



Efficacy of Hospital Alcohol Care Teams

Case Study

Executive summary

Through collaborative working between the Royal Oldham Hospital Alcohol Care Team, Community Alcohol Treatment Services, and Residential Rehabilitation, a patient successfully achieved sobriety and rebuilt her life. ***With the team's support, she progressed from a volunteer role to a peer mentor position and is now completing a Return to Practice Nursing course to rejoin her profession*** — a career once lost to alcohol dependency.

This individual success reflects the wider impact of temporary funding, which enabled significant service improvements. These included the introduction of a 7-day service, faster patient assessments, and the implementation of the Hospital to Home Detox pathway. The team also broadened its remit to include all forms of substance use, developed new treatment and referral pathways, delivered specialist training, and enhanced data collection.

As a result, the service achieved measurable benefits: reduced hospital admissions, shorter patient stays, fewer repeat attendances, and safer, higher-quality care for people affected by alcohol and substance use.

Timing: July 2022 to 2025

What did we do?

Additional funding allowed us to significantly expand and enhance service delivery, including:

- **7-day service provision** (including bank holidays) and implementation of the Hospital to Home Detox pathway, originally for Rochdale residents but now rolled out at ROH following policy updates.
- **Broaden service scope** to support patients with substance use beyond alcohol.
- **New treatment pathways** developed for Oncology and Outpatient departments, ensuring appropriate referral and support.
- **Training for ward staff** on managing patients presenting with illicit substance use.
- **Improved data collection** on patients presenting with substance use to better evidence service demand.
- **Faster assessment and intervention**, reducing preventable hospital admissions and shortening patient length of stay.
- **Frequent attender work** to reduce repeat attendances and re-admissions.
- **Expanded withdrawal management training** across the hospital, improving the safety and quality of patient care.



What did we find?

The Hospital Alcohol Care Team have utilised the temporary funding to support patients. Laura's (anonymised) story is a beacon for what the service can provide.

Laura's journey began with repeated hospital admissions for alcohol-related issues. During one such admission at The Royal Oldham Hospital, she met an Alcohol Specialist Nurse from the Alcohol Care Team who gave her something she had lost — hope.

At that time, Laura had lost nearly everything: her nursing career, her family, her home, and her sense of self-worth. With support from the Alcohol Care Team, she was referred to Turning Point and completed a three-month residential rehab programme. This marked the start of her recovery journey.

Through ongoing focus, determination, and peer support, Laura maintained her sobriety and began rebuilding her life. She trained as a Peer Mentor, volunteered with Turning Point, and progressed to employment as a Recovery Worker specialising in homelessness.

Now, Laura is studying at Cumbria University on a Return to Practice Nursing course, only weeks away from rejoining the Nursing and Midwifery Council register — achieving her lifelong dream of nursing again.

Today, she shares her story publicly to inspire others and reduce the stigma surrounding addiction. Laura credits the Alcohol Care Team at Royal Oldham Hospital for their compassion and support, emphasising how vital such services are in giving people like her a second chance at life.



Funding helped the team give patients like Laura **hope and a path to recovery**.

With support, Laura rebuilt her life and **now helps others working as a recovery worker specialising in homelessness**.

Laura is returning to nursing — **proof that the Alcohol Care team changes lives**.

Key challenges & lessons learned

1. Sustainability of funding

Additional funding helped with resourcing of additional staff such as specialist nurses and a service manager. The service offer was widened to be able to support people beyond just alcohol-related care to supporting people with wider substance use needs.

2. Staffing

Maintain experienced specialist staffing to meet the rising demand in people seeking help for alcohol and substance use is important.

3. Maintaining quality and accessibility of care

The service is effective as it is able to offer quick assessments and timely interventions outside of core hours. Maintaining quality and accessibility of care is an important element of the service. **This will lead to more preventable hospital admissions and longer stays.**

4. Expansion requires ongoing resources

To expand beyond alcohol-related care, the service needs **continuous investment in specialist training, coordination, and resources.**

5. Data and outcomes

Reliable data and evaluation are vital to demonstrate success and secure future funding, **however short-term funding may not assess long-term outcomes.**

6. Impact on patient care

Joined-up care and consistent support helps patients recover and rebuild their lives. **Maintaining this level of support will lead to reducing hospital readmissions and helping people return to their communities.**

If you want to know more about the **Efficacy of Hospital Alcohol Care Teams** case study, contact gmhscp.adminpopulationhealth@nhs.net