

Project Name: Hywel Dda University Local Health Board Step C Free Elimination Project

Organisations: Hywel Dda University Local Health Board

Start Date: 07/2025

Summary:

The project focuses on improving testing, diagnosis, and treatment access for hard-to-reach populations across three Welsh counties through enhanced community engagement, education, and point-of-care testing.

Objectives:

- Establish a clear, efficient HCV test-and-treat pathway.
- Increase dry blood spot testing (DBST) rates in substance misuse services (SMS).
- Expand point-of-care (POC) testing in community settings.
- Train SMS staff and peer workers to improve testing uptake and patient support.
- Provide proof of concept for a sustainable, scalable model.

Benefits:

Patients:

- Faster diagnosis and treatment initiation.
- Easier access to testing and care in familiar, non-clinical settings.
- Reduced stigma and improved engagement through peer support.
- Improved health outcomes and reduced risk of HCV transmission

Organisation/NHS:

- Increased testing rates towards national targets
- Reduced long-term healthcare burden from untreated HCV.
- Enhanced service delivery models for hard-to-reach populations.
- Provide data to support future funding and service development

Gilead:

- Provide insight into alternative HCV care models in rural and underserved areas.
- Provide an opportunity to support and refine micro-elimination strategies.
- Enhanced understanding of patient needs and engagement outside traditional NHS pathways.
- Potential to replicate and scale successful models across the UK and globally.

Contact:

Rachel Marsh, Associate Director, Regional Market Access - rachel.marsh@gilead.com

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