

Hep C U Later – Tackling Stigma as part of NHS England’s Hepatitis C Elimination Programme

HEP C U Later

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Provided by:



Background:

There are less than 60,000 people now living with hepatitis C (HCV) in England. The World Health Organisation’s 2016 viral elimination strategy set a goal of eliminating hepatitis C by 2030, NHS England aim to do this ahead of the 2030 target.

The Hep C U Later Programme, set up in 2020, is currently an NHS England commissioned project, and has two components.

1. **Micro-eliminating hepatitis C across services in the NHS Addiction Providers Alliance (NHSAPA, an alliance of 18 NHS Trusts in the UK providing addiction services, approx. 30k patients).**
2. **Providing resources, awareness and engaging with professionals in primary care, antenatal services and emergency departments.**

Methodology:

Hep C U Later understand that stigma can be a barrier to receiving effective care and treatment. Ultimately it can impact significantly on a person’s health, wellbeing, and experience of the healthcare system.

Hepatitis C, and other bloodborne viruses can be highly stigmatised due to lack of knowledge, misconceptions, and bias.

Our approaches to tackling hepatitis C stigma:

- Stigma Toolkit
- Merchandise for increased visibility
- Stigma Blog
- I’ve said ‘Hep C U Later’ banners
- Educational materials for the Public and Professionals



Toolkits



Factsheets



Posters



Leaflets



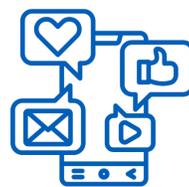
Wallet cards

• **Training and Education (Online CPD Accredited training & face to face) featuring stigma delivered across England to:**



- Universities
- Primary Care
- Emergency Departments
- Pharmacies
- Drug & Alcohol Services
- Antenatal services

• **Social media campaigns:**



- Big, bright, bold branding
- Lived experience stories
- Educating professionals
- Educating the public
- Stigma campaigns

Examples of projects that tackled stigma

- Recovery Project Social Media Campaign (the public as messengers dispelling myths & reaching people unaware of risks)
- Collaborative Testing Events in Primary Care
- South Asian Community Testing Events
- Testing in Gurdwara’s
- Distributing Translated Materials – Urdu & Ukrainian

Effectiveness:

Since 2020 our stigma related activities have seen the following impact.

Conferences:



2000+ professionals engaged by the team at conferences, sharing practical resources.

Training:



CPD-accredited training completed by **400+** health, social and criminal justice professionals.

Resources:

Resources were distributed to:

- ICBs
- ODNs
- Over 250 dental practices
- Local dental networks
- Local pharmaceutical committees
- General practices
- Local authorities



3,361 resources downloaded from our website.

Analytics:



7.97% engagement rate



654k+ post impressions



2,986 total followers



1745 QR code scans

Hep C U Later supported the NHS APA to:

- **46,000+** tests taken
- **25** sites helped to reach HCV micro-elimination
- **1000s** treated for HCV

Most recent stigma campaign analytics:

- Account impressions (just Facebook and LinkedIn) = **7,789**
- Post impressions (Facebook, LinkedIn and X) = **8,383**
- Post Reach (just Facebook and LinkedIn) = **4,174**
- Link Clicks (Facebook, LinkedIn and X) = **117**

Conclusion and next steps:

To effectively improve testing and treatment of hepatitis C stigma needs to be tackled among professionals and the public. There are many ways to tackle stigma and multiple approaches are needed to make a difference. Although Hep C U Later have run campaigns previously which also address hepatitis B and HIV related-stigma, more considerations needs to be in place to address stigma associated with these blood borne viruses.



Scan the QR code to access our Stigma Toolkit.