



**Change
Grow
Live**

HCV Impact Report

For the year ending March 2020



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Our mission

Our mission is to help people change the direction of their lives, grow as individuals, and live life to its full potential.

Our whole person approach addresses all the factors that impact on individual health and wellbeing and contribute to strong and cohesive communities.

Our values

Be open

Be bold

Be compassionate



This year has seen significant progress in our ambition to eliminate hepatitis C as a major threat to the health of the people who use our services. Testing across our services has increased, with the number of people starting antiviral treatment higher than ever before.

This work has progressed through the development of partnerships with Gilead Sciences, NHSE partners and others, working together to deliver a whole-system approach for the benefit of people who use our services. While this was recognised at the 2019 HSJ awards, where our successful partnership won the overall Best Partnership of the Year award, the real proof has come through the countless stories from people whose quality of life has improved with treatment.

We look forward to the year ahead with enthusiasm, confidence and a continuation of the successful impact Drug Treatment Services are making towards Eliminating Hepatitis C in England.

Dr Prun Bijral
Change Grow Live



Introduction

This year has seen significant progress towards the elimination of the Hepatitis C virus for the people who use our services. We have worked tirelessly to engage more people in testing and treatment than ever before.

We have a lot to celebrate, and a lot to be proud of as we see the impact of the work we do being recognised by our partners in NHSE.

Data extracted from the NHSE treatment registry May 19 – March 20 shows drug treatment services collectively contributed 33% of the 10,210 people who commenced HCV treatment. This equates to 3,400 people starting treatment across the drug treatment sector.

Change Grow Live contributed to 1,580 of the overall number, meaning 46% of people who started treatment were people who use our services.

Partnership work is critical to our success. Having a dedicated Hepatitis team to coordinate all aspects of service delivery and manage effective relationships with external partners has been pivotal. It has helped us develop strong, sustained partnerships working together to help more people be cured of Hepatitis C. Together with our partners at Gilead Sciences, we have worked hard to create better opportunities for people to be cured of Hepatitis C, something we will continue to do over the coming year. The partnership we have developed shows how we can work together to achieve micro elimination in services by 2023.



HCV strategy

In December 2017 Change Grow Live launched the Hepatitis C strategy. It outlined the ambition to reduce the number of people who use our services from becoming ill or dying prematurely as a result of HCV infection.

Why the need for a strategy?

Hepatitis C is a highly infectious virus that infects and damages the liver and leads to serious illness and premature death. As one of the largest clinical drug treatment providers in the UK, we work with many people who are either already infected, or who are at risk of becoming infected through intravenous drug use. This meant we had a fantastic opportunity to help reduce and ideally eliminate the risk of infection from Hepatitis C.

It was important that we were able to communicate that the treatment had significantly improved for those infected with Hepatitis C. The availability of Direct Acting Antiviral therapy allows for shorter, tolerable treatment periods (8 weeks in some cases) and an increased efficacy and cure rate.

A publication by WHO (GHSS Global Health Sector Strategy) endorsed the aim to “eliminate viral Hepatitis as a major threat to public health by 2030”: Public Health England (PHE) aspired to do this by 2030. We therefore developed our Hepatitis C strategy to make a significant contribution to achieving this aim.

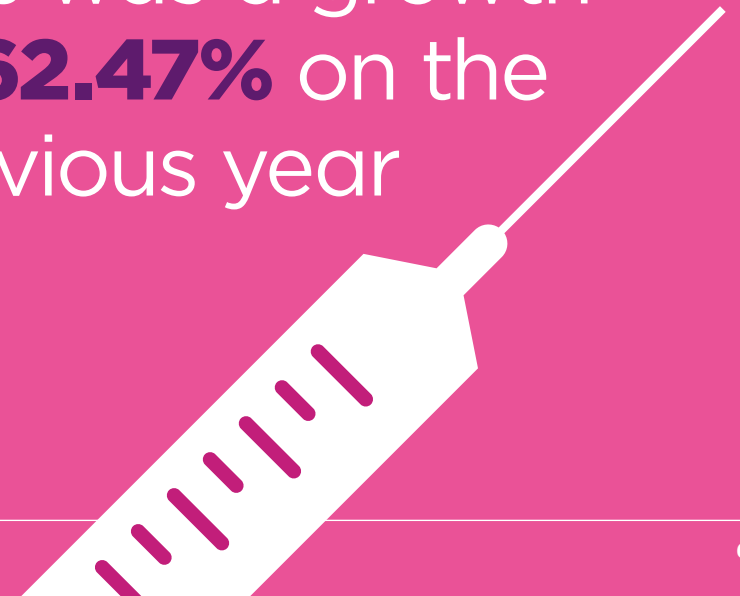


Impact

21,083 people were **tested** for Hepatitis C, a growth of **39.78%** on the previous year



Of the 21,083 people tested **10,164** were **IV drug users** therefore identified as a **priority group**. This was a growth of **62.47%** on the previous year





1,630

people **started treatment** for Hepatitis C, a growth of **81.51%** on the previous year

70
training and awareness sessions were delivered across the organisation to staff and volunteers





Since April 2018, as part of our commitment to eliminate HCV, Gilead Sciences have been formally collaborating with Change Grow Live. The vision was to work together with the NHS, utilising each organisation's strengths to improve HCV pathways for their service-users. We set an ambition of eliminating HCV within Change Grow Live services by 2023 and this report shows how far we've come.

Working closely with the NHS many clients have received diagnoses and treatment that they otherwise wouldn't have. Huge strides have been made to provide visibility of clients' progress through the HCV pathway from entry to cure, to ensure no one gets left behind. It's inspiring how much has been achieved and CGL should be proud. At the same time we recognise that more needs to be achieved and that our approach will have to adapt to current circumstances

While COVID-19 and social distancing has had a considerable impact on testing, treatment and care in hepatitis C, we've used this time well to reflect on what we can do better, how to embrace new approaches, innovate and collaborate even more closely with other stakeholders in the future. Things must change, but change brings opportunity to be better than before.

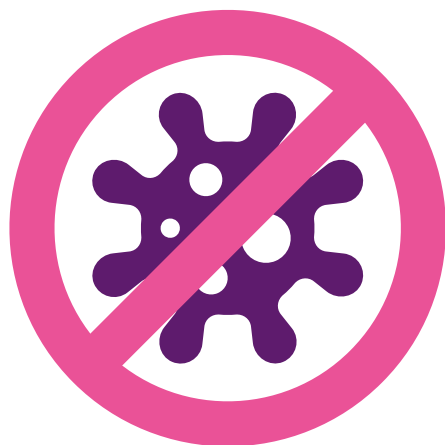
Our commitment to reach our 2023 elimination target is undimmed and I'm confident we will achieve this through continuing to work together.

Peter Smethurst
Director , Patient Access to Care
Gilead Sciences



Eliminating Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is one of the most common blood borne viruses in the country. Testing and treatments have improved a lot over the years, and most people can now be cured with few or no side effects.



We are working with Gilead Sciences to achieve micro-elimination of Hepatitis C in our services by 2023 in line with NHS England targets.

Local micro-elimination means:

- 100% of people using the service have been offered a Hepatitis C test.
- 90% of these people have then been tested.
- 75% of people who were diagnosed with Hepatitis C have started treatment.

Highlights of the year

- > Our **Richmond and Halton** services were the **first to achieve micro-elimination** of Hepatitis C for the people who inject drugs.
- > Our innovative national programme to improve medically assisted treatment for opioid users has helped improve BBV screening rates and referrals into treatment. Our **Hull service** achieved a **screening rate of 66%** among the injecting population compared to a national average of 31%.
- > Change Grow Live **won Best Pharmaceutical Partnership** alongside Gilead Sciences and NHSE at the HSJ (Health Service Journal) Partnership awards in March 2019. In November 2019, we were chosen as **overall winners** from all categories and awarded the **HSJ Partnership Award** alongside Gilead sciences and NHSE.
- > A trial of three nudge pilots at six sites found that **enhancing Hepatitis C training** for key workers to include practical planning and goal setting **doubled testing rates** in the short term.

Setting the standard

Drug treatment services were collectively responsible for 33% (3,400) of the 10,210 people starting treatment for Hepatitis C between May 2019 and March 2020. Change Grow Live contributed 46% (1,580) of the overall treatment starts from drug treatment services.

(Data Source: NHSE HCV Treatment registry).

It's important to highlight the shift in attitudes from the people who work and volunteer in our services towards testing and treatment pathways for Hepatitis C. Across Change Grow Live, more people truly value and understand the wider impact HCV can have on an individual and the recognition of the transformational benefits of someone engaging in treatment for Hepatitis C. These include:

- Engaging within the structure of a MAT programme
- Being more mindful of risk-taking behaviours and the importance of keeping themselves/others safe through regular engagement with the needle and syringe programmes on offer within services/local communities.



Innovation

Innovation in services across the country boosted local testing rates.

- We have used visual tools that have helped us to do things better and tell our story in a way that staff understand the data. Breaking down priorities and targeting specific groups of people helped increase testing rates in Hull by over 45% and 35% in Gateshead.
- An NHS partnership led to the appointment of two full time Hepatitis C clinical nurse specialists to work across East and West Sussex.
- Piloting a needle exchange project in Gateshead to stimulate take-up of Hepatitis C treatment following blood borne virus testing.



Hull ReNew IMAT & HCV correlation

During 2018, Change Grow Live launched an innovative national service improvement programme for treating opioid users: Improving medication assisted treatment (IMAT). It provided services with information, guidance, a toolkit and data-tracker designed to optimise treatment for opioid users. IMAT was launched in the intervention site (Hull Renew) in May 2019, together with a new model of care designed to improve HCV screening rates and linkage to appropriate care.

Intervention elements comprised:

- Dedicated Harm Reduction Workers providing targeted BBV screening
- Education and training for all staff on HCV screening and treatment
- Peer-support group of Hep C treatment completers encouraging screening uptake and supporting access to treatment
- Appointment scheduling to facilitate access to hep C nurses
- HCV offer aligned to MAT journey (understanding readiness/risk behaviours)
- HCV Treatment Clinic delivered in partnership with Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.

The new model of care remains in place. As of January 2020, the rate of HCV screening (among injectors) was 66%, compared with a national average rate of 31%.

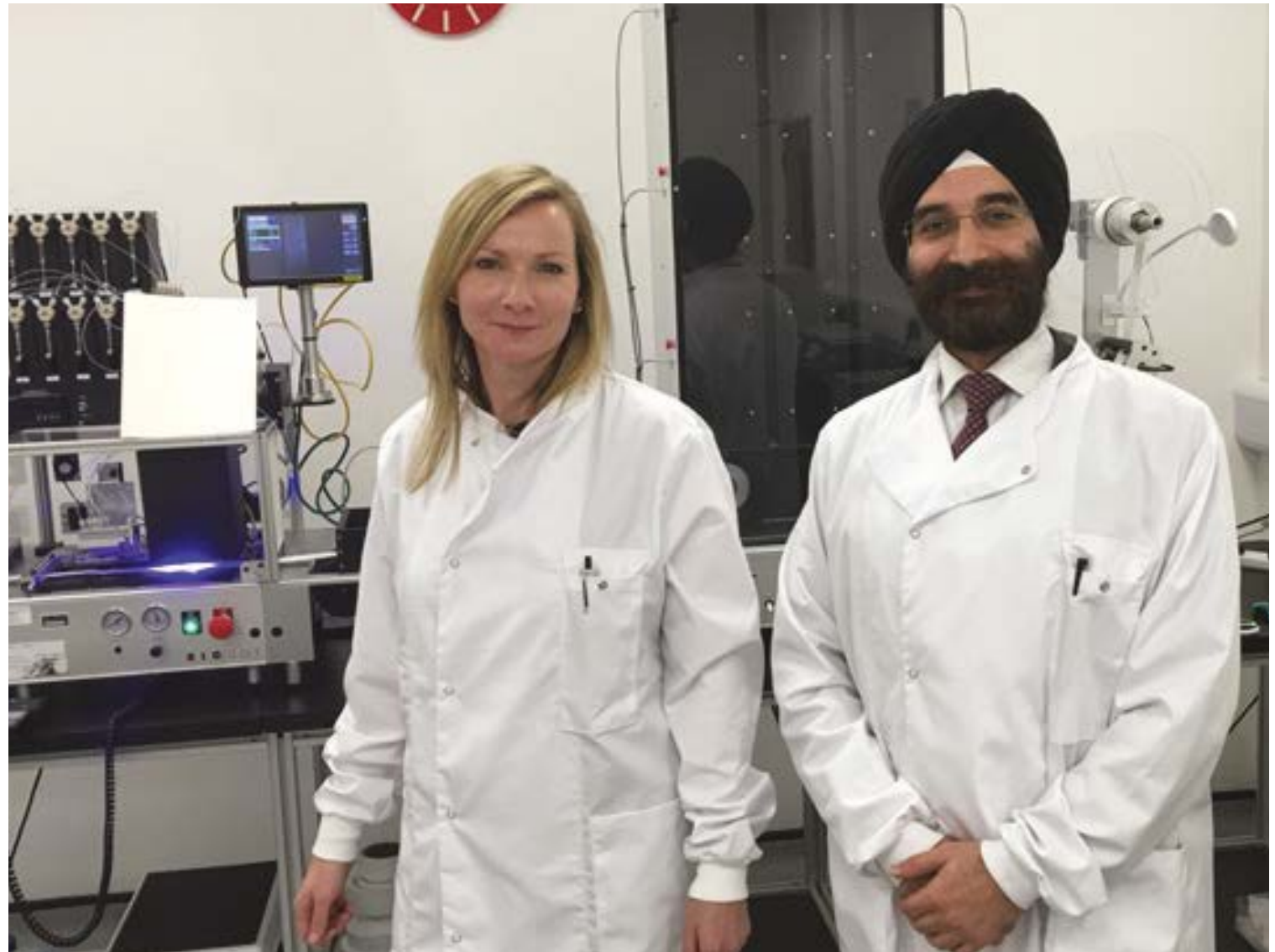
Our partners

Relationships with external agencies and key partners have continued to go from strength to strength, by virtue of a shared common goal to cure as many people as possible from the Hepatitis C virus.

There are many key contributors in the fight to eliminate Hepatitis C, with both the Hepatitis C trust and the Operational Delivery Networks (ODN's) playing key roles in the wider elimination strategy.

A special mention to our partners at Gilead Sciences, and those working across NHSE: through ongoing commitments, joint ventures and continued support we have increased the number of people who have engaged in testing and treatment pathways for Hepatitis C.

This success is something we will take forward into the year ahead.



What our service users say

“

My key worker at Change Grow Live pushed and encouraged me to have treatment for Hep C. I thought I was too old and didn't really care but I have just finished my 3rd month and can't tell you how good I feel. I am like a new man, I feel alive, awake and have more energy. I recommend treatment to everyone who needs it and thank you for being so caring to me.

Anon
Service user
Change Grow Live

”

“

I had Hep C for 8/9 years... I didn't think it was affecting me. I used to find it hard to concentrate... I think it was called fog head.

Treatment was so easy. I could pick up my script at the same time as my Hep C appointment. I hate hospitals and I wouldn't have gone. I tell everyone now to get treated, everyone thinks its like it was before but it couldn't be more different...When I got the final results it was such a weight off my mind.

Now that I'm cured I am starting to reduce my Methadone. I feel so much better.

Kevin
Service user
Change Grow Live

”

Team growth

From launching the Hepatitis C strategy, it was always the plan to develop/build a team of specialist workers to coordinate all aspects of hepatitis C service delivery, including workforce development, care pathways, data collation and external partnerships.

The team created was made up of 4 Regional Hepatitis C Coordinators, along with 2 data analysts who have worked tirelessly to drive forward and embed the strategies core aims and objectives.

January 2020 brought about growth within the Hepatitis C team when a National Hepatitis C Strategy Lead was appointed. The additional role has meant that we have been able to reflect on the achievements so far, and plan for future innovation in the quest for elimination of Hepatitis C.



Responding to Covid-19

The year ending March 2020 was overshadowed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The rapid development of events called for us to act fast and to work very differently in our approach to Hepatitis C.

Whilst this was met with a natural surge of anxiety, we were quickly able to see the opportunity presented to us. We took a natural step back, reviewed processes, looked at ways of working, and together with our partners started to plan for the revival of HCV pathways.

Here at Change Grow Live, we are confident that the mechanisms in place will see us through the return to normality and present even more opportunity to test, treat and cure people of Hepatitis C.

Case study

Our Walsall service – making a difference

Our Walsall service saw a spike in testing in late 2019, led by the Service Manager Lisa Buckley. The percentage of service users with a history of injecting who have been Hep C tested within the last 12 months have almost doubled, from 22.5% in July to 41.9% in December 2019. Alongside the commencement of an onsite Hep C clinic which helped to inspire the staff, Lisa did several things that made a difference, including:

Incentivising testing for staff members (giving the top tester a prize).



Taking part in a needle exchange pilot called The Nudge Campaign (with Gilead Sciences); carefully considered messaging and marketing on needle exchange equipment to quite literally nudge people to get tested in this setting.



Completing testing herself which as a Service Manager is unusual but showed massive commitment to the task.

Put together a service user newsletter for staff and service users to highlight the impact their testing was having and the outcomes.



Increased testing in community outreach settings.





About Change Grow Live

We help people to change the direction of their lives, grow as individuals, and live life to its full potential.

The people who use our services have been affected by a range of social issues and challenges. These include substance misuse and addiction, homelessness, poverty, unemployment, domestic abuse, and mental health issues.

Find out more

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