

NURSE RECOGNITION AWARD WINNER:  
**MS ELAINE LAWSON**



**PROJECT: Improving the delivery of HCV service to prisoners in the Thames Valley Region.**

*'I am absolutely blown away to have won this prize. I have only been in this post a year, so it has given me huge encouragement to continue to strive for what I believe in which is to enable us to deliver the best patient care we can to those in marginalised groups.'*

*'This endorsement has given me confidence to contribute my views and share ideas with others within this field and I have no doubt winning will have a positive impact in developing my future career within this speciality. I am privileged to work alongside and to receive continual support and encouragement from my colleagues, managers and lead consultant.'*

*Ms Lawson is Hepatology Specialist Practitioner at the John Radcliffe Hospital Oxford.*

'I have always been passionate about working to reduce the harms related to intravenous drug use, including the transmission of blood borne viruses (BBV's). When I was appointed as nurse specialist to provide Hepatitis C treatment in the local prisons it was this passion and interest that motivated me to develop specific aims for the service.

My priority was to increase the number of prisoners tested and treated for Hepatitis C within the prisons I cover (5 prisons, 1 Young Offenders Institute, and 1 high security forensic mental health hospital). However, I also realised that there was limited support and knowledge both for those prisoner who were diagnosed and the staff within the prison establishment. There was also frustration expressed from many patients who may have been diagnosed but then transferred or released without being able to start or maintain treatment.

'To address these key issues, I initiated co-ordinated collaborative teamwork with other agencies to provide prison staff training on BBV's, resulting in prison staff achieving the confidence to offer and undertake testing. To facilitate this further, we have also switched from venous blood testing to dry blood spot testing which has increased the numbers of tests achieved. We have introduced a peer to peer project in all the prisons with the specific aim of providing support, increase awareness and reduce stigma. Finally new pathways and consent forms have been developed to allow the patients results to be easily forwarded onto GPs, or other prisons if they are released or transferred.

'These developments have allowed for the number of those treated to increase by a massive 164%. In addition, we are now working effectively as a larger team to meet the targets for hepatitis C testing and treatment. Patient feedback has been extremely positive and most importantly, prisoners have access to much needed support and information regarding Hepatitis C.'

***Ms Lawson's Manager, Lead Research Nurse in Gastro and Hepatology, Denise O'Donnell comments:***

'Lainie joined our team in May 2018 and quickly realised what was needed to improve the delivery of the HCV service to prisoners which included support, education and treatment options plus a point of contact to discuss concerns.

Lainie has now made steps to put all this into place and the results show that it has been very well received and successful.

'Lainie is great at sharing her knowledge with and is a valuable member of her team. We know that the HCV prison service is in safe hands and will go from strength to strength with Lainie at the helm.'

