

TB Strategy Update

This is a regular update that provides information on the progress of the **Collaborative TB Strategy for England 2015 - 2020**. To subscribe to future updates please [click here](#)

1. World TB Day 2020

Each year, we commemorate World Tuberculosis (TB) Day on March 24 to raise public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of TB, and to step up efforts to end the global TB epidemic.

This year on World TB Day, with COVID-19 taking over so much of our work, we'd like to recognise the amazing work that TB stakeholders do, not only to support people with TB but are, and will be, doing for those affected by COVID-19.

It is important that we support the fight against this new pandemic, share our lessons, experiences and tools from TB, as an infectious respiratory disease, so that united we can defeat TB and COVID-19.



The theme of World TB Day 2020 - **'It's time'** – puts the accent on the urgency to act on the commitments made by global leaders at the UN General Assembly high level meeting on TB in 2018 to:

- scale up access to TB prevention and treatment
- build accountability
- promote an end to stigma and discrimination, and
- promote an equitable, rights-based and people-centered TB response

Alongside the **'It's time'** theme, the international Stop TB Partnership are also encouraging us to show compassion and to stand together in our fight against COVID-19 as well as TB.

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2. National TB Strategy – Summary of achievements, 2015 - 2020

THANK YOU to all stakeholders who have helped deliver the TB Strategy and its 10 'areas for action' over the last 5 years. We really appreciate all the hardwork you put into caring for patients and improving TB control. Collectively we have achieved a considerable amount, but of course there is more still to do!

Summarised below are some of the key achievements of the last 5years

- A substantial decline in TB (27% in 5 years)
- A blue print and common purpose for TB multi-agency stakeholders
- Improved collaboration & co-ordination between stakeholders
- Establishment of seven regional multi-agency TB Control Boards to drive local implementation of the Strategy. These have been successful at creating a forum in which local TB stakeholders can come together, to plan and take action to tackle TB in the most appropriate way e.g. by developing and supporting TB networks (clinical and nursing), supporting development of local pathways for patients with no recourse to public funds; piloting WGS cluster investigation pathways and linkage to TB services; and instituting supra Cohort Reviews.
- A national TB clinical policy and service specification to assist TB commissioning
- Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) for TB rolled out country wide 2017/18
- Detection by pre-entry TB screening of 250+ active TB cases a year
- A focus on workforce development
 - creation and support of TB nurse networks
 - professionalisation of the TB nursing workforce
 - annual national TB nurse conferences
- Production of a large amount of TB awareness raising literature and tools in association with TB Alert (online GP e-learning modules / nurse slide sets / social marketing / animations / new TB leaflets)
- A national 'MDR-TB needs assessment' undertaken by PHE in 2017 and supplied to the NHS England specialised commissioning infectious diseases specification review
- Conducted in 2019 a National Point Prevalence Study of the social needs of patients to inform future developments of the new national TB surveillance system and to support better provision of services for TB patients with social needs
- Completed a TB Stakeholder Survey in 2019 to gather information to feed into the development of the future TB Action Plan for England post 2020
- Generated lots of innovation, for example:
 - A new migrant LTBI testing and treatment programme that by 2020 had screened over 63,000 people for latent TB, with a test positivity rate of 17%
 - Re-developed and supported the British Thoracic Society MDR-TB Clinical Advice Service
 - A North West Paediatric TB Care Pathway and virtual MDT
 - A comprehensive resource to tackle TB in under-served populations
 - A new housing pathway and fund for homeless TB patients in London
 - An online tool, PHE Finger-tips, developed to help local authorities and CCGs interrogate local and national TB data
 - A National Prison Radio TB awareness programme
 - An LTBI testing pilot in foreign national prisons conducted successfully

3. Update on TB Strategy 'areas for action' progress 2019/20



Area 1 - Improve access to services and early diagnosis

- TB Alert have developed innovative communication approaches to increase the uptake of LTBI testing that include social media, social marketing and other community access points
- TB Alert are updating their existing range of patient information leaflets which are available online to download and print locally
- TB Alert have developed a resource pack for running TB lay-champions programmes. This includes guidance, training resources and a wide range of awareness resources which can be adapted to local pathways and needs. (See page 6 for further information)



Area 2 - Provide universal access to high quality diagnostics

- The National Mycobacterium Reference Service (NMRS) has produced 8 short educational videos on Whole Genome Sequencing: what it means, and the procedures and service at the NMRS. The videos are available on the PHE YouTube channel or [via this link](#).
- In 2019, NMRS conducted a vertical audit in 33 NHS laboratories to look at how NHS laboratories relay the information in NMRS reference reports to local TB clinicians and TB nurses in the North and Midlands. Action was taken on the back of this audit to improve reporting. A similar audit is planned nationally in 2020 aimed at seeking approaches to influence report formats in NHS labs to ensure accurate transmission of results and interpretive comments.
- NMRS is currently conducting a TB PCR Survey to understand laboratory and clinician access to TB PCR and determine if additional resources or education are required to facilitate access
- A pilot study is underway to look at how to improve the timeliness of reporting of WGS relatedness data by Health Protection Teams to TB Services
- The NMRS clinical team continue to participate in the BTS MDR-TB monthly MDTs as Clinical Service Advisors.

Area 3 - Improve treatment and care services

- TB in low incidence areas remains a challenge – in 2019 the national TB Strategy team set-up a task and finish group to assess and report on this. Considerable work has been done and a report / a resource is currently being prepared on how to meet the challenges sharing best practise examples and much more. This will be shared once finalised.
- The national TB Strategy team held a **clinical brainstorming session to inform the clinical priorities for the future TB Action Plan**. TB Control Board lead clinicians and lead TB nurses, alongside national TB leads with a clinical interest in TB were involved.
- **TB Control Boards are working to support and strengthen local TB clinical and nurse networks**
- **North West paediatric care pathway**, delivering a weekly 'virtual' multi-disciplinary clinic that networks a specialist paediatric consultant to district general hospital consultants and teams, shared nationally with TBCBs for their consideration



Area 4 - Improve contact tracing

- A national piece of work is ongoing work to develop a contact tracing pack for nurses to help improve contact tracing practices
- The roll out of WGS technology nationally is supporting more focussed contact tracing.



Area 5 - Improve BCG vaccination uptake

- A national BCG and Mantoux ‘train the trainer’ resource has been developed and piloted at the Y&H TB nurses’ forum and will now be roll-out nationally.
- Funding has been secured from PHE to support development of an e-learning module on Mantoux and BCG
- The national TB team are involved in planning for the implementation of the neonatal SCID Screening pilot in 2020 that will move BCG vaccination to 4-6 weeks of age rather than being at birth i.e. after a SCID result is known.
- A new BCG specification is being drafted by NHSE/I Public Health Commissioning to support the changes in the BCG programme

Area 6 - Reduce drug resistant TB

- PHE and NHSE continue to **support the BTS MDR-TB Clinical Advice Service** (launched in January 2018). Monthly virtual MDTs are taking place where MDR-TB cases, notified to this service, are discussed and advice provided by formally appointed MDR-TB experts including clinicians, microbiologists, public health specialists and TB nurses. This service also supports the prescribing of Bedaquiline and Delamanid as mandated by NHS England’s Specialised Commissioning service’s clinical policy and by the national TB clinical policy.



Area 7 - Tackling TB in under-served populations

- **The National Knowledge Service - Tuberculosis (NKS-TB)** has updated its on line resources. The target audiences are affected individuals, members of the public, healthcare professionals, and others with a duty of care. The collection of guidance can be accessed on the PHE TB pages or by clicking [here](#)
- **Video Observed Therapy (VOT)** provided by the London based ‘Find and Treat’ Service is available once again to London patients and available by tariff nationally for those with complex TB. In addition the national TB Strategy team are undertaking a review of VOT use.
- **An LTBI pilot has been undertaken in two foreign national prisons in the South East of England** to inform future national policy on LTBI testing and treatment in prisons
- **A national point prevalence study of the social need of TB patients** has been completed. Analysis of the data is underway and results will inform data fields in the new national TB surveillance system (NTBS) and future policy and clinical decisions
- A national prison training pack to raise TB awareness in prisons is being developed by the under-served populations delivery group

Area 8 - Implement new entrant latent TB (LTBI) testing and treatment

- The LBTI programme is now well embedded and over the last year several CCGs have switched their model of testing from primary care to secondary care. This has led to testing and treatment uptake improving. The NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE/I) team are working closely with CCGs to improve performance.
- **As of December 2019, over 63,000 LTBI tests have been reported since commencement of the programme in 2015 with an LTBI positivity rate of 17% (PHE monitoring data).**
- NHSE/I and PHE continue to support the provision of Flag 4 data to participating CCGs. Flag 4 data contains a list of all new migrants registering with GP and is used by LTBI programme providers to identify the population who should be invited for testing.
- **LTBI Web Portal** - all laboratories are now successfully submitting data using the bulk upload function. During November 2019, the web portal was piloted with the West Midland TB services and a training event was held.
- Luis Berrocal-Almanza from Imperial College London and part of the Respiratory HPRU team is evaluating the national LTBI programme and the results should be available soon.
- **PHE and TB Alert have designed a leaflet on 'LTBI testing and treatment' for migrants being tested for TB by the UK's pre-entry screening programme.** The leaflet is being provided to those granted visa's to increase awareness of latent TB and encourage uptake of LTBI testing once an individual has entered the UK.

Area 9 - Strengthen surveillance and monitoring

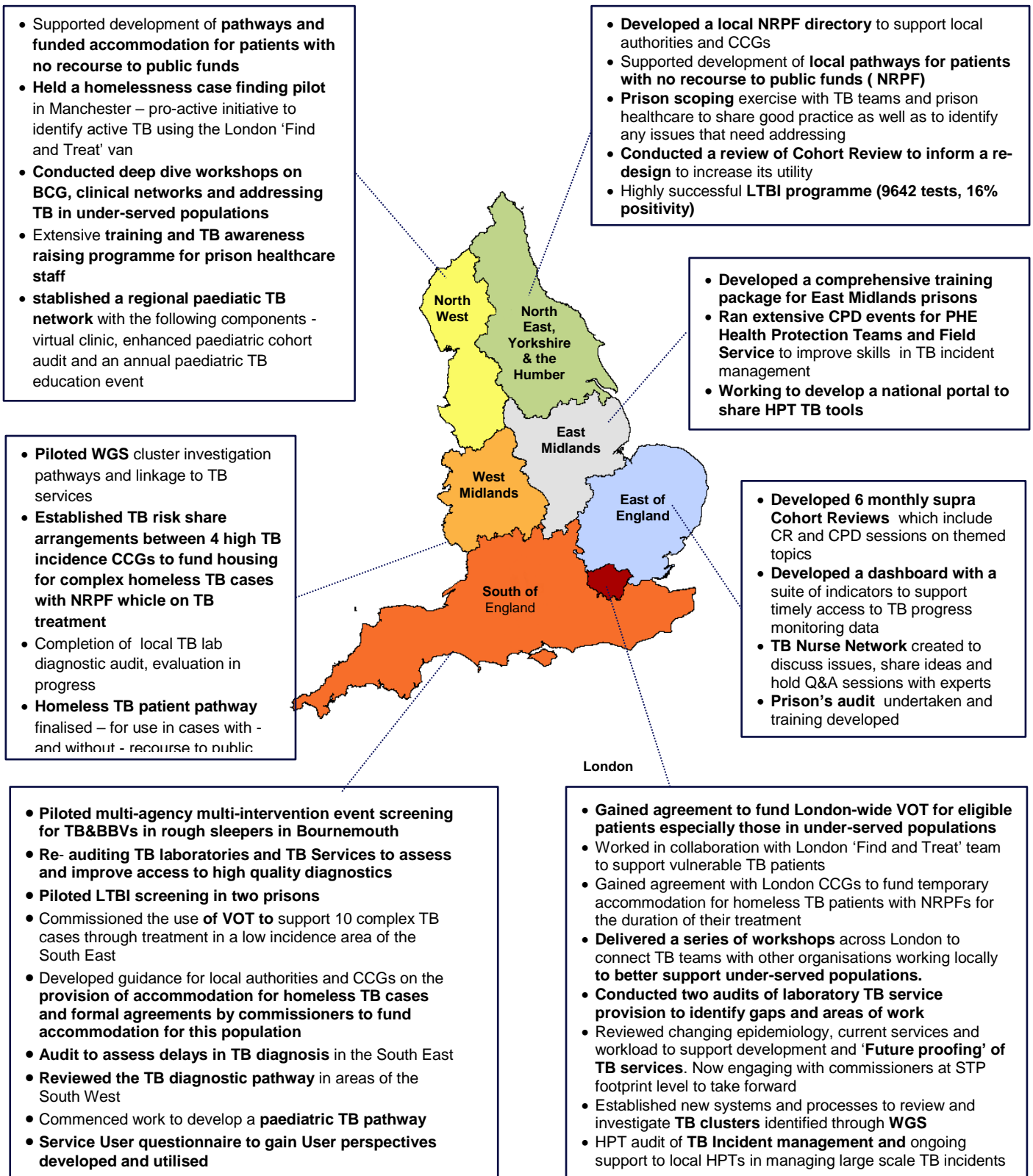
- **TB Strategy monitoring indicators** – are updated yearly in the annual report and are available via [PHE Fingertips](#) to enable interactive interrogation of TB data at Local Authority and CCG level <http://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/tb-monitoring>
- **TB Strategy progress measures** developed to support monitoring of implementation of the 10 'areas for action' at a national and TBCB level – **17 out of 22 measures now met**
- **TB Infographics**, based on the Annual TB report data, prepared and released at national and TBCB level with the Annual TB report (available [here](#) and on the PHE website)
- **Quarterly reports for TB notifications** in England have been published quarterly since February 2019, providing provisional high-level data on key TB indicators, and include further breakdowns by region. These reports aim to provide timely and up-to-date figures on key epidemiological indicators to inform ongoing TB control efforts in England. Click [here](#) to see:

Area 10 - Ensure an appropriate workforce to deliver TB control

- **[The Royal College of Nursing - Case management tool for TB Prevention, Care and Control](#)** was updated and is now available on the RCN website
- Two, one-day **TB nurse leadership workshops** were held in March 2019. Ninety-five nurses attended and both workshops were well received
- A national survey to capture nursing workload, activities and management of people on treatment for non-tuberculosis mycobacteria (NTM) was completed
- **4th annual National TB nurse conference** organised by PHE and NHSE/I was held in September 2019. Over 50% (200) of all TB nurses in England attended the conference
- A national network for TB support workers is being explored and champions sought
- The national TB team are exploring with other teams in PHE, the use of **[Project ECHO](#)** an on-line tool to support group and internet learning

4. Showcasing achievements of the 7 TB Control Boards - 2018-2020

The local implementation of the TB Strategy has been achieved through the hard work of 7 TBCBs and their partners. They meet at least three times a year and focus on 'areas for action' relevant to their local epidemiology as well as some national priorities, utilising nationally and locally developed resources to deliver better local TB control. Please find showcased here some of their achievements.



5. End of TB Strategy Programme Report – under preparation

The national TB Strategy team are currently drafting an End of TB Strategy Programme Report summarising key activities, achievements, outputs, outcomes and lessons learnt from implementing the *Collaborative TB Strategy for England, 2015-2020*. The End of Programme report would be shared with stakeholders once finalised.

6. An update on the new TB Action Plan for England, 2020-2025

As outlined in the December edition of the *TB Strategy Update* the national TB Strategy team have been working hard to prepare a draft future TB Action Plan for England, 2020-2025. A huge amount of work and stakeholder engagement has gone in to this but sadly due to PHEs involvement in the COVID-19 response its preparation has been paused. As soon as is feasibly possible we will return to this work.

PHE is committed to developing and delivering a new 5 year TB Action Plan, as outlined in its [Infectious Diseases Strategy](#) launched last September and together we will use it to move England towards TB elimination by 2035.

7. TB Alert Update

Latent TB Champions toolkit

TB Alert, in partnership with London Tri-Borough CCGs, has developed a range of resources for running a TB Champions latent TB outreach programme. In Tri-Borough, client-facing staff and volunteers from a consortium of refugee and migrant organisations were trained on TB and how to support uptake of testing and treatment within their communities. As TB Champions are embedded in the communities they represent, they understand their communities' needs, are a trusted source of information, and speak their languages – both literally and figuratively!

For World TB Day 2020, TB Alert has packaged the resources into a Latent TB Champions Toolkit. The toolkit provides public health teams and programme managers with guidance and resources for developing and delivering latent TB awareness-raising through community TB champions.

It features:

- guidance on developing a champions programme
- training presentations and materials
- resources for community outreach including 'Flipbook' presentation and evaluation tools
- complements existing latent TB awareness and support materials
- can be adapted to local specifications, contact Helen Clegg by email or telephone 01273 234030 for details

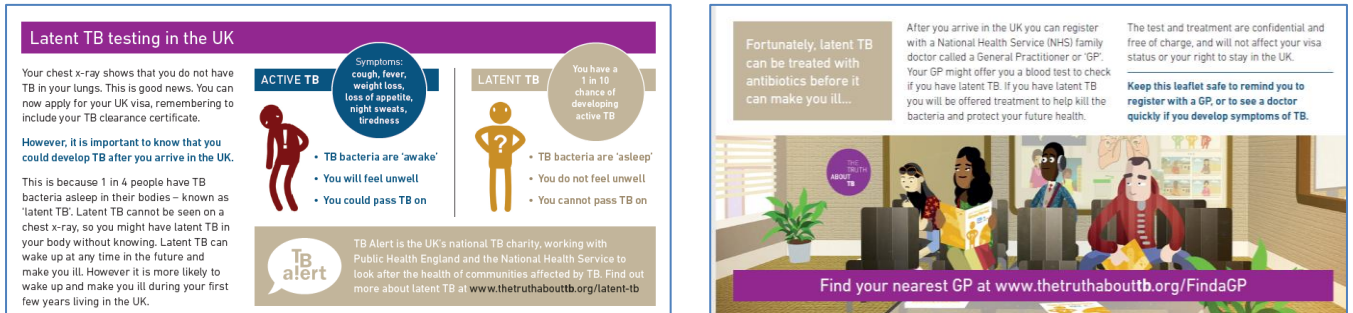


The Latent TB Champions flipbook is a portable, freestanding printed presentation with speaker's notes for Champions to use in their community outreach work. View the content in this short video/link:

https://www.thetruthabouttb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/LatentTB_Champions_Flipbook_WEB.mp4

Pre-entry latent TB advice flyer

TB Alert has produced a leaflet which is being given to UK visa applicants in their countries of origin when they have their pre-entry screening chest x-ray. It explains about post-entry latent TB testing and gives guidance about registering with a GP. It has been translated into eleven languages which can be viewed through this gov.uk link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/latent-tuberculosis-testing-in-the-uk>



National TB Communications Plan

TB Alert are now seeking funds to deliver more of the recommendations of the National TB Communications Steering Group’s report, which was published in early 2019. A high priority is to create an online information, training and resource centre for the third sector. This would help many organisations within the sector tackle TB within affected communities, improving access to diagnosis and supporting people during treatment. This online centre would reflect the needs of various population groups, for example different under-served populations.

8. 2020 National TB nurse and TB workforce conference

Good news - NHS England and NHS improvement has agreed to support the National TB nurse and TB workforce conference for the fifth year. However due to the COVID 19 incident it has been postponed from July 2020 to later in the year – a new date and agenda will be circulated once the impact of COVID 19 on the health service has significantly decreased.

We’d like to thank all stakeholders working to improve TB control in England for your continued hard work and support

A new 5-year TB Action Plan is under development this aims to further improve TB control, to maintain and extend the downward trend in TB incidence and move us towards TB elimination

Elimination is now our goal!

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