

HIPS/19/19 - An implementation science evaluation of Scotland's first heroin assisted treatment facility

Heroin assisted treatment (HAT) is the provision of prescribed heroin under medical supervision. Clinical trials have shown that HAT is effective in reducing illicit drug use, criminal activity, and improving the health and wellbeing of patients who have not responded well to traditional treatments such as opioid pharmacotherapy (OPT), e.g. methadone. Little is known about how best to implement HAT in the real world, out with a clinical trial setting. Furthermore, no HAT services currently exist in Scotland or the UK, despite being recommended in clinical guidelines.

We will conduct a mixed methods study to understand the barriers and facilitators to implementing Scotland's first HAT service, exploring the views and experiences of service users and providers, and other key stakeholders. These findings will be used, along with expert views gathered from those delivering HAT services in other countries, to develop a service manual that will guide the establishment, development and maintenance of HAT services across the UK and beyond.