering people will take annual leave.
- Watch out for any post strikes!
- Please reach out to Hep C U Later if you would like to access the Capillary Blood Testing (CBT) demonstration video or have any over training requirements and we will endeavour to support your requests.
- Contact us if you would like us to introduce you with a variety of ODN's who undertook year 1 in different ways who are happy to share their learning.



Good luck to everyone taking part!

London Joint Working Group Conference

On the 9th June 2023, the Hep C U Later team attended the London Joint Working Group [LJWG, Home - London Joint Working Group \(ljwg.org.uk\)](http://ljwg.org.uk) Conference with the theme being the final push for hepatitis C elimination in London. The conference was hosted by Dr Emily Finch of the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust.

The day was split into four sessions:

- Where are we now: the journey so far and what we need to do to achieve elimination
- Embedding testing and treatment into systems to maintain elimination
- Preventing new infections: rebuilding harm reduction services
- Inclusion health: learning from successes in approaches to hepatitis C to reduce health inequalities

Where are we now: the journey so far and what we need to do to achieve elimination

The first session was an inspirational presentation from Muhammed Goolamelee discussing his experiences of treatment and how he is now helping others.

We heard from the Hep C Trust peers who are working in prisons and about the accomplishments of HMP Brixton and HMP Wormwood Scrubs in achieving micro-elimination, the challenges of bringing harm reduction messages to people using image and performance enhancing drugs (IPED), as well as other challenges that working in a custodial environment presents.

Rachel Halford and Charles Gore conversed on the inception of The Hepatitis C Trust and gave the conference the following staggering statistics - since 2019:

- Over 100,000 people have attended peer workshops
- Over 36,000 staff have attended workshops
- Over 60,000 community tests have been undertaken
- Just under 12,000 people who are hepatitis C positive have been found
- Over 9,000 people have has hepatitis C treatment

Professor David Nutt spoke of the beginnings of the LJWG and how through collaborative working, services are able to share information and practice across all stakeholders.

One of the thought provoking Q&A questions was around how we export the UK learnings to the rest of the world.

Embedding testing and treatment into systems to maintain elimination:

Session 2 focused on the importance of data, and engaging with it to help maintain elimination. Nicole Klynman, Director of Public Health at Bexley Council, presented on what local authorities are doing and their awareness of the hepatitis C elimination programme.

Professor Ashley Brown and Ian Jackson discussed influencing policy, as well as ensuring the treatment registry is updated to record end of treatment SVR tests. The conference was told that the NHS hepatitis C testing portal was now live:

[Get tested - HEP C U later](#)

We then heard from Diana Divajea who presented on data sharing. The stand out points in her presentation highlighted the importance of data sharing, ensuring that all partners are engaged, as well as having an understanding and compliance with data sharing laws.

Our very own Deanne Burch presented with Matt Milner from Gilead Sciences on achieving micro-elimination in drug services, and the audience heard that across the drug treatment sector since 2019 in England:

- Over 150,000 hepatitis C tests have been completed
- Over 7,400 people have started treatment
- 1 in 10 are Hepatitis C are positive

Matt Milner spoke of the importance of engaging people in treatment and Hep C U Later told the attendees that testing has doubled year on year across the NHS Addictions Provider Alliance (NHSAPA) and that there are 5 sites within the NHSAPA that have successfully micro-eliminated so far, one of which is CNWL Hounslow.

We heard that collaboration was key, and also highlighted in Deanne Burch's presentation, and a theme running through the day, was how we need to improve sustainability; harm reduction messages and needle exchange provision across the drug treatment sector.

Dr Beatrice Emmanouil took the conference through data focusing on an overview of London, showing a less than 5% prevalence in some areas, however, there are areas up and down the country where it is higher. The main messages were to keep testing and treating, and that we can collectively produce a lasting legacy of sustainability.

Aneesha Noonan chaired an informative look at the role of GP champions. There are 62.3 million people in primary care, with GPs well positioned to assist in the elimination of hepatitis C as experts in holistic care and collaborative working. The conference discussed engaging with all GPs and attending their protected training time to provide education around hepatitis C, and inform them of the simple referral process to Operational Delivery Networks (ODNs) to help alleviate the pressure on GPs. The conference heard from Dr Kate Robson with regards their processes in Bristol and the innovative approach to prescribing within services, the over labelling of medications, and maximising all contact points to get the most for people who access the services.

Preventing new infections: rebuilding harm reduction services

Stuart Smith of The Hepatitis C Trust spoke of their recent surveying of pharmacies looking at needle and syringe provision (NSP). The accompanying visual map provided the conference with an interactive overview of any gaps in provision across London and highlighted that although there is great work being undertaken on eliminating hepatitis C, if there isn't the NSP provision in place, we will find a gradual increase in infections/re-infections.

Holly Mitchell from UKHSA provided an insight into the lack of joined up reporting of needle exchange usage and how this hinders our ability to effectively evidence the adequate provision of needles and syringes. Many people in the audience agreed the World Health Organisation (WHO) target of 300 needles per person per year was too low for efficient needle and syringe provision. However there was agreement that there needed to be further stakeholder engagement, mapping, and a minimum dataset for all services to accurately report on the number of needles and syringes dispensed.

Simon Young and Dee Cunniffe discussed peer needle exchange, its inception and the development of this in Hackney [*New report: peer-based needle exchange service in London - London Joint Working Group \(ljwg.org.uk\)*](#)

Inclusion health: learning from successes in approaches to hepatitis C to reduce health inequalities

The final session of the day looked at how to reduce health inequalities, including people who may use alcohol, may have cirrhotic livers, or those who may be affected by homelessness. The conference was urged to not just look at one issue but work holistically.

The next session looked at the e-bike clinic, which has its own battery supply and wifi cloud that is bringing treatment to people. The bike provides a holistic approach to healthcare as well as having the ability to get where vans cannot.

Archie Christian again highlighted the themes of the day, stressing the importance of a holistic approach to health as well as joined up working.

Chris White from The Hepatitis C Trust spoke of the importance of pushing back on budget cuts, how communication is key, and everyone should be involved in planning and decision making.

West Midlands Public Health Awards

On a sunny Saturday evening on the 20th May, the Hep C U Later team were getting their glad rags and masquerade masks on, ready for the West Midlands Public Health Ball. The team were excited to be at the awards, with our own Elimination Co-ordinator Laura Hughes nominated, but also to support our partner services SIAS in Solihull, Recovery Near You in Wolverhampton and Inclusion in Telford.

The guest speaker was Professor Patrick Saunders who welcomed public health colleagues and a multitude of high quality and innovative nominations were announced.

Unfortunately, we didn't come away with any awards, however, what we did come away with, was a renewed commitment to micro-eliminating hepatitis C in our partner services, with innovative and fresh ways to drive this forward!

To find out more about Hep C U Later please visit us at www.hepculater.com and follow us on social media  @HepC_U_Later  Hep C U Later

For general enquiries, please email us at HepC.ULater@mpft.nhs.uk

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