



Beverley Jones, team leader and lead Tuberculosis (TB) nurse for the Barnsley health integration team explains how changes made to the Tuberculosis pathway in Barnsley have resulted in positive outcomes for patients accessing the service.

The Barnsley health integration service undertakes a health screening assessment for all asylum seekers and EU migrants arriving in Barnsley. During the health screening assessment the Barnsley Tuberculosis service's nurse undertakes a thorough examination of the individual which usually lasts for approximately one hour, and includes screening for Tuberculosis.

The process of identifying and treating individuals with TB was previously very long. It could take up to eight months from the initial screening to the patient completing their treatment. This obviously increased the risks for the individual being treated and also the local population as the individual could potentially be contagious and pass the disease onto others.

Due to the risks involved with such a long delay, the service reviewed the pathway and introduced a shorter pathway to enable those with TB to be treated significantly faster.

Previous pathway problems

The significant time period between diagnosis and treatment increased the risk for the individual and the risk of the disease being spread.

Due to the length of the pathway, the number of individual appointments that patients were expected to attend was high, and that the majority of individuals who accessed the pathway did not speak English as their first language. This led to confusion and a misunderstanding of the appointments that they needed to attend and as a result the 'did not attend' rate for the pathway was significantly high.

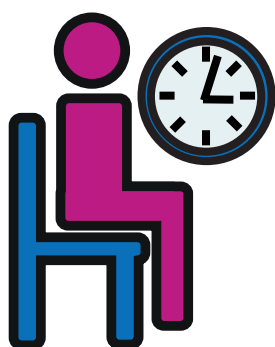
To combat this, the Barnsley TB service collaborated with the Health Protection Board, Public Health England, Barnsley CCG and the respiratory consultant at Barnsley Hospital in order to streamline the pathway.

New pathway improvements

The introduction of the new pathway has achieved the following outcomes:

Following health screening, individuals diagnosed with latent (inactive) TB now receive their initial treatment faster than the previous pathway – they are now seen within 4.5 weeks (32 days) following initial screening as opposed to 15 weeks (106 days).

The Barnsley TB service now assists the hospital's respiratory consultant by delivering the follow up appointments for individuals with latent or non-complex active TB. This has enabled the respiratory consultant to solely focus on the individuals who are deemed high risk due to complexities. This has helped





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to reduce the overall duration of the pathway from 41.5 weeks (292 days) to 31 weeks (218 days).

The overall pathway duration for patients diagnosed with latent TB has reduced with the introduction of the new pathway from 9 planned appointments to 7 appointments. This has reduced the length of time from initial screening to completion of treatment from 29 weeks to 19 weeks.

Waiting times for access to the TB respiratory consultant clinic have fallen due to the initial consultant appointment now being able to be used to both confirm diagnosis and provide medication. Previously the patient had two appointments with the consultant as part of the diagnosis process – reducing it to one has released secondary care consultant capacity.

The quality of the service delivered to patients with TB has improved through the streamlining of the pathway. It has avoided unnecessary delays in treatment, and patients now progress through the pathway without having to attend as many appointments. This reduces confusion and enables individuals to have a better understanding of the purpose of the care being provided, which has had a positive impact on reducing ‘did not attend’ rates across both the TB service and respiratory consultant clinics.

Comparison of results

Classification of TB	Number of individual appointments from screening to treatment conclusion		Duration of pathway from screening to treatment conclusion	
	Previous pathway	Current pathway	Previous pathway	Current pathway
Active	20 appointments	21 appointments	292 days	218 days
Active low risk	N/A	17 appointments	N/A	203 days
Latent	9 appointments	7 appointments	209 days	135 days

Sharing success

The recognised success of the local TB pathway has resulted in Barnsley being chosen as a South Yorkshire pilot area in relation to effective multi-disciplinary TB alliance pathway development. I attend and advise this forum in my capacity as clinical lead.

Since the introduction of the new pathway, the Barnsley TB service is viewed as an exemplary service which has led to me being asked to participate in Public Health England’s task and finish group for the National Recommendation for Non-Problematic Latent Tuberculous Screening.



In a nutshell

Asylum seekers and EU migrants were previously waiting a long time to receive treatment for their Tuberculosis diagnosis. The team have now streamlined the treatment pathway so that they get treatment quicker.