

Novel approach to re-engage people into hepatitis C care

HEP C U Later

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Background:

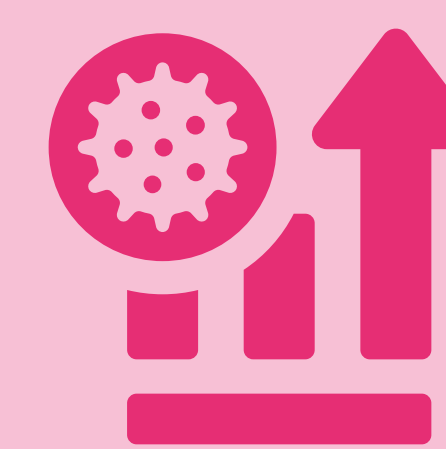
Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust (AWP) and Bristol Drugs Project (BDP) are part of Bristol ROADS (Recovery Orientated Alcohol and Drugs Service) drug treatment system. Both organisations collaborate with Hep C U Later (HCUL).



UKHSA data showed high levels of RNA+ in Bristol, but low levels of treatment uptake.



In 2017, out of 114 people currently or recently injecting drugs (<2years), although 49% were approved for treatment, only 46% (26 people) actually started treatment.



High levels of new infections continued, with 36 new diagnoses in Jan-May 2020.

As of 31st December 2021, BDP had **245 people who were RNA+** and further analysis of data showed over **185 had been diagnosed >5 years previously**. An innovative way was needed to address this.

Methodology:



In 2022, funding was secured, which was match-funded by University Hospitals Bristol, to employ a Hep C Assertive Engagement Worker to work alongside the AWP BBV Specialist Nurse and lead on a multi-agency approach to re-engage the 245 RNA+.

A multidisciplinary project board was established.



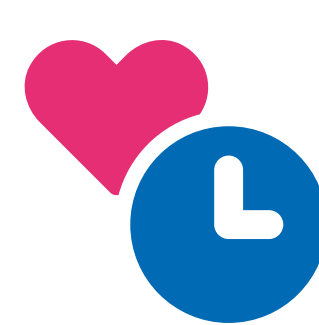
Care records were searched and people stratified into lists depending on needs, including:

- priority people with cirrhosis
- those dispensed treatment and lost to follow-up
- outstanding SVRs

Hep C Assertive Engagement Worker



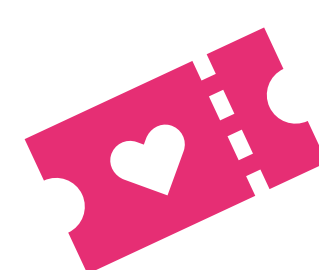
Offering intensive **support** to re-engage people



Allowing people **time** to discuss their needs



Utilising **mobile phones** and sim cards



Utilising incentive **vouchers**



Accompanying people to appointments or being with them for telephone assessments.

Effectiveness:



200+

people have now been treated.

The project has ensured:



Meaningful professional relationships



Robust and ongoing support



A truly person-centered approach

The unconditional care and time has been invaluable in engaging people, many of whom reported multiple barriers and inequalities during their original treatment pathway.

Conclusion and next steps:

This project has been essential in engaging these RNA+ into treatment and therefore significantly reduced onward transmission rates. Work continues to monitor reinfections and ensure robust harm reduction initiatives.

Disclosure of interest statement:

This project has been supported through an Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) 'Joint Working' initiative between Gilead Sciences Ltd., and Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust.