

Tuberculosis in North East Lincolnshire

responding to an apparent long-term cluster of TB in under-served populations in a low incidence area

Local context

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On average, there are around six cases of TB in North East Lincolnshire each year, giving North East Lincolnshire an incidence rate three times lower than England

In contrast to the national picture of TB, a high proportion of our cases involve white British people with **social risk factors** for TB, such as substance misuse, homelessness or imprisonment



OpenDoor

Open Door is a unique facility in the heart of Grimsby that provides GP, health care and social support services, information, advice and guidance. Many of its service users are from our most deprived and vulnerable communities.

It has also served as the base for our local TB service.

Case note review

In response to the cluster, NELC's public health team carried out two case note reviews, the first looking at the histories of eight patients who had used the local specialist TB service, and the second looking at the histories of seven patients (including some from the cluster) who had died following a TB diagnosis.



Findings from the review include:

- Late diagnosis with missed opportunities to diagnose earlier
- The possibility TB isn't being considered as a potential diagnosis
- Patients with very chaotic lives and numerous social risk factors

66%
were male

53%
had been smokers

73%
had abused alcohol

20%
had a prior history of TB

In response, we have actively raised the issue at GP development sessions, to increase awareness of the likelihood of TB, and shared our findings with PHE.

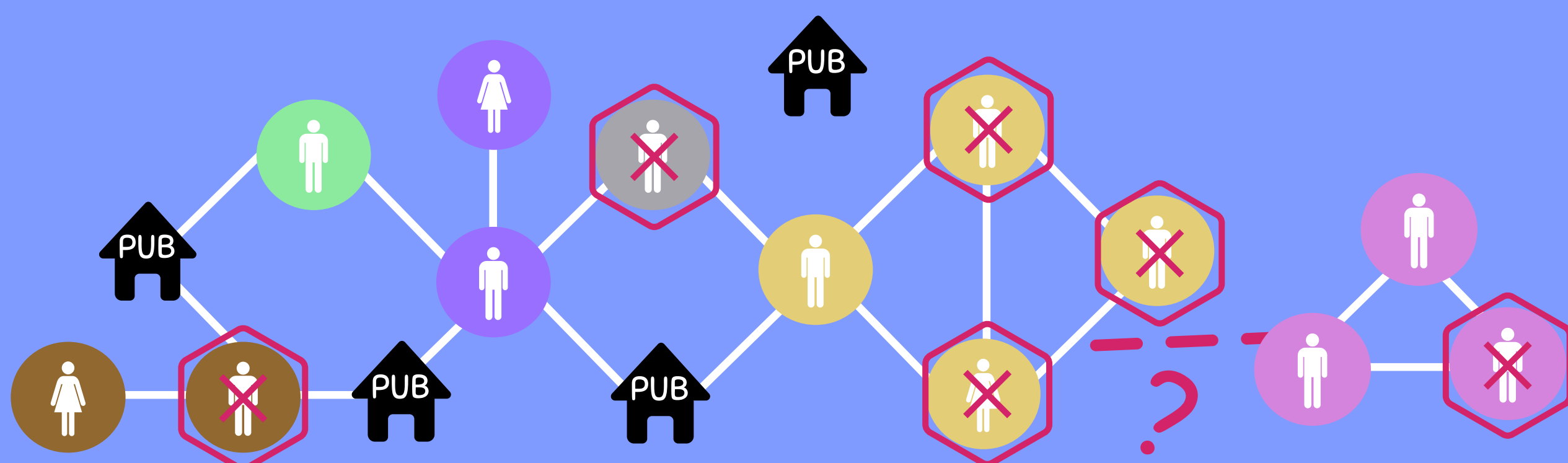


The cluster



In 2016, following contact tracing carried out by local TB nurses, and evidence built by PHE's field epidemiology team, it was established that a cluster of TB cases existed, centered around local drinking networks and particular pubs, with cases as far back as 2009

Each circle is a person, coloured by strain of TB — A line is a link between people or places



Summary and key messages

High alcohol use is a significant risk factor for TB in North East Lincolnshire

Incidence remains low, but has increased of late, especially in white urban populations with chaotic lives

TB should be considered as a possible diagnosis in patients with social risk factors and symptoms such as a persistent cough, coughing up blood and night sweats