

Committee Updates

Graham Foster has been appointed ODN Lead for NHS England and has therefore had to step down from his role as LJWG chair. We're very pleased to announce that the group will be co-chaired by Emily Finch and Suman Verma.

Dr Finch is a Consultant Addiction Psychiatrist at South London and Maudsley and Clinical Director, Addictions Clinical Academic Group (CAG). She is a member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists Addictions Executive, the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) and the working group revising the DH guidelines on the management of substance misuse.

Emily commented: *"I am very excited to co-chair the LJWG with Suman. My background in addiction psychiatry and Dr Verma's background in hepatology will mean that we can work to bring together the diverse services who deal with the treatment of people who inject drugs and have hepatitis C. This is a very important time for the treatment of hepatitis C in people who inject drugs. We have really effective treatments which could eliminate the disease. However the overall financial situation means we will have to work hard to ensure that these patients have access to services with the ability to identify those who need treatment and robust referral pathways into that treatment."*

Dr Verma is Consultant Hepatologist at the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital and Honorary Consultant at the Royal Brompton Hospital. Prior to this she was Locum Consultant and Senior Clinical Fellow at the Institute of Liver Studies at King's College Hospital.

Suman said: *"I am delighted to co-chair LJWG with Emily. With our differing backgrounds there is an opportunity to build upon the successes of Graham and Ashley, further improving the care and access to care for people living with hepatitis C and a history of substance use. Whilst the new hepatitis C treatments are revolutionising the prognosis of viral hepatitis and mitigating complications such as liver cancer, there is much work to be done to improve screening and access for this important group of patients. The individual and societal benefits of reducing viral hepatitis burden and transmission are enormous, as are the challenges. I look forward to working with Emily and the LJWG to reduce the burden of hepatitis C in London."*

Charles Gore remains the Vice-Chair, with John Jolly taking up the post of Treasurer.

Emily and Suman are delighted to welcome two new members of the committee: Sarah Hart and Ashwin Balabhadra. Sarah is the Senior Commissioner for Substance Misuse and Sexual Health

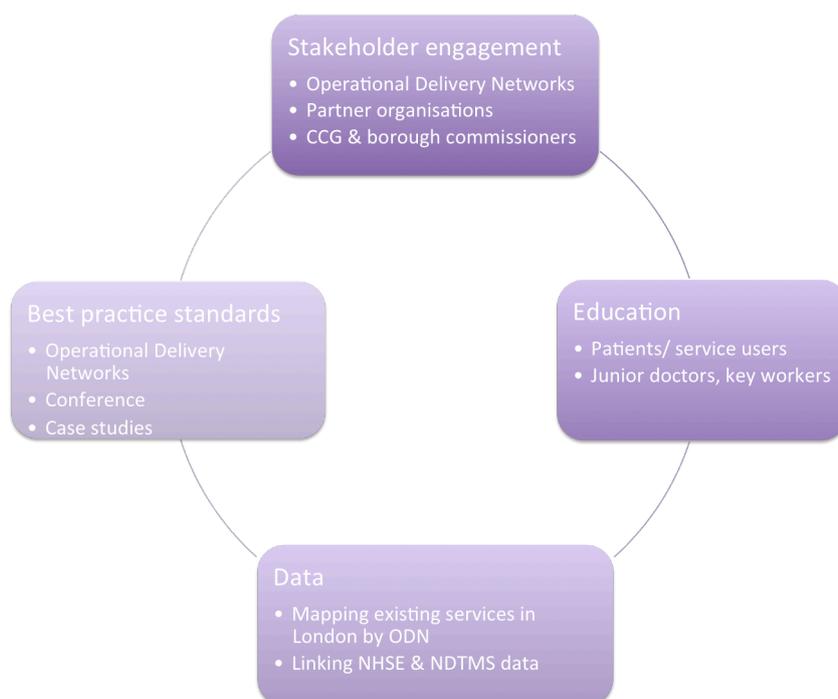
services within Public Health in Haringey Council. She is dual trained as a nurse and social worker and has worked in drug and alcohol services for 20 years. Haringey has set its target and budget for testing for hepatitis C at 90%.

Dr Ashwin Balabhadra is a GP with Special Interest in the Management of Substance Misuse and Hepatitis in Primary Care, also based in Haringey. He has worked in this field for a number of years not only in the NHS, but also in voluntary organisations and prison services.

LJWG 2016 plans & stakeholder meeting

Stakeholder meetings will be held on the afternoons of Monday 25th April and Monday 24th October. We aim to hold a conference in the autumn.

Our plans for the year focus on the four key areas of engagement, education, data and best practice standards, and we look forward to sharing them with you in April.



Contact

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