

# Using a peer-led programme to educate and eliminate HCV in the UK’s largest prison

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### Background & Aims

HMP Berwyn is currently the largest prison in the UK. Situated in Wrexham, North Wales, the prison is separated into three different house blocks and a separate segregation unit. The prison has a population of more than 2,000 men. The community peer model was developed in 2010; and rolled out at HMP Berwyn in October 2022. Two full-time staff members from The Hepatitis C Trust (HCT) were recruited to work at HMP Berwyn alongside a BBV nurse lead, who helped implement the peer programme and a testing strategy at the Prison. The project was overseen by the HCT Southern England and Wales prisons manager, two pharmacists, Public Health Wales, the head of healthcare and the HMPPS.

### Intervention

The project involved a multidisciplinary partnership team with prison staff, healthcare, substance misuse, mental health, Public Health Wales and Prison education staff.

### Activities

- Prison staff and prisoner training
- Promotional materials
- Supported PCR clinics
- Education/P2P workshops; raising awareness of hepatitis C, transmission routes, harm minimisation
- Wing based outreach
- Actively engaged those declining test to turn majority around
- Implement peer-led programme with peers on all wings

### Challenges

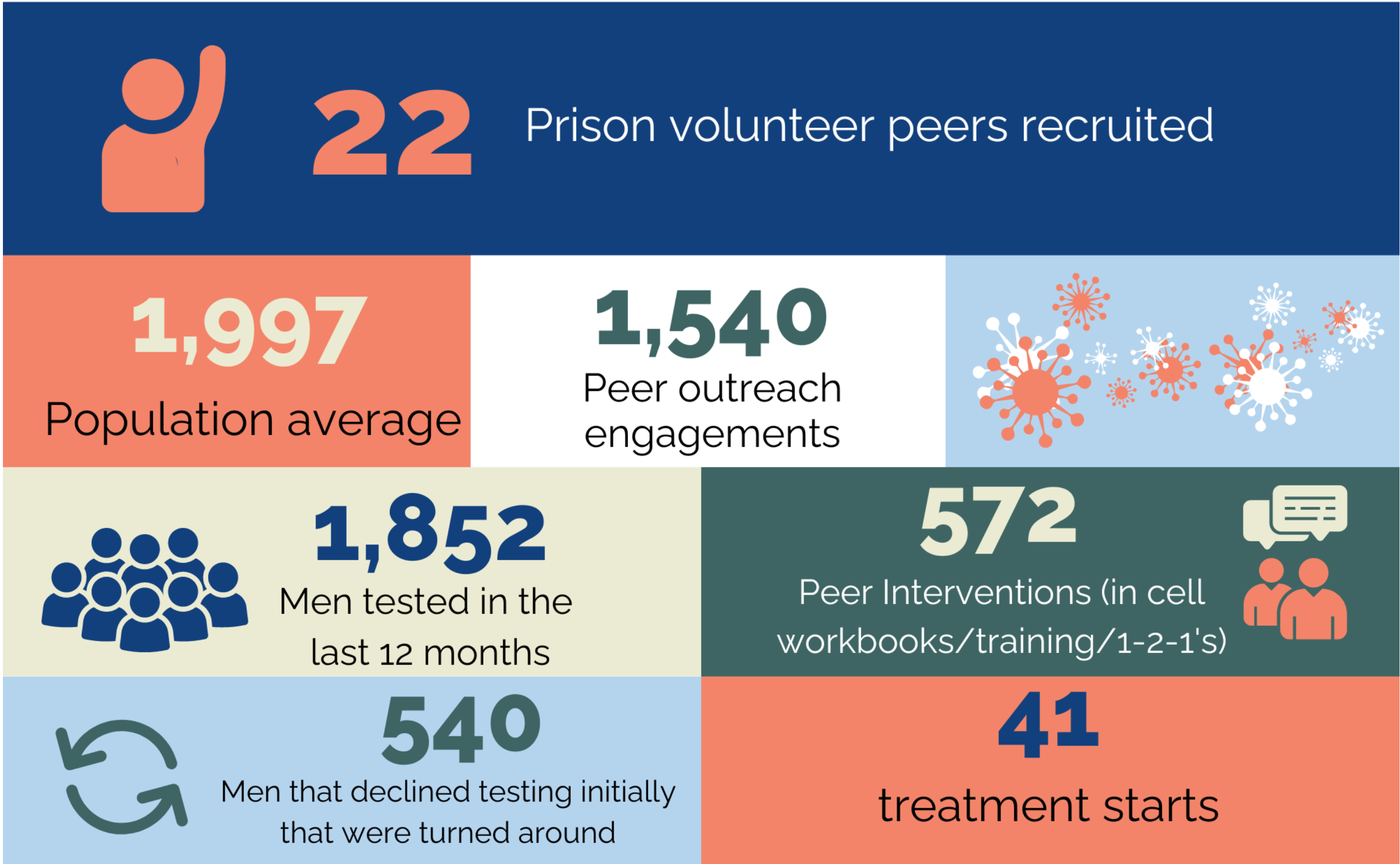
- Changing population – Remands and transfers
- Prison vetting
- Reception testing – getting staff on board to ensure that testing was being completed when prisoners first arrive at HMP Berwyn
- Prison regime – prison lockdown days, VP wings have a different prison regime to other wings within in the prison
- Stigma- changing the stigma of both prisoners and staff members
- Staff support – getting staff on board with the peer programme and getting healthcare team on board to carry out testing

### Impact

- 572 peer to peer interventions were carried out
  - 1540 outreach engagements
  - 540 declines were turned around with the help of peers
- This meant that over 96% of the 2,106 population was tested leading to the micro-elimination of the prison.
- Lived experience has improved the engagement within the prison.- prisoners can relate to one another
  - Stigma has been broken down as hep C is no longer a taboo subject
  - More awareness has been raised within the prison- More education and knowledge about the virus
  - Prisoners are now requesting tests- staff are asking HCT staff where they can access tests in the community



## Hepatitis C “eliminated” at HMP Berwyn



### Conclusions & Next steps

- All peers to have references written for them
- Peers to be managed by prison and any peers that exit to be supported into new employment within the prison
- BBV Lead trained to deliver HCT Awareness Training
- Six and 12 month visits to review impact and sustainability
- Both paid staff have now gained future employment

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