

YOUR OWN HIGH-LEVEL MEETING TO END TB

ARRANGE TO MEET YOUR MP AHEAD OF WORLD TB DAY

Until the COVID-19 pandemic, tuberculosis (TB) was the world's deadliest airborne disease, killing 1.6 million people in 2021. Back in 2018, world leaders set ambitious targets for tackling the disease, to meet the Sustainable Development Goals' ambition to eradicate TB, HIV and malaria by 2030 (target 3.3). This September, at the United Nations, there will be another 'High-Level Meeting' to check in on whether the promises made back in 2018 are being delivered. It is likely that a step change in ambition will be needed to make TB eradication by 2030 a realistic proposition, and it will be vital to put public pressure on governments to work together to end TB for good. Now is a great opportunity to start building political awareness of the importance of working together to end TB. This month, and into March, we'd like you to plan to meet your MP to discuss how to reinvigorate the global response to TB, in advance of World TB Day (24 March).

- This September, world leaders will meet at the United Nations to discuss their response to TB, the world's second deadliest communicable disease after COVID-19.
- TB is a highly infectious airborne disease, mostly affecting the lungs. It is treatable and curable, but often goes undiagnosed and untreated.
- People affected by TB need to be at the centre of policies on TB diagnosis and treatment. It is often a stigmatised disease which can make people's experience of TB even more difficult.
- The COVID-19 pandemic took resources away from TB services, leaving many more people with the disease, and reversing decades of progress, particularly in many low- and middle-income countries, where health systems often struggled to cope.
- World TB Day (24 March) is a great opportunity to start building the political pressure needed to ensure the UK Government plays its part in reinvigorating global efforts to end TB, so MPs should ideally be made aware of the issue before then.

What is TB?

Tuberculosis is a disease which has survived for 70,000 years and still affects over 10 million people each year. It is a contagious bacterial infection spread through inhaling tiny droplets from the coughs or sneezes of an infected person. TB commonly attacks the lungs but can affect any part of the body, from the bloodstream to the brain. Despite being a preventable, detectable and curable disease, in 2021, [1.6 million people died](#) from TB, 10.6 million new cases were diagnosed, and many more cases remained undetected.



CHECK OUT OUR CAMPAIGN GUIDE ON TB

"Stigma was one of the biggest barriers, next to the actual illness itself".

Handaa Enkh-Amgalan is a TB survivor and advocate from Mongolia who wrote about her experience of battling TB and facing stigma in her book '[Stigmatized](#)'. You can [hear her share her story here](#).



What needs to be done to tackle TB?

Without treatment, around 50% of people who catch TB will die. TB is more prevalent in vulnerable and marginalised populations, and in countries without adequate health services to diagnose and treat TB. The fight to end TB is also made more challenging by new strains of TB, known as drug-resistant or multidrug-resistant TB (DR-TB or MDR-TB), which are resistant to most existing courses of treatment. A [Global Plan](#) exists to end TB, and political will is needed to make sure the plan is delivered. With the additional funding required by the Global Plan, TB programmes worldwide will be able to treat 50 million people with TB, including 2.2 million people with drug-resistant TB.

What is being done to tackle TB around the world?

Most of the resources needed to end TB are provided by countries' health systems, including diagnosis, treatments, and community outreach services. Additionally, the [Global Fund to Fight HIV, TB and Malaria](#) provides 76% of all international financing for TB, supporting low- and middle-income countries to deliver TB services. The Global Fund has invested US \$8.5 billion in programmes to prevent and treat TB as of June 2022. If you campaigned with us last year for the [replenishment of the Global Fund](#), thank you!

What needs to be done now?

A dangerous combination of complex treatment methods, lack of an effective vaccine, and a historic lack of political will and investment, means that TB remains a major health threat in many countries. The Global Plan aims to eliminate catastrophic underfunding of TB programmes and accelerate the development of new TB vaccines, diagnostics and medicines. Together, we can end TB, but only if countries step up their commitments and include TB into discussions about global health security, pandemic preparedness and response, and universal health coverage. If governments commit and act accordingly, the target to eradicate TB by 2030 can be met and millions of preventable deaths avoided.

What is a High-Level Meeting?

The United Nations frequently holds High-Level Meetings (HLMs) to increase awareness and consensus among Heads of State on topics of global concern, including disease threats. The first and so far only [HLM on TB](#) was held in 2018, where Member States committed to treat 40 million people with TB by 2022 and ensure sufficient funding for both TB programmes and research and development, closing annual funding gaps. In September 2023, with TB services in many countries struggling to meet the needs of their populations, the UN will hold a [second HLM](#) on TB to review progress against the 2018 commitments.

What should the UK Government do?

In 2022, the UK Government committed £1 billion for the next three years to the Global Fund to Fight HIV, TB and Malaria. While this was welcome, it was £800 million less than the Global Fund needed. The UK Government must recommit itself to leading the fight to end the TB epidemic. The UK has some of the best research and development (R&D) academic institutions in the world, some of which are working to develop new TB vaccines and drugs. The UK Government must support this effort with plentiful R&D funding, which will also be a valuable investment to combat future pandemics. The UK Government should also take a leading role in the UN High-Level Meeting. The success of these events often relies on the seniority of the people in the room at the time. We are asking Development Minister Andrew Mitchell MP to attend, and to urge his international partners to do the same.



THERE ARE 4 SPECIFIC ASKS FOR YOUR MP THIS MONTH. FIND OUT MORE ON THE ACTION PAGE BELOW AND [IN THIS DOCUMENT](#).

TAKE ACTION!

The next two months is a perfect time to create awareness about TB and to engage your MP. Here are four stages of action you can take to help reinvigorate the fight against TB throughout February and March:

01

Build awareness of TB

Understand what TB is and how it affects people and their communities.

Many people in the UK think of TB as a disease of the past, and don't understand the importance of investing in treating and combating the disease. To better understand TB and normalise discussion about it, you could: Read our [Introduction to TB](#), host a film screening of '[Unmasked: we all breathe](#)', write a blog about it or share information on social media using the hashtag #EndTB.



02

Prepare to meet your MP

Arrange a meeting with your MP on or around World TB Day (24 March).

Now is the time to make your MP aware of this issue, in order to build the political pressure needed for the UK to play its part in ending TB. It's easy to talk directly with your MP - don't be daunted if you've not done it before! Call their office to schedule a meeting with them. You can use our guide on [How to hold a successful meeting with your MP](#).



03

Meet your MP

Tell your MP why you care about TB and what they should be doing about it. There are specific asks for your MP which we have outlined [in this document](#).

As their constituent, your concerns should be their concerns! MPs often rely on others to better understand a topic and to know what to do about it. The specific asks outlined in the document above include asking your MP to attend a discussion in Parliament just before World TB Day, to push the Government to invest in Research and Development, and to urge Development Minister Andrew Mitchell MP to attend the High-Level Meeting on TB at the UN in September.



04

Share via local and social media

Publicise your meeting in your local newspaper and/or online.

To continue raising awareness about TB and make the discussion with your MP public, you can write to your local newspaper using this guide on [Working with the Media](#). Tell them about your meeting and any commitments your MP might have made. Remember to take a picture and write down quotes during the meeting, so you can share them afterwards on social media as well (have a look at our [campaign guide on using social media for advocacy impact](#)).



It can feel intimidating to contact your MP or write to a newspaper for the first time. We are here to help - just get in touch! And don't forget to let us know that you've taken this month's action by emailing:

Campaigns Coordinator Aurora Basso at aurora.basso@results.org.uk