



## News Release

### **TB rates in the West Midlands higher than national average**

New figures show 1,085 tuberculosis (TB) cases were reported in the West Midlands region in 2012. This represents a rate of 19.3 per 100,000 head of population, compared to the national rate of 15.2 and is also an increase from 2011, which saw 1,008 cases reported in the West Midlands, a rate of 18.0 per 100,000. The figures are published in Public Health England's annual '*TB in the UK: 2013 report*' published today (21 August).

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. Within the West Midlands region, Birmingham recorded the highest rate of TB at 42.4 per 100,000 (455 cases); followed by Coventry at 41.7 (132 cases); and Sandwell at 38.5 (119 cases). The local authority with the lowest rate was Herefordshire at 3.8 per 100,000 (7 cases); followed by Staffordshire at 4.2 (36 cases); then Shropshire with a rate of 4.6 (14 cases).

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 Nic Coetzee, consultant for communicable disease control with PHE West Midlands, said: “TB is a preventable and treatable condition, but if left untreated, can be life threatening. The prevention and control of this disease must remain a public health priority in the West Midlands, as the TB rate increased from 18.0 per 100,000 head of population in 2011 to 19.3 in 2012. 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.

“To reduce the risk of active TB disease in people coming to the UK from high incidence countries, it is essential that new migrants have good access to screening and diagnostic services. Ensuring that NICE recommendations 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.”

– Ends –

### Notes to Editors

1. See the **Appendix** at the end of this press notice for a table comparing TB rates in the West Midlands for 2012 and 2011.
2. PHE Tuberculosis in the UK Report 2013 is available from the press office and should be available from Wednesday 21 August at the following link:  
<http://www.hpa.org.uk/Publications/InfectiousDiseases/Tuberculosis/1308TBintheUK2013report/>
3. 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/>

4. 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. To find out more, visit our website [www.gov.uk/phe](http://www.gov.uk/phe) and follow us on Twitter @PHE\_uk

**For more information contact PHE West Midlands press office on 0121 232 9223/4**

## Appendix

**Table comparing rates of TB for 2012 and 2011 in the West Midlands region**

Local Authority area of residence	2012		2011	
	Cases	Rate (per 100,000)	Cases	Rate (per 100,000)
Birmingham	455	42.4	401	37.3
Coventry	132	41.7	120	37.9
Dudley	29	9.3	35	11.2
Sandwell	119	38.5	106	34.3
Solihull	23	11.1	21	10.1
Walsall	51	18.9	68	25.2
Wolverhampton	76	30.4	90	36.0
Warwickshire	53	9.7	45	8.2
Worcestershire	36	6.4	21	3.7
Herefordshire	7	3.8	6	3.3
Shropshire	14	4.6	10	3.3
Telford & Wrekin	14	8.4	7	4.2
Staffordshire	36	4.2	32	3.8
Stoke-on-Trent	40	16.1	46	18.5
<b>West Midlands</b>	<b>1,085</b>	<b>19.3</b>	<b>1,008</b>	<b>18.0</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>8,130</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>8,259</b>	<b>15.6</b>