

T-SPOT[®] TB

*New entrant latent tuberculosis infection
screening in the UK*

Case study - Refugee and Migrant Centre in Wolverhampton

Implementing latent tuberculosis infection screening through a third party organisation

The Refugee and Migrant Centre in Wolverhampton

In Wolverhampton, the local authority has worked with the Refugee and Migrant Centre (RMC), local TB team and Oxford Immunotec in an effort to target vulnerable groups with a high incidence of latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI). Steve Barlow, Health Protection Lead Practitioner at City of Wolverhampton Council, explains how careful planning and close collaboration have resulted in a highly successful, award-winning implementation of TB screening in a non-clinical environment.

Steve Barlow explains

"In Wolverhampton we had a large number of entrants from countries with a high incidence of TB. By screening this group proactively for LTBI, we aimed to prevent the progression to active TB. That's why we approached the RMC to set up a screening project."

TB screening at the RMC

Prior to the pilot project in 2015 there was very little proactive LTBI screening in Wolverhampton.

"If we had gone with the national model of GPs screening," Steve continues, "information indicated we would have missed a large cohort of individuals that were vulnerable. That was the major benefit of the RMC model - the wide range of assistance they provide. One of the purposes of the LTBI screening was to get individuals registered with a GP, for access to healthcare assistance."



Founded in 1999 by volunteers



Provides assistance to migrants that have no other access to services



Clients from over 120 countries



Contact with more than 2500 clients in 2016

The South Staffordshire Medical Foundation Clinical Awards 2016

"A prime example of collaboration between Public Health, the RWT (The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust) TB Team, The Refugee & Migrant Centre and a private provider. This pilot service demonstrated that it is possible to provide access to health care for a population that might not otherwise receive it and by screening a high risk cohort an excellent diagnostic yield was obtained."

Implementing the pilot project



Wolverhampton city council worked in partnership with Oxford Immunotec to run a pilot project screening **100 individuals** with the T-SPOT.TB test to establish the extent of LTBI within the RMC community.

Asked about the implementation of TB screening at the RMC, Steve stresses the importance of looking beyond GP practices. "We found that the majority of people tested that were eligible for screening were not registered with a GP. There could be many reasons for this: lack of understanding of the GP system, language barrier or most likely because registering with a GP is not necessarily a priority for newly arrived young, predominantly male migrants."

When it comes to predicting potential barriers to successful TB screening, there were both personal and organisational barriers. Personal barriers of language and how to get around the stigma of TB and from an organisational point of view there is the issue of taking a clinical screening process into a community setting, making sure you still comply with all the clinical governance and other clinical issues.

A collaborative approach between all organisations helped to identify barriers early in the project. Steve reports: "We sat down with the teams to discuss what we wanted to achieve and what the barriers would be. We then worked holistically to overcome these barriers." The **expertise that Oxford Immunotec** brought to the planning and implementation of the project, for example in training and transport, played an important role in the success of the programme. "The role of Oxford Immunotec has been integral from the outset."

33%
Positive

97%
Treatment rate

Commenting on the results, Steve says: "I think it was really successful. In the entire pilot screen there's only been one individual who did not receive treatment, so that's a **97%** completed treatment rate, which is phenomenal. In the research I've looked at you never get a completion rate as high as that."

Continued success with funding from NHS England

After completing the pilot screening project in 2016, the City of Wolverhampton Council and Wolverhampton CCG applied to NHS England for funding to continue the programme. They are currently screening every two months and by early 2018, a total of 317 individuals that otherwise would have been missed have been screened; around 30% of individuals tested positive.

Commenting on future plans for TB screening, Steve adds: "We're going to continue with the RMC. It's a highly successful model, it's a proven model, but obviously the numbers might drop off as we catch up with the numbers of new entrants around. We're also looking at potential university screening. Wolverhampton has about 400 students from Africa and Asia that could be eligible for screening".

317
Individuals tested

Screening every
2 months

30%
Individuals tested positive

Steve concludes

For me, LTBI screening in public health - it's invaluable.

REFERENCE

1. The South Staffordshire Medical Foundation Clinical Awards 2016. Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust. <http://www.royalwolverhampton.nhs.uk/about-us/awards/the-southstaffordshire-medical-foundation-clinical-awards-2017/the-south-staffordshire-medical-foundation-clinical-awards-2016/> [Accessed May 2018]

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