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Executive Summary of a Joint Working Agreement

Hep C U Later – Hepatitis C Patient Identification Collaboration

Executive Summary

In July 2019, the parties entered a Joint Working Agreement in support of NHS England's (commitment to achieve elimination of hepatitis C (HCV) in England by 2025.

The project, which became the HepCULater Drug and Alcohol Services Programme (Hep C U Later), ran for an initial period of three years to March 2022 and was subsequently extended by a further two years to run until March 2024.

Hep C U Later have been a key enabler in developing HCV micro-elimination, in partnership with Gilead Sciences, across NHSAPA member services since 2020, feeding into the positive patient outcomes seen across the wider NHS England (NHSE) national elimination programme. Hep C U Later have delivered a consistent year on year increase in testing and HCV treatments for people who access these services and have developed a wealth of resources, experience, and expertise with the opportunity to share across the wider Celtic nations in support of wider elimination efforts.

In discussion the Parties have agreed to develop a new agreement in accordance with the principles and guidance relating to joint working between the NHS and the pharmaceutical industry, in line with the ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry.

It is anticipated that the Joint Working Project shall continue for a period to 31st March 2026.

The aims and objectives of the Joint Working Project are:

To bring benefits to patients and improve patient outcomes through high quality treatment and management with the stated aim of micro-eliminating hepatitis C in all drug and alcohol services across NHS Trusts which are part of the NHS Additions Provider Alliance (NHSAPA) and to expand benefits across the wider UK region, sharing considerable expertise that has been built by Hep CU Later and Gilead Sciences.

The key elements of project activities include:

- Support progress to ensure remaining people in NHSAPA drug services are cured of Hepatitis C
- Work towards ensuring a secure future for micro-elimination for people accessing NHSAPA drug and alcohol services.

- Co-develop opportunities for people outside of drug services to be cured of hepatitis C including but not limited to pharmacies and NSP (Needle and Syringe) providers.
- For learnings from Hep C U Later to be shared more widely and complement Gilead's patient activation work in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

The expected benefits of the Joint Working Project are that:

- Patients will benefit from reduced time from viral infection to diagnosis and improved access to specialist care and treatment to prevent disease progression and complications with the ultimate objective of elimination of Hepatitis C within this patient population.
- Patients and the NHS will benefit as earlier diagnosis and care interventions may also prevent onwards transmission of Hepatitis C.
- Patients and the NHS will benefit from the development of innovative hepatitis C care pathways.
- Gilead and the NHS will benefit from a better understanding of the effectiveness and value of early testing and the creation of innovative hepatitis C care pathways particularly in high prevalence areas.
- The project will direct public health protection interventions through patient engagement in harm reduction programs and treatment of at-risk individuals.
- Better understanding of the challenges faced by the NHS in delivering high-quality patient services and care.
- Faster implementation of NHSE HCV Elimination Programme which benefits Gilead ambition to eliminate HCV as public health risk.

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