

Hep C U Later Pilot Report:

Cepheid-GeneXpert Cartridge Waste Management Project

Introduction:

Hep C U Later is an NHS initiative, commissioned by NHS England, focused on expanding hepatitis C awareness, testing, treatment, and prevention beyond traditional drug and alcohol services. For 2024–2026, the programme is piloting new approaches in a range of organisations to reach broader communities.

This document outlines the implementation process, key outcomes, and lessons learned from the pilot.

Pilot Outline:

The Cepheid-GeneXpert cartridge waste management project aims were:



- To reduce waste across the national Hepatitis C testing network
- To limit the amount of Cepheid-GeneXpert cartridges wasted across the English Operational Delivery Networks (ODNs)/services
- To increase cost efficiency savings and to lower the carbon footprint as a result of unused cartridges going into waste.

Implementation:

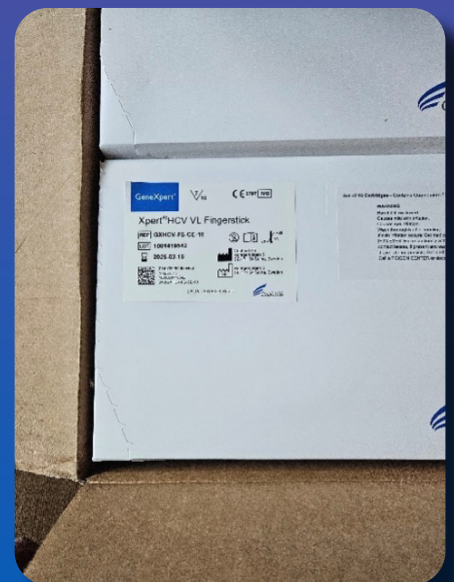
- In 2023, concerns about Cepheid-GeneXpert cartridge waste prompted the development of a waste reduction project.
- The High Intensity Engagement Coordinator emailed the Hep C U Later network (ODN leads, service managers, and third-sector organisations) to outline the project.
 - Hep C U Later set up a recording system to track:
 - Services with near-expiry cartridges available to share (including contact information)
 - Cartridge quantities, expiry dates, and batch numbers
 - Dates of collection or couriering
 - Organisations willing to receive and use cartridges before expiry (including delivery confirmation)
- Collaborative planning with service leads and project managers addressed:
 - Information Governance requirements
 - Batch number recording
 - Responsibility for postage and costs
 - Couriering and collection logistics

Implementation:

- The project launched in 2024, with Hep C U Later facilitating the first cartridge share in February 2025; the initiative will continue until March 2026.
- **Key challenges included:**
 - Determining how to courier parcels containing cartridges.
 - Deciding who would cover postage and delivery costs.
 - An additional issue arose when the courier could not access the secure office area of the ODN donating cartridges.
 - The Engagement Coordinator collected both packages by hand.
 - The second package incurred no cost, as it was from a service local to the Engagement Coordinator.

Outcomes:

- Hep C U Later evaluated the cost of Cepheid-GeneXpert cartridges (**£30 each**) against the potential cost of waste.
- By facilitating the sharing of **140 cartridges**, the programme achieved **£4,200 in savings** across the hepatitis C network.
- Accurate records were kept of both the teams **donating and receiving** the cartridges.



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Claire, Practice plus HMP Hewell:

“I received an email from the Hep C U Later Cepheid-GeneXpert cartridge waste management project asking if anyone was in need of some Cepheid-GeneXpert cartridges due to the expiry date being up soon.

At HMP Hewell we get through so many of the cartridges and I think the waste management project is such a good idea as we used both boxes in nearly 3 weeks.

As we all know the cartridges are expensive and it makes sense to try to use as many of them as we can.

I am sure if this occurs again HMP Hewell would be happy to take some as we get through so many.”

Debbie, CGL Birmingham:

“We had a number of cartridges (30) and we were worried that they would not use them all before they were due to expire in March 2025, the Birmingham ODN lead informed us that Hep C U Later were managing a cartridge swap project, Hep C U Later collected 20 cartridges from us, we had 10 left to use before they expired, we were able to use the remaining 10 before they expired and we were pleased to be able to help another service in need. ”

Georgia Threadgold, NHSE:

“This incredibly impressive initiative has helped the NHS minimise waste and help use resources more efficiently, which is both necessary for assisting the NHS in reaching its ‘Greener NHS’ goals, and for improving patient care.

It has ensured that Cepheid-GeneXpert cartridges are getting to where they are most needed and has prevented valuable NHS resources going to waste. Tony and the team have worked tirelessly to make this happen, and my hope is that this can be replicated across the system.”

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Learning:

- Services should remain vigilant and implement stock rotation procedures to reduce waste and manage costs.
- Ensure couriers can access secure sites before contracting them for collections and deliveries of cartridges.
- To minimise waste, services should contact Hep C U Later via email if they have cartridges unlikely to be used before expiry, allowing enough time for postage and use.
- For future cartridge shares, consider having the receiving service cover postage or courier costs for the free cartridges.
- This approach can be adopted across NHS and third sector organisations to save costs, support sustainability, and reduce carbon footprint by sharing consumables with a shelf life.
- Always record cartridge batch numbers in case of manufacturer recalls.



Our Key Learning:

- **Effective stock rotation and management are essential for cost savings and creating a greener, more sustainable service.**
- **Ongoing communication is vital-regular reminders help ensure services know stock can be shared across the hepatitis C network, with Hep C U Later ready to facilitate.**
- **Clear plans are needed for sharing the cost of transporting stock between services.**



How do I find out more information?

- **Hep C U Later** – for queries and further resources & information (you can also email connect.HepCULater@mpft.nhs.uk)



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