

25 April 2024

Instances of TB or an Outbreak in Belfast Trust in Financial Year Ending 31 March 2024

Under Freedom of Information legislation, please clarify if instances of TB and/or an outbreak (i.e. more than one person) has been detected at BHSCT hospitals:

As the referral centre for complex, multi-drug resistant and paediatric TB in Northern Ireland, a number of cases of TB disease are identified every year within Belfast Health and Social Care Trust - typically 30 - 40 new cases.

This pattern applies to the years 2023 – 2024.

Potential contacts of infectious TB are traced through the Trust TB Service, in collaboration with the Public Health Agency (PHA).

No outbreak of TB has occurred within Belfast Trust facilities during this time.

Community outbreaks of TB are investigated and managed by applicable Trust TB Services, in collaboration with PHA.

- 1. When and at which facility was the first case (s) detected.**
- 2. How many cases may have been contracted from the first instance (s)?**
- 3. What are the overall number of cases to date?**

Questions 1 to 3 above, appear to refer to an individual case. Without further information it would not be possible to answer these.

However, we would not disclose any personal or identifiable information about an individual case - exempt from release under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Disclosure would constitute a breach of the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

- 4. How many deaths have occurred (a) from TB and (b) with TB**

PHA Northern Ireland produce TB statistics each year, which include TB related mortality for the region. This question should be directed to the PHA for response.
Email: foi.pha@hscni.net

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5. What are the risk groups/factors and what mitigations have been activated?

The risk factors for TB in Northern Ireland are:

- Close contact with someone who has infectious TB.
- Homelessness, excessive drug and alcohol use.
- Immune deficiency.
- People who have lived or spent time in a country or area with high TB incidence.

National screening policies exist to identify and screen those at risk for TB infection and to issue preventative treatment or protect with BCG vaccination, where appropriate.

6. What advice/guidance has been issued

7. On what date were relevant authorities alerted, given TB is a notifiable disease?

Questions 6 and 7 appear to refer to an individual case. Again, we would not disclose any personal or identifiable information about an individual case.