First meeting of Elimination Maintenance Strategy Group takes place

HCV Action has held the first meeting of the Elimination Maintenance Strategy Group, marking the start of important work to begin preparing England for maintaining elimination after it has been achieved. On 12th March, senior stakeholders from a wide range of organisations came together to discuss plans for elimination maintenance, and how this workstream can be taken forward.

Participants discussed the progress made so far under the Hepatitis C Elimination Programme. Other key considerations highlighted included the importance of maintaining the successful partnership models established between different specialisms, the value of aligning elimination maintenance with other health agendas such as inclusion health and mitigating health inequalities, and the need to navigate a changing commissioning landscape in the coming years.

Three Working Groups will now be formed to sit under the Strategy Group, taking forward the topics of Prevention and Testing; Data, Surveillance and Oversight; and Commissioning Treatment and Care. If you would like to express your interest in being involved in one of these working groups, please contact the HCV Action secretariat.
New Harm Reduction Hub launches in Hackney

Last week, a new peer-based Harm Reduction Hub officially opened in Hackney. The Hub has been jointly developed between the London Joint Working Group on Substance Use and Hepatitis C (LJWG), Hackney Council, and The Hepatitis C Trust, as well as working closely with people with lived experience of substance use. It aims to facilitate access for people who use drugs to safe injecting and harm reduction equipment, as well as (where appropriate) link them to other services and provide support shaped by people who understand their circumstances.

The launch of the Hub follows the previous publication of a scoping report by the LJWG on a peer-based needle exchange service in London. A thread with further information on the Hub’s development can be found here.

The service is currently available from Hackney Council’s Community Wellbeing trailer outside Ridley Villas in Ridley Road market, Dalston (47A Ridley Road, E8 2NP), on Thursdays from 2pm-8pm.

UK’s largest prison achieves micro-elimination
The largest prison in the UK, HMP Berwyn in Wales, has successfully micro-eliminated hepatitis C. The achievement comes at the end of an 18-month peer project led by The Hepatitis C Trust, working in a multidisciplinary team also involving Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB), Public Health Wales, and HM Prison and Probation Services (HMPPS).

The large prison has a population of over 2,000 men, yet over the 18 months the team managed to test over 95% of the population between them. With the support of 18 prison volunteer peers, and through centering the voice of lived experience, over 300 men who initially declined testing changed their minds.

The Hepatitis C Trust peer project launched with two full-time members of staff, Neil Emery and Jenessa Turnbull, to support the newly appointed BBV nurse Anya Hughes. The Trust team were quick to provide the prisoners and staff with awareness training and recruit and train peers to support this and have all-important myth-busting conversations with fellow prisoners on the wings.

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**News and reports**

* The next webinar in Gilead Sciences’ non-promotional Be Free of Hep C series is taking place on the topic ‘Commissioning for Elimination: Best Practice HCV Pathways in Drug Services’. The event takes place on Tuesday 16th April, 12:30 - you can register [here](#).
* The [Hep Mag](#) has written up a study by Indian researchers suggesting that easy access to direct-acting antiviral therapy for chronic hepatitis C led to a high cure rate for people with decompensated liver cirrhosis.

* [ContagionLive](#) has published a summary of a study suggesting positive early results of a four-week course of glecaprevir and pibrentasvir as a treatment for co-infections of HCV and HIV.

* [Physician's Weekly](#) has published an article on universal screening for hepatitis C virus during pregnancy and its effect on case identification and management.

* The [JAMA Network](#) has published a study on the cost-effectiveness of strategies for treatment timing for perinatally acquired hepatitis C. It suggests that treating 3-year-olds with perinatally acquired HCV was projected to increase life expectancy and decrease health care costs.

* [HCPLive](#) has released the latest instalment of their docuseries, on the effect that stigma around HCV has on uptake of donor kidneys from HCV-positive donors among non-infected transplant recipients.

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**Share good practice**

If you would like your service to be featured as a good practice case study on the HCV Action website, have any news to share with colleagues, or would be interested in being an [HCV Action Ambassador](#), please send an email to [hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk](mailto:hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk).

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*The Hepatitis C Trust provides secretariat support to HCV Action.*

Please encourage colleagues to join HCV Action for free hepatitis C related updates and tools by emailing their full contact details to [hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk](mailto:hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk).

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