

Minutes of the Drug & Alcohol Cross Party Group held on

Tuesday 13th June, 2017, Scottish Parliament

1. Attendance

MSPs: John Finnie and Monica Lennon

John Budd, Louise Carroll, Caroline Cassidy, Kate Chittick, Elinor Dickie, Beverley Gail, Emma Hamilton, David Hathaway, David Johnston, David Liddell, Mark McCann, Gary Meek, Jennifer Mulligan, Hannes Neugebauer, Aileen O’Gorman, Michael Trail.

2. Minutes of last meeting – 18th April 2017 were approved

3. Outbreaks of infection among injecting drug users in Scotland

3.1 The Glasgow outbreak of HIV among drug injectors

Dr Louise Carroll, Public Health Programme Manager – HIV, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde gave a presentation on the current outbreak

Characteristics of the drug injectors with HIV infected in current outbreak:

- Heroin injectors – no strong evidence of NPS use.
- Known to drug treatments services - not necessarily currently engaged.
- Know about IEP and access it. Mainly few community pharmacies in city centre.
- 2/3rds report frequent public injecting
- Homelessness, criminal justice system are features
- Nearly all report links (social, injecting, economic) to the city centre and east end

A number of factors -

- people who are untested and unaware that they have HIV
- people who are untreated for HIV

... who continue to inject together

- relatively low prevalence of HIV led to lack of awareness of real HIV risk from injecting within the services and amongst PWIDs

PWIDs and those who work with them had a very historical model of HIV and a strong focus on hepatitis C. The initial response focussed on raising awareness - ongoing partnership with Scottish Drugs Forum offering briefings to services with a printed resource– over 60 sessions, more than 500 attendees

Training for peer recovery volunteers who will be in touch with people who have recently injected.

There are several specific factors associated with this outbreak:

- Risk was not considered when injecting took place within a relationship
- There was low recognition that sharing paraphernalia carried risk
- Batch preparation and sharing of drugs particularly associated with public injecting
- We are starting to build a picture that cocaine is used in addition to heroin. NESI study and recent information from the NEO database both point to an increase in cocaine use that is particular to Glasgow and not seen in other areas.
- And while there is good coverage of IEP 68 sites across NHS GGC – the majority provided by community pharmacies which keep shop hours.

Specific responses include -

- a low dead space option for the 2ml syringe (from April 2016)
- Central Station now offering IEP until 10.00 p.m.
- Established a fixed evening IEP service in the east end
- Piloting of an HIV outreach service at the Homeless Addiction Team HAT service
- Model involves the CNS from the Brownlee running a clinic in the HAT and doing outreach
- Community dispensing model for HIV drugs, which will allow daily dispensing of ARVs in a community setting
- Funding for consultant time to attend the HAT clinic, which will start in the next few months and should remove another barrier to accessing treatment.

Role of public injecting examined in a major HNA 'Taking Away the Chaos' which recommends piloting of safer consumption facility. ADP plans to look at the models of care for this population.

Challenges include

- Within addiction services. increased case loads, coverage and capacity to engage with more challenging clients has reduced.
- Questions about what else can be done to engage this population and improve the management of their addiction.
- Big challenge getting this population on to HIV treatment. It is important for individual health outcomes and control of the outbreak.
- specific challenges around engagement, retention and achieving this viral suppression.

Lessons –

- how easily HIV can be transmitted undetected in this population
- the range of prevention activities needed from awareness raising, harm reduction, IEP and addiction treatment through to HIV testing and treatment as prevention.
- the importance of sustained HIV prevention activity and demonstrates

Even if the outbreak has slowed, and there is limited evidence that it has, we now have a much larger pool of HIV positive individuals who could transmit HIV in future if not successfully treated themselves.

3.2 Other significant recent outbreaks of infection

Emma Hamilton, National Training and Development Officer (Harm Reduction and Emergency Responses), Scottish Drugs Forum

Slides attached.