



ROADMAP FOR SUSTAINABLE HEALTHCARE

Background

The hepatitis C virus (HCV) is a potentially fatal infection that can cause serious liver disease including cirrhosis, end-stage liver failure, and liver cancer. There are an estimated 214,000 individuals chronically infected with HCV in the UK.¹ Currently, the condition is both under-diagnosed and under-treated, with less than 50% of people infected with HCV aware of their condition and only 3% of those who are diagnosed receiving treatment each year.^{1,2}

SUSTAINABLE HEALTHCARE PILOT 1: THE HEPATITIS C PARTNERSHIP

Overview

With AbbVie's support, charities Addaction and The Hepatitis C Trust set up a pilot initiative in the South West region, designed to widen HCV testing and offer additional support to access appropriate treatment for people who use drugs or who are in recovery. The pilot initiative comprises three key interventions:

1. Workforce development

Addaction staff is provided with training to improve their understanding of HCV, the benefits of testing, new treatment options and the importance of modifying individuals' behaviour. The training promotes better understanding of the ways in which drug service staff can effectively support their service users.

Status


An ongoing programme to train the frontline staff is currently underway. In some areas, 90% of Addaction staff has now attended a training session on HCV.

2. Peer-to-peer education

Peer-to-peer educators are trained to deliver a personal message to service users regarding the importance of testing and attending hospital appointments. Through talks at various sites, the peer educators use their personal story to encourage service users to get tested and receive treatment. In more than half of the peer education sessions, on-site hepatitis C testing is available following the session.

Status

Since the beginning of 2016, the peer-to-peer education programme has reached almost 500 people who use drugs or are in recovery, with an average of 80 people each month. At least 85% of them, when surveyed at the end of the talks, had taken in and retained all five key issues and misconceptions on HCV from the training and seven out of ten attendees felt that their knowledge of HCV had increased 'a lot' or 'massively'.³





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3. Buddying scheme

Buddies are trained to provide support to service users throughout the treatment pathway. They accompany HCV patients to their hospital appointments, carry out one-to-one visits and provide ongoing support through the treatment cycle.

Status

These interventions have been rolled out in different combinations in Cornwall, North Somerset, Devon and Dorset. Since 2014, there have been 34 buddy-client contacts and the number will increase over time.⁴

Anticipated outcomes

The partners all hope to create an environment in the South West region that will lead to a long-term increase in HCV testing and treatment rates amongst people who use drugs or are in recovery. It is hoped that this will translate into improved health outcomes, reduce the number of “Did Not Attend” patients within the local population and contribute towards the delivery of the ultimate aim of HCV elimination.

The pilot’s results have been independently evaluated since its initiation with the final results expected in October 2016.

It is anticipated that by the end of 2016 there will be two community test and treatment centres in the South West Region and it is hoped that 2017 will see the national roll-out of the principles from the pilot.

¹Public Health England, Hepatitis C in the UK: 2016 report, 2016. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/541317/Hepatitis_C_in_the_UK_2016_report.pdf [accessed August 2016]

²Public Health England, A hepatitis C story worth telling, 2014. Available at: <https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2014/06/30/a-hepatitis-c-story-worth-telling/> [accessed August 2016]

³National Hepatitis C Programme, Evaluation - Year 2: Interim Report, June 2016.

⁴National Hepatitis C Programme, Evaluation - Year 2: Interim Report, June 2016.