



Tackling hepatitis, saving lives

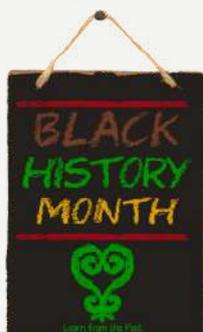
*How South London's
networks are transforming
testing and treatment*

See pages 12 -14

October: A month of recognition and awareness

This month across South London we've taken time to celebrate contribution and raise awareness, recognising the individuals and innovations shaping a better NHS.

- **Black History Month** has been a chance to honour the impact of Black communities and colleagues across our health and care system, from the community leaders shaping change, to the clinical teams providing compassionate, culturally competent care.



- **Liver Cancer Awareness Month** has spotlighted South London's work on hepatitis B and C, preventable, treatable diseases that often go undetected for years. Thanks to the efforts of our South London Hepatitis ODNs, testing and treatment are now reaching further into communities than ever before.



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Feature: Hepatitis ODNs

Want to know more?

[Get in touch](#) and we can share with you and your teams.

South London / South East leadership

NHS Kent and Medway appoints new chief executive

Adam Doyle has been appointed as chief executive of NHS Kent and Medway.

Adam is one of the longest serving chief executives in the NHS, most recently the chief executive of NHS Sussex. Adam began his NHS career as a physiotherapist before moving into leadership roles in commissioning and healthcare management.

He previously served as chief executive for NHS Merton Clinical Commissioning Group and as director of community services and private care at The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust.

[\(Kent and Medway ICB, 29 Sep\)](#)



Adam Doyle
Chief Executive
NHS Kent and Medway ICB

Surrey and Sussex chief executive appointed

Karen McDowell has been appointed as Chief Executive Officer of NHS Surrey Heartlands and NHS Sussex ICBs from 15 October 2025.

Karen, who has been the Chief Executive Officer at NHS Surrey Heartlands for the last two years (having also been Deputy Chief Executive prior to this), will become the CEO for the two organisations as part of their cluster arrangement that starts on 1 October 2025.

[\(Surrey and Sussex ICBs, 29 Sep\)](#)



Karen McDowell
Chief Executive
NHS Surrey Heartlands
and Sussex ICBs

South London leaders

For South East London, Andrew Bland (*right*) was last month reappointed as Chief Executive, and Katie Fisher (*far right*) remains Chief Executive of South West London, having been appointed in February of this year.



Andrew Bland
Chief Executive
NHS South East London
ICB



Katie Fisher
Chief Executive
NHS South West London
ICB

Around the system

New NHS online hospital to give patients more control over their care

The NHS is setting up an 'online hospital' – *NHS Online* – in a significant reform to the way healthcare is delivered in England. The innovative new model of care will not have a physical site, instead digitally connecting patients to expert clinicians anywhere in England. ([NHS England](#), 29 Sep)



Pride in Place: community led regeneration meets neighbourhood health

NHS Confederation's briefing outlines the government's Pride in Place strategy, providing £5 billion over ten years to fund local boards that drive regeneration in 204 places, including Croydon. It urges NHS leaders to engage early so that health improvement and left shift objectives are embedded into local decision making.

([NHS Confederation](#), 13 Oct)



Value first: Rethinking cost and value

This month's HSJ "Mythbuster" on drug pricing pressures echoes the "value first" approach SLOSS has explored in high cost drugs and devices, for example generic switching and home care models.

Such examples form credible, patient safe alternatives to spiralling drug costs – grounded in clinical evidence, local intelligence, and patient benefit.



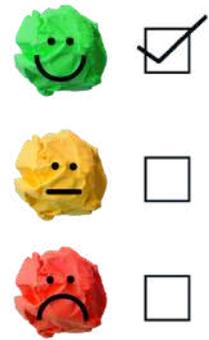
Around the system

Nuffield Trust: Patient satisfaction

A 2024 British Social Attitudes survey, analysed in this Nuffield Trust blog, reveals only 21% of the public are satisfied with the NHS – the lowest level on record – while 59% are dissatisfied.

The analysis identifies hospital waits, A&E quality, and overall care quality / communication as the strongest predictors of dissatisfaction, suggesting that tackling elective backlogs and sustaining quality must be core priorities.

([Nuffield Trust](#), 30 Sep)



**Return
On
Investment**

Value in Health: The unrealised opportunity in prevention

This insight from CF's Value in Health series argues that prevention remains an underleveraged part of the health system, even though evidence suggests many interventions offer strong returns. The report calls for smarter investment, better data use, and applying ROI thinking to prioritise high impact prevention rather than treating it as an optional extra.

([Carnall Farrar](#), 2 Oct)

October is Black History Month

Black History Month is an opportunity to honour the achievements, history and culture of black people and their invaluable contribution to society and the healthcare system. It's also an opportunity to connect; inspire and empower future generations.

This year's theme, ***Standing firm in power and pride***, highlights the importance of sharing stories of resilience, strength, and unwavering commitment to progress that defines the black community. Like other organisations, NHS Confederation has a wealth of resources including:

- [Keeping equality at the forefront of NHS changes](#) (blog) reflects on the NHS changes and persistent inequalities highlighted in recent reports with hopes for a future NHS that leaves no one behind.
- [An investment not a drain](#) (briefing) offers views on the value of EDI to the NHS from healthcare leaders.
- [Shattered Hopes](#) (report) explores the experiences of BME leaders' and challenges in breaking the glass ceiling in the NHS.

South London Sustainability Review

The South London Specialised Services Sustainability Review is a vital initiative that aims to support the long term effectiveness of specialised services.

Working with our SLOSS partners, we're investigating new opportunities for how our services can work smarter and smoother in future, making best use of clinical expertise, data, and system wide planning.

Two workshops will be held through the autumn to discuss practical ideas for improving value, reducing duplication, and strengthening resilience across the region. This work is part of our wider ambition to ensure specialised care remains high quality, equitable, and sustainable in a changing NHS landscape.



[Learn more about the Sustainability Review](#)

Want to share insight?

If you have views to share for the South London sustainability review, please contact [Dan Kyle](#), Associate Director.



South London transformation

Sickle cell

Sickle cell docufilm

The team from the local West London Haemoglobinopathy Coordinating Centre have organised a screening of the SICKLE docufilm on 23 October at the Wimbledon Odeon.

Similarly, the South East London ICB team will screen SICKLE on 27 October from 16:30-19:30 at Guy's Hospital, Robens Suite.

About the film

SICKLE is a compelling and thought provoking documentary that uncovers sickle cell disorder's history and profound impact. Created by The Red Cell Network in collaboration with Black Thrive Haringey, this powerful film highlights the challenges surrounding this condition.

Through heartfelt patient stories and expert insights from healthcare professionals, SICKLE takes viewers on an emotional and educational journey.

[Online booking for complimentary tickets](#)



The poster for the SICKLE film screening features a circular logo with diverse faces and the IHO logo. It includes the text: 'FILM SCREENING', '23RD OCTOBER 2025', '6:30PM - 8:30PM', 'WIMBLEDON ODEON SW19 1QB', and a QR code. It also provides a link to book tickets: <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/the-red-cell-network/183148>. Logos for NHS, The Red Cell Network, and IHO are at the bottom.

Strengthening support for those living with sickle cell

The Southwark Wellbeing Centre hosted a Sickle Cell Awareness Coffee Morning (*right*) earlier this month, bringing together partners and local organisations to raise awareness of sickle cell and highlight the importance of strengthening support for people affected in our community.



About the Southwark Wellbeing Hub

The Hub offers free mental health and wellbeing support to anyone living in Southwark or registered with a Southwark GP. Services include one to one support, signposting, information, peer led groups, and volunteering opportunities.

The Oxleas Sickle Cell Community Clinic has created supportive bi monthly sessions for women from global majority backgrounds to talk. These bi monthly sessions are hosted by the sickle cell multi disciplinary team as part of the South East London enhanced sickle cell community service and serve to:

- Connect with other women living with sickle cell
- Discuss impact of sickle cell on women's health, family planning, and mental wellbeing with sickle cell specialists
- Explore how to best manage life with a long term condition



Meera Patel, Highly Specialist Pharmacist (*right*) and Simone Hessen, Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist (*left*)

South London transformation

Sickle cell

Sickle cell evaluations: Improving emergency and community care

Two major evaluations are helping to shape the future of sickle cell care nationally and in London.

The REVAL national evaluation, focused on emergency department (ED) bypass units, has been extended to March 2026. An interim report covering seven pilot sites – including those in South London, at St George’s and Lewisham hospitals – is to be shared with the Pan London Sickle Cell Improvement Board this week. Early findings suggest these specialist units offer quicker access to pain relief, calmer and more culturally safe environments, and improved patient experiences compared to standard A&E care. The report highlights implementation challenges and variation between sites, and will include recommendations for both bypass and non bypass units, along with support for developing future business cases for future sustainability of services.

Meanwhile, a pan London evaluation reviewed community services designed by each ICB. Based on more than 50 interviews, the findings show positive patient experiences, especially around continuity, emotional support, and care navigation. Challenges remain around staffing, data access, and peer mentoring integration, with recommendations on standardising referral pathways, embedding self management support, and ensuring sustainable funding.

Celebrating 20 years of advancing sickle cell and thalassaemia care

The 20th Annual Academy for Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia (ASCAT) Conference brought together clinicians, researchers, advocates, and patients from across the globe at Excel London. Over four days, sessions explored everything from cutting edge gene therapy and patient reported outcomes, to real world evidence and innovation in low and middle income countries.

It was fantastic to see the South London sickle cell teams representing their services, connecting with colleagues and stakeholders to share how services are improving for people living with sickle cell.



South London transformation

Multi morbidity model of care (MMMOC)

Building momentum for multi morbidity care

Last month, the South East London ICB team hosted an energising workshop to take the multi morbidity model of care (MMMOC) to the next level, evolving towards neighbourhood based, integrated care for people with multiple long term conditions.

The day brought together colleagues from across the system to:

- Share lessons from the MMMOC pilot
- Build practical skills for multi morbidity care
- Explore what integration really looks like in action
- Plan how to embed these approaches in local teams

The energy in the room reflected the shared commitment to changing care for people who need it most. Huge thanks to everyone who made it such a collaborative, focussed, and hopeful day.



South London transformation

Blood borne viruses

Across South London, significant strides are being made in combating blood borne viruses (BBV), with a strong focus on prevention, improving access to care, and addressing health inequalities – as seen within our South London opt out ED testing programme and pioneering work in HIV re-engagement.

South London HIV Network

The South London HIV Network brings together clinicians, commissioners, community sector partners and others involved in HIV care in South London. Together, we aim to improve clinical outcomes and experience of care for the population of South London living with HIV, reduce health inequalities, and share learning across the system.

Over the past few months, we have successfully delivered a range of events for Network members and have an exciting programme planned through to Christmas.

Join the SL HIV Network

The SL HIV Network welcomes all individuals involved in HIV care across South London. If you would like to join our mailing list, please contact our Project Manager, Geraldine Clay, at geraldine.clay1@nhs.net.

All previous meetings, along with educational and clinical resources are available on NHS Futures: [South London HIV Network](#).



Coming up

October – HIV: Getting to Zero collaborative

Our October virtual session will spotlight the vital contribution of voluntary and community sector partners in achieving the 2030 *Getting to Zero* HIV goal.

Speakers from METRO, Terrence Higgins Trust, Connect Well, and Positively UK will share case studies and insights from across South London.

November – Cultural competency in HIV care (in person)

We're looking forward to our November in-person network meeting at Novotel Blackfriars, hosted by Marc Thompson (Lead Commissioner, London HIV Prevention Programme).

Guest speakers from UKHSA and National AIDS Trust will share insights from the [Reimagining HIV prevention for London's Black heritage communities](#) report, followed by an interactive workshop on cultural competency in HIV care. Full programme to follow in early October.

Recent events

August – HIV Clinical Leads Meeting

South London HIV clinical leads met in August to review key priorities across the region.

We welcomed Alessandro Ceccarelli from METRO, who presented a proposed set of evaluation metrics for the South London peer support service, as part of our broader ambition to strengthen community based HIV care.

September – Complex Cases MDT

This month's HIV Complex Cases MDT, hosted by St George's, focused on follow-up for reactive BBV screening and explored case management for underserved communities.

The session also covered benchmarked practice across trusts and aimed to reach shared clinical consensus for managing complex presentations.

South London transformation

Blood borne viruses

Award recognition: Croydon's HIV ED testing team

Saving lives, reducing healthcare inequalities and tackling stigma

Congratulations to the Croydon University Hospital team, winners of the Medical Protection Society Award for Patient Safety, for their opt out HIV testing programme in the Emergency Department.

Led by Dr Ian Cormack and colleagues, the team has been collecting and using local HIV data since 2005 to drive earlier diagnoses, reduce stigma, and improve health outcomes. Their work has saved lives, reduced healthcare inequalities, and set a national example in inclusive, safety driven care.



Team members include: Dr Ian Cormack, Dr Sarah Horne, Dr Wendy Armstrong, Andrew Widdowson, Dr Leslie Perry, Consultant Scientist, Carl DeSouza, Advanced Nurse Practitioner

Mark your diary!



1 December

Colleague thanks

The South London HIV Network would like to extend a special thank you to our Project Manager, **Adam Bradley**, who has supported the Network over the past six months. Adam is moving on to his next placement in the Civil Service Fast Stream, and we wish him every success.

THANKS!

The Network will continue to be managed by Clinical Leads **Dr Lisa Hamzah**, Clinical Lead HIV Medicine, St George's Hospital and **Dr Liz Hamlyn**, Consultant Physician in HIV and General Internal Medicine, King's College Hospital, with **Geraldine Clay**, SLOSS Project Manager.

South London specialised networks

SLOSS team update

SL clinical networks: Mid year progress reflections

All of the 20+ South London specialised clinical networks have submitted their 2025/26 mid year reports, capturing achievements and progress at the halfway mark. These reports reflect the breadth and depth of collaborative work underway across the system – from pathway redesign and personalised care to clinical leadership development and digital transformation.

Each network continues to drive improvements in care quality and outcomes, often in areas where patients experience the most complexity or inequality. From major conditions like cardiac, renal, and neuro, to rarer or more specialised areas, the networks are a vital part of our regional infrastructure.

To help make sense of this landscape, Alice Ward, Associate Director of Networks and Transformation, has mapped the workstreams and ambitions of each network against the strategic pillars of the NHS 10 Year Plan. This analysis highlights how the networks are contributing to system goals like:

- Better use of data and digital tools
- Strengthened multidisciplinary working
- Prevention and earlier diagnosis
- More equitable, joined-up care

To learn more about the network's priorities or this analysis, please contact [Alice Ward](#).

Peer support for network managers

Our September South London Clinical Network Managers meeting covered key system updates, the NHS planning framework, and early discussion on the future role of networks. Some of this content reflected our own interpretation to spark debate, rather than formal policy.

The 22 October meeting will be rescheduled. Agenda items welcome. Please contact [Andrea Marlow](#) for details.

SL network news

London Spinal Cord Injury Network Manager appointed

Shiona MacPherson has been appointed the new London Spinal Cord Injury Network manager. Shiona comes with a wealth of NHS and network experience, and will commence in post from 27 October.

The network extended its sincere thanks to Natalia Neira for steering the ship as Network manager for the last two years. Natalia has worked tirelessly to develop the network and to move it forward working together to implement the wider programme, improve SCI care for patients and support for staff.





Spotlight on hepatitis and the ODNs:

Quietly transforming early diagnosis, outreach, and care

Hepatitis B and C are preventable, treatable – but often invisible – conditions. Many people live for years without symptoms, unaware they are infected. Left undiagnosed, these viruses can cause serious long term harm, including cirrhosis, liver failure, and cancer. But South London is leading the way in finding, supporting, and treating people at risk, *because early diagnosis saves lives.*

South London has two of the UK's most established Hepatitis Operational Delivery Networks (ODNs), led by **Dr Kosh Agarwal** (South East London, King's College Hospital) and **Dr Dan Forton** (South West London, St George's Hospital). These expert networks coordinate testing, treatment, and care across multiple NHS trusts, playing a critical role in public health, prevention, and addressing inequalities.

In recent years, they've driven a quiet revolution in early diagnosis, from opt out testing in EDs to community outreach in shopping centres, libraries and churches. **The result? More people diagnosed earlier. More lives changed. And more progress on the path to elimination.**

1.6M HBV and HCV tests performed

2,271 new HBV and HCV diagnoses

783 people previously diagnosed but not in care, now re-engaged

"This is exactly the kind of public and inclusion health work the NHS should be doing. It's good news, and it's saving lives."

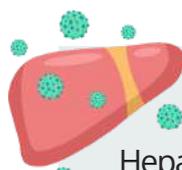
-- Dr Kosh Agarwal
SEL Hepatitis ODN Lead

Opt out ED testing : A simple idea, saving lives

Since 2020, South London has been part of a quiet NHS success story: routine, opt out testing for HIV, hepatitis B (HBV) and hepatitis C (HCV) in emergency departments (EDs).

It's simple – and it works: Any adult having bloods taken in A&E is also tested for these blood borne viruses, unless they say no.

Across the 10 hospitals now live in South London, the results speak for themselves. This model helps spot silent infections early, link people to treatment, and prevent future liver disease and cancer, especially in communities where health inequalities are most pronounced.



Why early diagnosis matters

Hepatitis B and C often progress silently, with symptoms appearing only once significant liver damage has occurred. Timely diagnosis enables access to antiviral treatment, reduces onward transmission, and prevents complications including cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma. South London's ED testing model identifies infections earlier – particularly in underserved populations – supporting both individual outcomes and population health goals.

Special: Tackling hepatitis, saving lives

Community outreach: Testing where it's needed most

In Lewisham and Brixton, King's College Hospital and the Caribbean and African Health Network (CAHN) have partnered to offer free, drop in testing for hepatitis B, including on site FibroScan liver health checks. The HBV testing was kindly funded by [King's College Hospital Charity](#).

Outreach locations (Oct–Dec 2025)

- Brixton Library: 23 Oct, 6 Nov, 20 Nov, 4 Dec
- Lewisham Shopping Centre: 28 Oct, 11 Nov, 25 Nov, 9 Dec
- Calvary Temple, Camberwell: 4 Oct
- St Mark's, Kennington: 25 Oct



“We’re passionate about bringing testing into the heart of our communities. It’s a privilege to connect with people where they are, build trust, and support early diagnosis.”

-- Kathryn Oakes
Clinical Nurse Specialist
King's College Hospital



What are hepatitis ODNs?

Operational delivery networks (ODNs) coordinate care across multiple NHS partners for complex conditions.

South London's hepatitis ODNs are national leaders in:

- ✓ Driving early diagnosis
- ✓ Linking people into lifesaving treatment
- ✓ Supporting NHS 10 Year Health Plan goals on prevention and equity
- ✓ Helping reduce liver cancer rates

In their words: Supa's story

In this video filmed during World Hepatitis Day, Supa Chantschool, founder of [Hep B Companion](#), highlights the importance of why testing matters.

“Hi, my name is Supa Chantschool, and I'm living with hepatitis B. Most people don't even know they have it – and without early testing, it can lead to liver cancer. That's why testing matters.”

— Supa Chantschool
Patient advocate, Founder of Hep B Companion



Special: Tackling hepatitis, saving lives

Hepatitis B and C: What's the difference?

Both hepatitis B (HBV) and hepatitis C (HCV) are blood borne viruses that can damage the liver, often silently, without symptoms for years. But they differ in key ways:



Hepatitis B

- More common globally
- Often passed from mother to baby or through unprotected sex.
- No cure yet, but can be managed with long term treatment, and a safe, effective vaccine can prevent it.

Hepatitis C

- Mainly spread through blood to blood contact (eg, sharing needles or medical equipment in the past).
- Usually curable with a short course of tablets.

Early detection matters. Left untreated, both viruses can lead to liver damage and cancer. But with timely testing and care, people can live long and healthy lives.

The NHS hepatitis C elimination programme has been internationally recognised, with around **100,000** people treated since 2015 and a **57%** reduction in prevalence between 2015 and 2023.



Care closer to home: Hepatitis C self testing kits

Order a kit online
hepctest.nhs.uk



As part of the drive towards a more personalised, prevention focussed *Neighbourhood Health Service*, the NHS is expanding access to free, at home hepatitis C testing.

Tens of thousands of people at higher risk, including those who may not regularly engage with traditional services, can order a discreet, self sampling kit online. This initiative is a key part of NHS England's national Hepatitis C elimination programme, helping to prevent serious liver disease, reduce health inequalities, and connect more people into life saving care.

Elimination is the goal – but we're not there yet

We've made major progress on hepatitis B and C across South London. Opt out testing in EDs, community outreach, and at home kits are all helping us find more people at risk and connect them to care.

But there's still work to do. We're seeing new diagnoses every month. That tells us there are still many people living with hepatitis who don't know it, especially in underserved communities.

Elimination is a long term journey. But every earlier diagnosis, every re-engaged patient, and every conversation brings us closer.

The healthcare landscape is complex.

South London integrated care boards (ICBs) and specialist providers have taken the opportunity to work collaboratively to integrate specialised services and deliver an end to end pathway approach for patients.

South London partners

- [Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- [King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- [St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- [South East London Integrated Care System](#)
- [South West London Integrated Care System](#)
- [The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust](#)

SLOSS is a system change catalyst, guiding specialised healthcare in South London towards a more equitable, efficient, and sustainable future.

Our values of collaboration, inclusivity, and a commitment to excellence enable us to foster strong partnerships across the system, breaking down silos and enabling seamless care delivery.

Driven by our mission to underpin specialised transformation with a robust and compelling evidence base, we provide the data, insights, and implementation expertise needed to optimise specialised care pathways, reduce inequalities, improve efficiency, and ensure value for money.

**Want to know more?**

Connect and follow us:
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