NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration West

ARCBITE

Brokering Innovation Through Evidence

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Driving the use of low dead space injecting equipment among people who inject drugs

Low dead space injecting equipment has less space between the needle and the plunger after injecting. Blood and drug remain in this space, so if needles are shared the risk of spreading blood borne viruses such as HIV and Hepatitis C may be lower when there's less space for blood to be left in the equipment.

The traditional injecting equipment with detachable needles supplied by needle and syringe programmes has a higher volume of dead space. Low dead space syringes with detachable needles for people who inject drugs are a relatively new innovation.

Our earlier research with the NIHR Health Protection Research Unit (HPRU) in Evaluation of Interventions at the University of Bristol found that people who inject drugs would be willing to switch to this safer equipment, if the benefits were explained and they were introduced gradually.

What was the aim of the project?

This project aimed to increase the adoption of this new, safer equipment in needle and syringe programmes, through developing materials promoting their benefits.

What did we do?

We developed posters, a booklet and animation to promote the benefits and use of low dead space equipment, and broader harm reduction messages, for people who inject drugs, the needle and syringe programmes supporting them, and policymakers. We worked closely with Bristol Drugs Project, people who inject drugs and a designer with a track record of creating public health materials for this audience.

The research is supported by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Applied Research Collaboration (ARC West) at University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust.

What did we do?

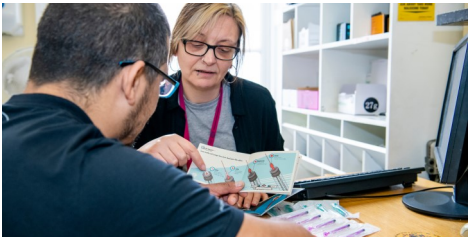
Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), Deborah Hussey, Assertive Engagement Worker from Bristol Drugs Project, joined the CLAHRC West (now ARC West) team as Knowledge Mobilisation Fellow.

Deborah visited needle and syringe programmes around the UK, from Glasgow to London, to understand barriers to the uptake of low dead space equipment, and how different programmes operate and share harm reduction messages.

Deborah and the rest of the team worked with designer Michael Linnell of Linnell Communications.

Through a series of workshops, the materials were co-designed by service users from Bristol Drugs Project, who shaped the messages, language and look and feel of the materials. They were a diverse group in terms of age, level of experience in injecting drugs and equipment preferences.

Working closely with the intended audiences means the materials have been tailored to their needs and preferences, so will have a greater impact and resonance with them.



View the materials

The posters and leaflet:
bit.ly/ExchangeSuppliesLDSS

Watch the videos on YouTube:
bit.ly/DeadSpaceVideos

Download the videos:
bit.ly/DownloadDeadSpaceVideos

What next?

We are sharing the materials widely with service users, needle and syringe programmes, commissioners and public health stakeholders both nationally and internationally. They are available to download from Exchange Supplies' website. Exchange Supplies has pioneered the use of detachable low dead space equipment among people who inject drugs.

Find out more

arc-w.nihr.ac.uk/Use-low-dead-space/

Read the paper

Co-design of harm reduction materials for people who inject drugs to implement research findings
Deborah Hussey, Zoe Trinder-Widdess, Darren Bagnall, Cassie Dee, Tatty Bojangles, Jo Kesten
Published in Harm Reduction Journal
bit.ly/DeadSpacePaper

With thanks to...

This project was supported by Bristol Drugs Project, Exchange Supplies, Public Health England, the Bristol Health Partners Drug and Alcohol Health Integration Team (HIT), NIHR ARC West, NIHR HPRU in Evaluation of Interventions at the University of Bristol and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

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