

# **A MIXED METHOD EVALUATION OF NHS TAYSIDE'S INJECTING EQUIPMENT PROVISION SERVICES**

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## **Background:**

Providing sterile injecting equipment alone is not sufficient to prevent the transmission of blood-borne viruses among injecting drug users; interventions, such as user education, are also required. This study aimed to evaluate Injecting Equipment Provision Services (IEPS) in Tayside, Scotland, against the National Guidelines for Services Providing Injecting Equipment. These guidelines were developed as an action under Scotland's Hepatitis C Action Plan, Phase II.

## **Methods:**

NHS Tayside has 20 IEPS; 16 community pharmacies, 3 Minor Injuries Units and a specialist harm reduction service (SHRS). A mixed methods study collected data from people using, and staff working in, IEPS: Peer researchers undertook a customer satisfaction survey and mystery shopper exercise, and staff participated in semi-structured interviews. Qualitative and quantitative analysis was undertaken to produce an evaluation report making 40 recommendations, using the data from the three research methods.

## **Results:**

Data collected from Customer Satisfaction Surveys showed that 95.1-97.5% people were always provided with enough equipment to allow one new use for every injection, except for provision of water (71.3%). The data also showed the range of service user perceptions of staff knowledge on key issues in different service settings: pharmacy IEP (39.7-62.1%) and SHRS (76.2-100.0%). Staff engagement and education with people using the IEPS also showed varying results: pharmacy IEP (13.6-44.1%) and SHRS (38.1-80.0%). Qualitative data from mystery shoppers and staff surveys corroborated and enhanced discussion of these findings. Only 4 surveys were collected from MIU IEPS, and have not been included in the results by site type.

## **Conclusion:**

The differences between site type was apparent with the SHRS rating much higher across all areas, providing better overall customer satisfaction and in wider harm reduction and public health aims. This confirms the value of staff training and the negative impact of stigma on delivering services to people who inject drugs.

## **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

No conflicts of interest