



## Quick guide: conversations about latent TB and the benefits of testing and treatment

### Giving information – identifying people who may benefit from a latent TB test

1. My name is ... I'm a TB Champion. I volunteer for an organisation called [insert name here]...can I have a chat with you about TB?
2. Can you tell me what you know about TB so I don't tell you what you already know?  
[This is an open question, use as an opportunity for 'myth busting']
3. [Possible responses to give]
  - TB is a serious illness
  - anyone can catch TB - though some people are more at risk due to their health, lifestyle or links to countries where TB is common
  - TB passed through the air when an infectious person coughs or sneezes – TB is not passed through spitting or touching surfaces or objects
  - Transmission requires prolonged contact – so people who live or work together at greatest risk
  - TB never went away in the UK
  - TB is treated with antibiotics and can be cured in the majority of cases
4. And have you heard of latent TB at all?
5. [Points to cover in explanation]
  - TB bacteria are sleeping, so there are no symptoms and it is not infectious
  - TB bacteria can wake up – then you fall ill with *active* TB
  - Latent TB is more likely to wake up if you have a condition that affects your immune system (like HIV or diabetes) or if you have recently moved to the UK from a country with lots of TB
  - Latent TB can be treated with antibiotics, to help prevent active TB developing
  - 1 in 4 people globally have latent TB – and most come from countries with high rates of TB
  - Some people may benefit from a blood test to check if they have latent TB
6. Can I ask you some questions to see whether you would benefit from a latent TB test?  
[Note: recent UK arrivals who are aged over 35 or who do not come from a qualifying country may still be able to receive a test through their GP]
  - Are you younger than 36 years old?
  - What country are you from? How many years ago did you leave?
  - Have you lived or travelled in any other countries in the last 5 years?

## 7. [Responses to specific comments]

<i>Tell me more about the test?</i>	Latent TB is found with a simple, free blood test.
<i>But I have had a BCG?</i>	The protection given by the BCG reduces over time, so it is still good to get tested .
<i>But I have had a TB chest x-ray/was screened for my UK visa?</i>	Chest x-rays look for signs of active TB in the lungs. The only way to find out if you have latent TB is to get a blood test.
<i>What about my relative who is over 35 / has lived in the UK many years?</i>	The test is only offered to those that will benefit the most, but if you are worried you can ask your GP or a TB Nurse for advice.

## Encouraging people to get tested

1. Ask people questions that help them see themselves as people who will get tested:
  - How will you feel if you get tested and the result is negative?
  - How will you feel if you get tested and the result is positive?
2. Let the client talk but focus on positives:
  - If it's **negative** you know that you have nothing to worry about. This will give you peace of mind.
  - If it's **positive** you will have caught it early. You can treat it without passing it on to anyone. This can protect your future health and the future health of your family and community.
3. Ask an open question to encourage discussion:
  - So how do you feel about getting tested?
4. Acknowledge concerns but end on a positive [with suggested responses to specific barriers]:

<i>It is hard to get an appointment.</i>	<p>I understand that it can be difficult to get an appointment but checking if you have latent TB is very important. Perhaps you can ask for a test when you see your GP for another reason? Some GPs also let you book appointments online.</p> <p>Booking GP appointments can be difficult but I know you will do it because health is very important to you.</p>
<i>I feel nervous going to the GP. My English is not very good.</i>	I understand, but try not to worry about your English. We can book your GP appointment if that helps. You GP surgery can also arrange for someone to help translate for you.

<i>I don't have a visa to be here, and so I can't go to a GP.</i>	GP services are open to anyone living in the UK, it doesn't matter what your immigration status is. We can help you to register.
<i>I am worried about people finding out I went to the GP about TB.</i>	<p>GP services are confidential. Even if you are positive you can take the treatment in the privacy of your own home. No-one would need to know unless you tell them.</p> <p>I know you are concerned about the stigma around TB, but you know that your treatment will be confidential and this is the only way to ensure you never pass TB to anyone else.</p>
<i>I am healthy so why would I waste time going to the GP?</i>	<p>You may feel well now. But, if you have latent TB that wakes up you will become seriously ill. It is much easier to get tested and treated now while you feel healthy.</p> <p>I know that you are very busy but the opportunity to get tested might not always be there and I know you are someone who always finds a way to get things done.</p>
<i>Even if I am positive for latent TB, I don't like taking antibiotics/medication.</i>	<p>This is understandable. But, if your latent TB wakes up and makes you ill you will have to take antibiotics/medication for a much longer time.</p> <p>Also, it is still valuable to find out you are positive for latent TB, even if you decide not to get treated. At least you will be more aware to watch for symptoms of active TB.</p>
<i>I have heard that these antibiotics have side effects.</i>	For some people there can be side effects, but other people get no side effects at all. The TB nurse would discuss this with you before you start any treatment.

### Bringing your conversation to a close

1. Thank the person you have spoken to for their time and ask if they have any more questions.
2. Find out if they are likely to go for a latent TB test if you have not yet asked this.
3. Complete your paperwork.