

# Addressing the sustainability of the micro elimination of hepatitis C in England

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## Background:

Needle and Syringe Programmes (NSPs) are crucial in minimizing hepatitis C, HIV, bacterial infections and other harms among people who inject drugs (PWID). UK NSP coverage is estimated at 30-35%. Barriers to more effective coverage include the loss of discrete, anonymous NSP arising from integrated recovery services. Consequently, the number of people sharing and re-using injecting equipment remains high, **with a third of PWID sharing and reporting they don't have sufficient access to NSP.**

UK NSP  
coverage is  
estimated at  
**30-35%**

## Programme of work:

Change Grow Live (CGL) is **the largest provider of substance use treatment in the UK**, delivering a third of all treatment across 106 services. Its programme to achieve and sustain micro-elimination of hep C includes:



### Re-promotion

NSP re-promotion across CGL and the treatment sector, supporting staff's continued professional development.



### Standardization

Participating in the UKHSA working group to standardize measuring of NSP coverage.



### Re-training

A full harm reduction re-training program aimed at frontline workers.



### Home delivery

Working with harm reduction social enterprise 'Exchange Supplies' which provides online ordering and delivery of sterile equipment to people's home address.



### Collaboration

Contributing to the UK's NHS hepatitis C elimination strategy through the Treatment Services Hepatitis C Provider Forum.



### Pharmacy liaison

A network of Pharmacy Liaison leads across CGL driving quality improvement.



### Strategic interventions

A strategic refocus on NSP/blood borne virus (BBV) interventions as standardized operating procedures, with named Harm Reduction Leads in services.

## Effectiveness:

We tested  
**35,000**  
people for  
hepatitis C  
and other BBV

in our services between  
April 2022 and March 2023

**1,400**  
people went  
on to access  
treatment

**6 services**  
**2 hubs**  
achieved  
hepatitis  
C micro-  
elimination

## Conclusion and next steps:

**A renewed focus on NSP coverage and harm reduction is required to sustain recent success in hep elimination. To achieve this, we need sector-wide collaboration to the level achieved in the micro elimination of hep C.**



# Responding to novel synthetic opioids in the UK

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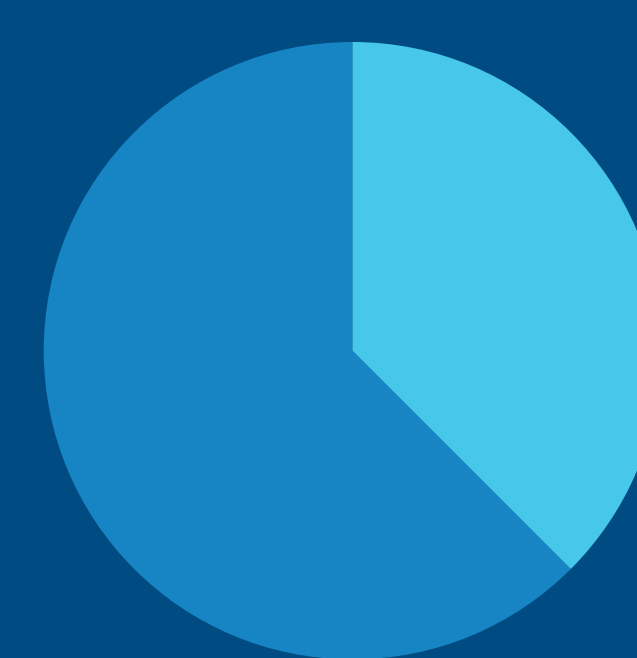
## Background:

# 220

## confirmed deaths due to NSO and nitazenes

From June 2023 England witnessed a sharp increase in deaths relating to NSOs, predominantly nitazenes, **with 220 confirmed deaths between June 2023 and September 2024**. This is a rising number as coroners' verdicts come in.

Change Grow Live provides **over a third of all treatment services in England**; with over 63,000 people in structured treatment.

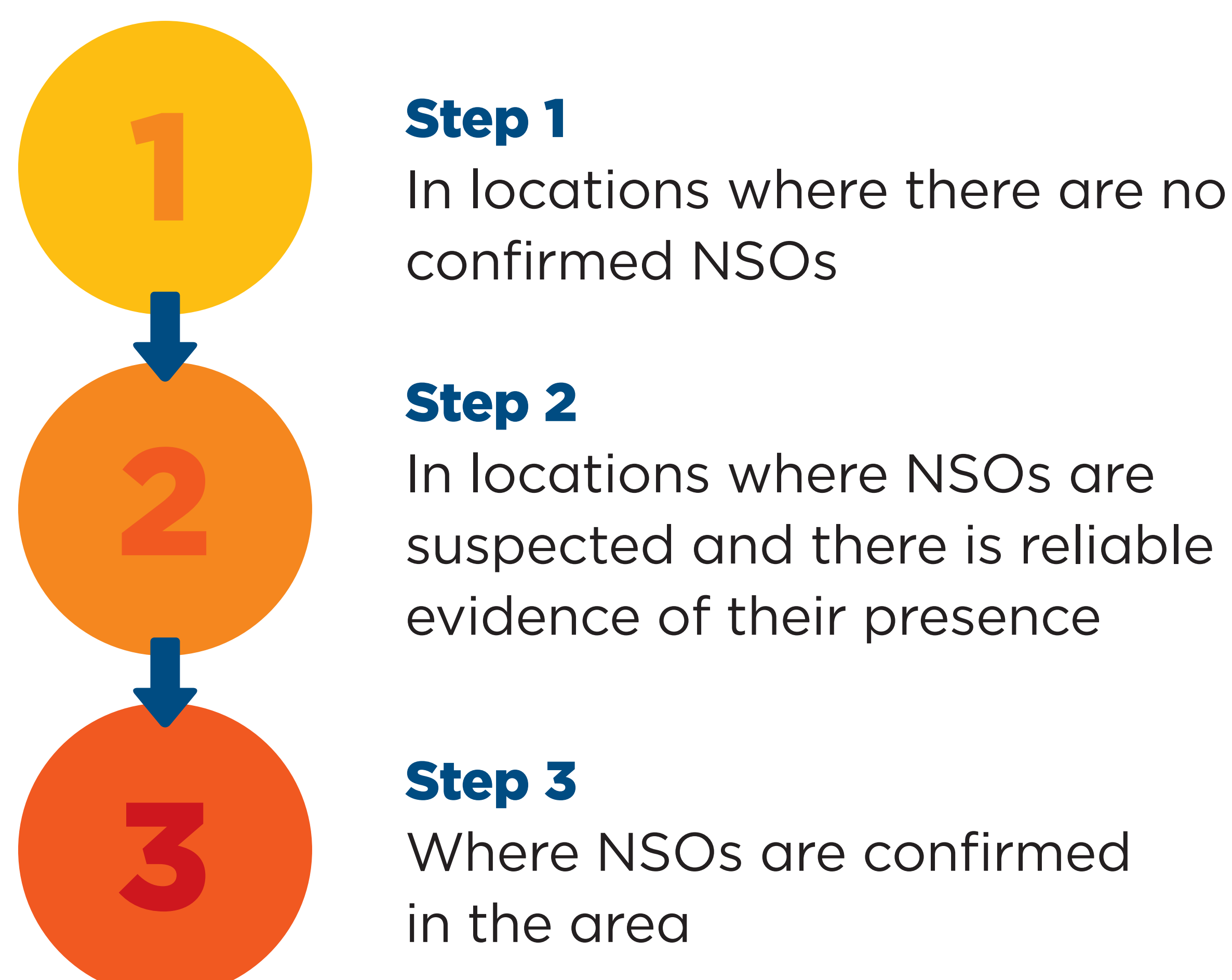


## 63,000 people in structured treatment

## Description of intervention

NSO monitoring alerts increased early 2023. In June, over 30 deaths were reported among people accessing our drug treatment services. **A Critical Incident Task and Finish Group swiftly developed an NSO strategy to support services nationally.**

A phased approach for targeting support to services was implemented:



The response included provision of accessible accurate safety advice, increased harm reduction interventions and same day access to prescribing with a goal of accessing more people into the safety of medication assisted treatment.

## Effectiveness

**By introducing NSO guidance and stress testing this in live situations, our services are better prepared for an increase in people seeking treatment as a predicted heroin drought materializes in 2024.**

# 400

**nitazene self-testing kits issued in the first month alone**

# 18,000

**nitazene self-testing kits supplied by our services between February 2023 and September 2024**

## Conclusion and next steps

**Given changes in Afghan supply routes, the NSO situation is likely to worsen. It is therefore crucial to share harm reduction strategies across the UK and globally.**

**Whilst monitoring the changing drug markets, we continue to engage people at risk in treatment and work with pharmaceutical companies to further develop point of care testing of drugs.**