

## PAN-DORSET HEPATITIS C MENTAL HEALTH ENGAGEMENT PILOT

### Authors:

Skaife C<sup>1</sup>, Hansford L<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust <sup>2</sup> Inclusion, part of Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust,

### Background:

People with Significant Mental Illness (SMI) often report engaging in risk behaviours including injection drug use (IDU) and are therefore at increased risk of acquiring hepatitis C virus (HCV). Limited integration between mental and physical healthcare services frequently means that this population neither accesses nor receives appropriate care for HCV, increasing their risk of developing advanced liver disease.

### Description

A pilot project initiated by Hep C U Later targeted patients under the care of Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) services within Dorset to: undertake point of care (POC) testing and support those with active HCV infection to access treatment services; and educate all CMHT staff on the HCV elimination agenda. Working in partnership with a representative from the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), we created a HCV Elimination Strategic and Operational Board to better coordinate the work of the pan-Dorset teams, and to provide strong governance for the various bids and HCV initiatives.

### Effectiveness:

Although the pandemic hindered delivery of the project, under the Board's guidance, regular clinics were established within one CMHT, where 5 patients with active HCV infection were directly linked into treatment. A further 10 patients with active HCV infection were assertively engaged and supported to access treatment. Training workshops were delivered to 85+ CMHT staff, with resources created on HCV and poor mental health. HCV care pathways were reviewed, negotiated and established.

### Conclusion and next steps:

The pilot demonstrated that, through enhanced joint working with CMHT, patients with SMIs can be supported to access HCV services more effectively; and valuable insights into the experience of patients who bridge substance misuse and mental health services can be obtained. The board will be examining where there are further opportunities to align more strongly across CMHT and CCGs to provide those with SMIs better access to HCV care.

### Disclosure of Interest Statement:

This project has been supported through an Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) 'Joint Working' initiative between Gilead Sciences Ltd. NHS Addictions Providers Alliance (Hep C U Later) and NHS England.