

HEP C U Later

**Inclusion One Recovery Bucks
Peer to Peer Naloxone**

The Inclusion One Recovery Bucks community drug and alcohol treatment service (operating in High Wycombe and Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire) achieved the major milestone of hepatitis C micro-elimination within their service in August 2023. We spoke to Ronnie Morrell, harm reduction lead about the other harm reduction activities they've been leading on over the last year, specifically the peer to peer Naloxone project.

Why is harm reduction so important?

“Education is the way forward. People will always use drugs - that’s a fact. If we can educate them around the possible risks/harms with their drug of choice, then hopefully by showing/advising them on the safest way possible to use the drugs we can hopefully reduce some of those risks/harms to them and others.”

Ronnie Morrell, Communities Lead, Inclusion One Recovery Bucks

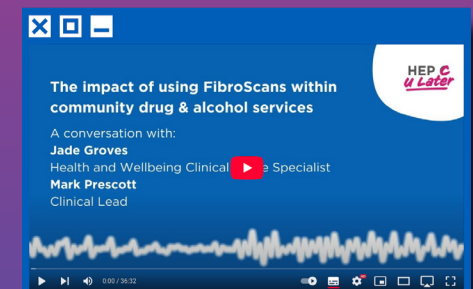
Peer to Peer Naloxone:

Over the last year the service have been running a very successful peer to peer Naloxone project in an effort to reduce opioid overdoses, improve awareness and reduce harm.

Naloxone to reverse opioid overdose is an essential tool alongside harm reduction advice in tackling the increasing incidence of fentanyl, nitazines and xylezines in the heroin supply. There is an increasing concern about synthetic opioids and the already too high number of drug related deaths, and the peer to peer Naloxone project was implemented to help reduce this risk and reach people who may not come into contact with drug and alcohol services.

In 2024 Hep C U Later recorded a podcast with Jade Groves and Mark Prescott at Inclusion One Recovery Bucks about the transition from reaching hepatitis C micro-elimination to using fibroscans to check liver health.

You can watch it [here](#).



How was it implemented?

The Inclusion One Recovery Bucks service worked with George Charlton ([Naloxone - GC Training & Consultancy Services \(georgecharlton.com\)](http://georgecharlton.com)) to implement the group, providing them with training, branded clothing to solidify their team and all of the encouragement they could need to have a positive impact on the community.

To reduce any challenge they may face from the community or other organisations whilst distributing Naloxone the local police have pictures of the Naloxone Awareness Recovery Crews (NARCs) in their offices, and each member of the team carries a card with the contact details of Ronnie Morell so he can deal with any enquiries and provide reassurance and education on the importance of this work.



How does it work?

The peers called their team the Naloxone Awareness Recovery Crew (NARC) and there are currently four peer to peer Naloxone peers with a variety of lived and living experience of using drugs. The team at Inclusion One Recovery Bucks provide support, a team chat, group and one to one supervision.

Ronnie Morell spoke of how the NARCs look after each other, bringing a sense of community, and the importance of being part of something and its impact on people's recovery and personal growth. He spoke of their commitment and passion and how "they feel like they're part of something, they're really excited about what they're doing".

The NARCs attend two static drop-ins as well as training and distributing Naloxone to professionals and the community during outreach, therefore reaching people who might not otherwise access drug and alcohol treatment services.

One of the drop-ins they attend every three weeks hosts food, health checks, housing advice, citizens advice and other key health and wellbeing interventions all in one place. Some of the professionals they have trained have included hostel staff, fire stations, and night shelters.

The NARC team are reimbursed for their work every day which may consist of 3-4 hours, lunch and travel.

There are twice yearly steering group meeting to review the progress, reach and impact of the project with police commissioners in attendance and maintaining communication with them is essential to future-proofing this essential work.



What impact has it had?

Ronnie Morrell said **“I like to think we’ve flooded Bucks with Naloxone”**.

Key to tackling the increase in overdoses and drug related deaths is ensuring at least two Naloxone kits are dispensed each time as a minimum, synthetic opioids are included in the Naloxone training and key harm reduction messages are given to anyone who may be using heroin. Overdose awareness day events help to highlight these messages even further.

Ronnie Morrell said **“The police have been on board from day one”**, and spoke of the enthusiasm particularly from new police officers **“They look like they really care...they look over the moon to have been trained”**. Ronnie continues to receive emails with interest from police officers **“Since it started it’s just become infectious”**, suggesting there has been a shift in culture and understanding.

“The peer led Naloxone Awareness Recovery Crew (NARC) are Buckinghamshire’s saving lives heroes, they play a crucial role as part of our strategic response to reducing drug related deaths in Buckinghamshire.” Cavelle Lynch, Commissioning Manager, Buckinghamshire.

Since the NARC team have been in place they have trained and distributed kits to 287 people. Additionally over 240 police officers in the area have been trained and dispensed nasal Naloxone kits which continue to be replaced as they are used or expire. Ronnie recalled how it was reported to him that last year 700 nasal naloxone kits were administered by the police across England and he will soon be going to Staffordshire to support further with training.

Kelly from the NARC team said **“It was great teaching people how to save lives.”**. The team receive lots of good feedback and generally everyone is happy to be provided with the training and an ability to save a life. **“People are happy and feel it’s amazing and they did not know about Naloxone, they imagine overdose is people on the street they don’t think about people taking prescription drugs.”**



As well as the important benefit to people who are at risk of overdose, the NARC team have also commented on how the project has affected them personally, including their own sense of feeling worthwhile and being part of something good.

“Its helped my self confidence and self-esteem, I enjoy doing the drop in and meeting other professionals and people in the community. I enjoy being able to teach people something I feel the training also helps to change people’s opinions of people who use drugs as well, they all tell me how well im doing and how good the training was hopefully this helps to change some of the misconceptions and stigma attached.”

“It’s been very good for me it has helped me to see what I want to do with my life. I used to walk everywhere just with my head down looking at the floor, I don’t now. I look up and look around and that feels good. I slip up sometimes, but I get back on track.”

What impact has it had? continued

“My Self confidence and self-esteem have improved I feel like I’m giving back to people and the service that helped me....I hope one day to be able to work in the service I will soon be a volunteer.”

The police are now making a video of how important it is to be trained to use Naloxone and there is needle and syringe provision in a vending machine at the local police station, all of which are helping further to break down stigma and barriers.



What other harm reduction improvements are planned for the future?

Ronnie Morell stated that the next step for the NARC team is exploring how they can also distribute needle exchange and complete dried blood spot testing for blood borne viruses in the future.

Ronnie and the team are also keen to see ‘Naloxone is kept here’ stickers for pubs and shops in case Naloxone is needed in the local area and Ronnie is currently working with pub staff to train them, especially in areas where a person has overdosed in the past. Ronnie envisages a future where an outreach van can deliver multiple interventions and support in rural areas where public transport doesn’t operate fully, as well as the use of drug consumption rooms in services. The NARC team would also like to see more resources for people when they leave rehab to improve aftercare in the community.

Inclusion One
Recovery Bucks
reached **hepatitis C
micro-elimination
in August 2023**

287 naloxone kits
were dispensed by
the NARC team in
the last year

240 police officers
trained to use
nasal naloxone in
Buckinghamshire



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