



## News Release

### **TB rates in Thames Valley – Annual report**

New figures published today (Tuesday) in the Public Health England (PHE) annual report, *TB in the UK: 2013* show 294 tuberculosis (TB) cases were reported in Thames Valley in 2012.

This represents an overall rate of 14.5 cases per 100,000 population across the Thames Valley against a national average rate of 14 cases per 100,000. Highest rates were recorded in Slough with 82 cases, 58.5 per 100,000 population and Reading with 43 cases (27.6). Lowest rates were in West Oxfordshire: three cases, (rate 2.9).

This was a slight decrease in both areas: Slough's figures in 2011 were 84 cases, rate of 59.9 per 100,000; Reading dropped from 51 cases in 2011 (32.8) to 43 in 2012 (27.6).

Rates of TB have stabilised nationally at around 14 cases per 100,000 since the mid-2000s, following the increase in incidence seen in the previous two decades. However, despite considerable efforts to improve prevention, treatment and control, TB incidence in the UK remains high compared to most other Western European countries.

London continued to carry the burden of infection in 2012, with 3,426 cases accounting for almost 40 per cent of the UK total, followed by the West Midlands with 12 per cent. As in previous years, almost three quarters of cases were in people born in countries where TB is more common. Of those born abroad, the majority of cases were from South Asia (60 per cent) and sub-Saharan Africa (22 per cent).

In the UK-born population, those most at risk remain individuals from ethnic minority groups, those with social risk factors such as a history of homelessness, imprisonment or problem use of drugs or alcohol, and the elderly.

Dr Diana Grice, Thames Valley Public Health England Centre Director, said: "TB is a preventable and treatable condition but, if left untreated, it can be life threatening. Efforts to control the spread of this infection must remain a public health priority. Early diagnosis and appropriate treatment are key to reducing TB levels in the UK so we encourage local health service commissioners to prioritise the delivery of appropriate clinical and public health services for TB, especially in areas where TB rates are highest."

She added that it was essential that new migrants to the UK who may have come from high incidence countries have good access to screening and diagnostic services to reduce the risk of active TB disease.

“Ensuring that NICE guidance on screening for latent TB infection are implemented in a coordinated manner across the country is therefore very important.”

Dr Paul Cosford, Director for Health Protection and Medical Director at PHE, said: “TB remains an important public health problem, particularly in London and among people from vulnerable communities. We have therefore made TB one of the key priorities for PHE and are working with key stakeholders to oversee the development of a stronger national approach to TB control.

“This will have at its heart support to local clinical, preventive and social care services in the NHS, local government and wider health and social care system. We are determined to see a sustained reduction in TB, and will work tirelessly to support local partners in those areas where the burden is greatest.”

Dr Muhammad Abid, Consultant in Communicable Disease Control in Thames Valley PHE Centre, said the highest rate of treatment completion in the country (90%) had been achieved in the Thames Valley in 2012. “We have worked very closely with our partners and stakeholders on trying to control this infection,” he added.

**Number of new TB Notifications and rate per 100,000 population in Thames Valley 2011 and 2012 by LA of residence**

Local authority	2011		2012	
	Number	rate	Number	rate
Aylesbury Vale	6	3.4	18	10.3
Bracknell Forest UA	10	8.8	10	8.8
Cherwell	15	10.6	15	10.6
Chiltern	6	6.5	7	7.6
Oxford	43	28.3	40	26.3
Reading UA	51	32.8	42	27.0
Slough UA	84	59.9	82	58.5
South Bucks	5	7.5	8	12.0
South Oxfordshire	3	2.2	4	3.0
Vale of White Horse	6	5.0	8	6.6
West Berkshire	6	3.9	9	5.9
West Oxfordshire	3	2.9	3	2.9
Windsor & Maidenhead	10	6.9	12	8.3
Wokingham UA	10	6.5	14	9.1
Wycombe	33	19.2	20	11.6

Ends

**Notes to editors:**

1. PHE Tuberculosis in the UK Report (2013) – an embargoed copy of the report is available from the press office or at the following link from <http://www.hpa.org.uk/Publications/InfectiousDiseases/Tuberculosis/1308TBintheUK2013report/>
2. TB is an infection caused by bacteria. It usually affects the lungs, but can affect other parts of the body. TB is transmitted when someone who has the infection coughs or sneezes, but it requires close prolonged contact in order to spread from person to

person. For more information about tuberculosis, please visit:

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/Tuberculosis/>

3. Public Health England's mission is to protect and improve the nation's health and to address inequalities through working with national and local government, the NHS, industry and the voluntary and community sector. PHE is an operationally autonomous executive agency of the Department of Health.

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