

WWW. WORKING WITHIN WALSALL TO ELIMINATE HEPATITIS C: FROM TEST TO CURE

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Background

Prior to the Viral Hepatitis Nurse Specialist (CNS) role being introduced at Walsall hospitals the consultant and specialist pharmacist, within the hospital setting, undertook treatment for patients with Hepatitis C (HCV). The introduction of Operational Delivery Networks overseeing HCV treatment numbers, England signing into the World Health Organisation plan to eliminate viral hepatitis by 2025 and recognising work in other Trusts, led to a successful business case for a CNS post.

Description of model of care/intervention:

The CNS increased capacity allows a HVC clinic to be based at the local substance misuse service. Prior experience of setting up a similar service in a neighbouring Trust was key. Initial communication with those testing at community service identified numbers testing positive as compared to numbers attending hospital treatment appointments, were significantly lower and change was needed. Protocols were written and a clinic has recently been established one afternoon per week for the CNS. The CNS can directly liaise with keyworkers, nurses and psychiatrists involved in the clients' recovery journey and incorporate their HCV treatment seamlessly into that journey.

Effectiveness:

The service is very much in its infancy however is rapidly gaining interest from clients as well as other key people involved. Talks between peer mentors and commissioners have proven successful and trained volunteers will be doing dried blood spot tests to improve numbers diagnosed. This is directly as a result of the CNS being visible for both advice and support for those staff and to receive direct referrals.

Conclusion and next steps:

The familiarity of the environment, staff testing and the presence of the CNS, will give continuity of care for clients who would not have engaged previously. The numbers from test to successful treatment will be audited and presented to commissioners and future plans are to increase the HCV treatment clinic availability at the substance misuse service.

Disclose of interest: none