



# BBV bulletin:

Monthly update report of the introduction of opt-out  
BBV testing in prisons from PHE, NHS England &  
NOMS

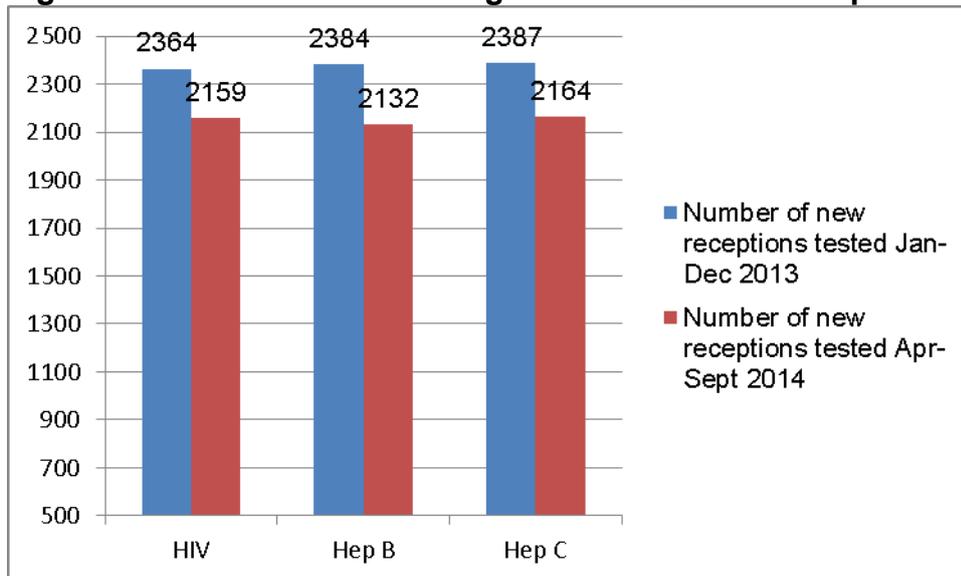
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## Pathfinder evaluation

The results of the pathfinder evaluation have been analysed and the full report is due to be published in February 2015 to enable lessons to be learned across the estate.

Generally the results of the evaluation are very positive and data shows prisons have almost doubled the amount of individuals they are testing (**Figure 1**). Using the available data the **proportion of those who are found to be positive for HIV increased slightly (from 0.25% to 0.3%)**, for hepatitis B it remained relatively consistent since before (0.25%) and after (0.23%) the start of the policy. It is expected that the proportion found to be positive in opt-out testing programmes will decrease as this will include the whole population as opposed to targeting only those known to be in high-risk groups.

**Figure 1: Numbers tested during Jan March 2013 and April – September 2014**



The evaluation has shown there is more to be done to ensure individuals testing positive for hepatitis C access treatment, with only around one in four people referred for treatment actually commencing treatment.

Only 5/11 prisons reported testing as per the national guidance where hepatitis C antibody positive samples are automatically tested for polymerase chain reaction, alongside a test for hepatitis B (HBsAg) and HIV infection (HIV Ab and Ag P24 test).



Another concern is the availability of robust data, for example only 4/11 prisons were able to specify hepatitis C PCR results.

The opt-out BBV testing programme is an ambitious programme, which requires a shift in culture, so that universal offering of BBVs testing is the norm. Despite the short evaluation period of six months and the limitations of the information available, there are already some key indications, which will help identify areas to be tackled for the future overall successful implementation of this programme. Details on where to access the full report will be made available in February.

### **HCV Action / PHE Road shows**

Three roadshows are being planned for 2015 to enhance local service provision and showcase and share good practice in the prevention, testing, diagnosis and treatment of hepatitis C. The events are being run by PHE in partnership with **HCV Action** and aim to raise awareness of the new five year national hepatitis C improvement framework, which provides guidance on effective hepatitis C services and is aimed at eliminating hepatitis C as a significant public health concern. The events are aimed at local stakeholders and whilst not health and justice specific they will include work in the local area on the BBV opt-out testing policy in prisons.

The first event is to be held in Liverpool on 6 March. Further details can be found at: <https://www.phe-events.org.uk/hpa/frontend/reg/thome.csp?pageID=181796&eventID=465&eventID=465>

### **For more information about the national BBV opt-out policy**

There is a wide range of information available which explains the purpose of this policy. We have produced supporting documents to help partners to implement this work, including the national algorithms. These documents can be accessed under 'Improving testing rates for blood-borne viruses in prisons and other secure settings' at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-testing-rates-for-blood-borne-viruses-in-prisons-and-other-secure-settings>

### **Contact for further information:**

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