



Public Health
England

University Hospitals Bristol **NHS**

NHS Foundation Trust

DEPARTMENT OF RESPIRATORY MEDICINE

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Bristol Royal Infirmary

Marlborough Street

Bristol BS2 8HW

Dear GP,

The face of TB in the South West is changing.

Half of cases are UK born, and an increasing proportion has social risk factors

ALWAYS THINK TB

Investigation is simple - order a CXR, send sputum for TB culture and contact the TB Team

I am writing to you on behalf of the South of England TB control board in my capacity as the lead TB clinician for the South West.

Currently the South West is one of the worst performing regions in terms of delay between TB symptom onset and starting treatment. The 2018 annual TB report for England shows that 50% of all persons with pulmonary TB in the South West experience a delay of over four months before starting treatment.

Late presentation results in disease that is harder to treat as well as increases the risk of transmission in the community which requires complex contact tracing exercises.

We want to change this situation. We would particularly like to draw GP's attention to the changing demographic profile of TB patients. While anyone can get TB, we are seeing increased numbers of TB cases in the UK born population. We are seeing more **UK born patients with social risk factors, such as homelessness, drug misuse and previous imprisonment**. These patients tend to present later with more advanced infectious disease. Any delay in diagnosis further compounds the issues.

Symptoms of active TB disease include fever, unexplained weight loss, night sweats, loss of appetite, fatigue, cough lasting 3 weeks or coughing up blood.

If you suspect TB **do not wait**. Order a CXR, send 3x morning sputum for TB culture and contact your local TB service. A list of TB services and their contact can be found in the attached appendix.

Often the most underserved populations have chaotic lifestyles that mean they present late and are erratic about attending for x-rays or providing samples. We are happy to work with you to support "pre-diagnosis patients" you are concerned about, and will try to encourage patients to attend for x rays and do sputum samples where possible.

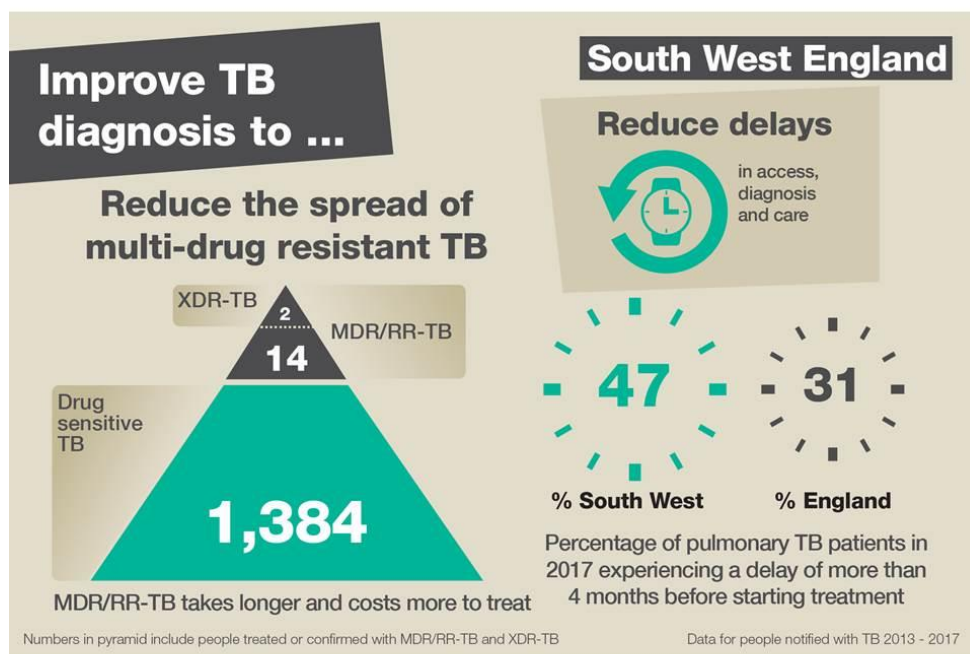
Please refer all presumptive TB cases to your local TB or respiratory service. For general clinical enquires please telephone 0117 3422966.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely

Dr Sarah Mungall
Associate Specialist in Respiratory Medicine and TB Clinical Lead for the TBCB

- cc. Mike Wade, Deputy Director of Health Protection, Public Health England South West
- cc. Dr A. Leahy, Consultant Respiratory Physician, BRI
- cc. Dr Izak Heys, Consultant Infectious Diseases Physician, Southmead Hospital
- cc. Dr J Calvert, Consultant Respiratory Physician, Southmead Hospital
- cc TB Nurses, South West



Appendix 1: **TB Services in the South West**

TB services	Phone
Bristol Tuberculosis Nurse Service Lawrence Hill Health Centre	0117 9543066
Carfax Swindon TB Contact Tracing Service	01793 546030
Cornwall NHS Trust	01209 318 052
Derriford Hospital	01752 439 948
East Dorset (Bournemouth & Poole)	01202 704 560 / 01202 704 570
Gloucestershire Royal Hospital	03004 222 222
Musgrove Park Hospital	01823 343 461
North Devon	01271 311 600
Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital	01392 406 253
Royal United Hospital	01225 825344
Salisbury District Hospital	01722 336262
Southmead Hospital	0117 4146341
The Great Western Hospital	01793 604020
Torbay Hospital	01803 655 117
Weston General	01934 636 363
Yeovil Hospital	01935 384 691