

Neonatal jaundice at home: A postcode lottery



Authors: Mailis Michaud Maturana, Jacques Cornwell, Kamla Pillay, Joanna Mena, Eva Loucaides, on behalf of The London REACH Network Collaborative¹

Introduction	Methods
- Over half of babies develop jaundice in the first week after birth². - Objective measurement with transcutaneous bilirubinometry (TcB) or serum bilirubin (SBR) is usually required for diagnosis and monitoring. - Home phototherapy is safe and cost-effective when compared to hospital-based treatment^{3,4}. - We surveyed jaundice community testing and treatment availability in London.	- All London NHS Trusts providing postnatal care were surveyed about their community neonatal jaundice services, via the resident doctor-led REACH network. - Responses from resident doctors, who were encouraged to liaise with community teams, were collated and analysed descriptively.

Results

- Responses from 20 out of 26 sites (77%) were received and analysed.
- A quarter (5/20, 25%) of sites regularly provide phototherapy in the community
- Two additional sites (2/20, 10%) reported they were able to provide phototherapy in the community, though it was rare in practice.
- Variability in proportion of responding sites offering home phototherapy was seen across London regions (Fig. 1).
- 90% of responding sites were able to support community TcB measurements, with only a minority having capacity for community SBR monitoring (Fig. 2)

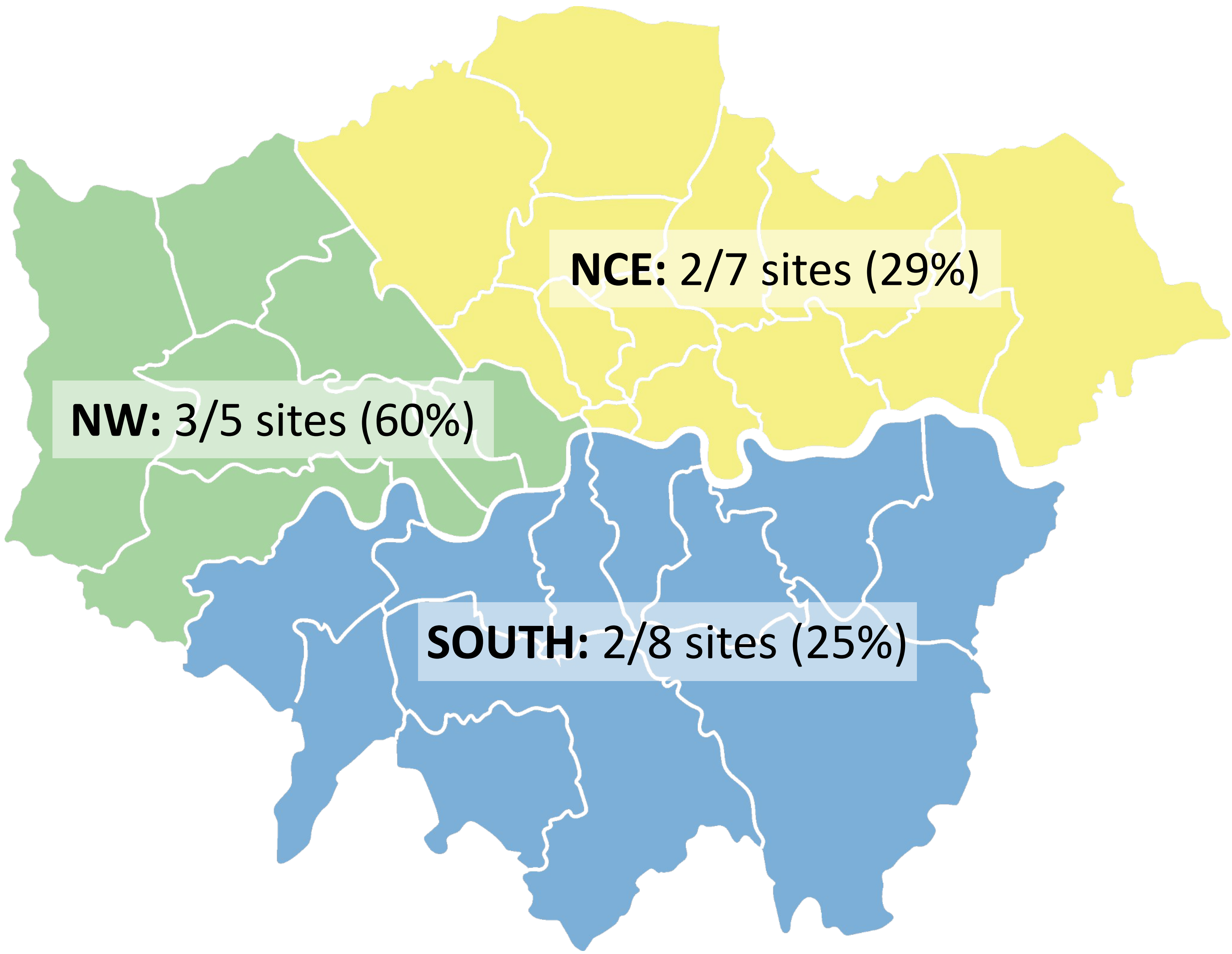


Figure 1: Map demonstrating proportion of sites reported to have community phototherapy availability across three London regions: NCE (North, Central, East), NW (Northwest), and South.

Conclusions

- At least one community bilirubin measurement method is available from all 20 responding sites, but community treatment is only available in a minority.
- This discrepancy suggests a ‘postcode lottery’ with regards to basic community jaundice services. Lack of home treatment options may disproportionately impact families struggling with finances, mental health difficulties, or other caring responsibilities.
- Development of equitable community neonatal jaundice services should be a priority.
- Underuse of current community phototherapy availability suggests resource, staffing, or clinical barriers, which should be further investigated.

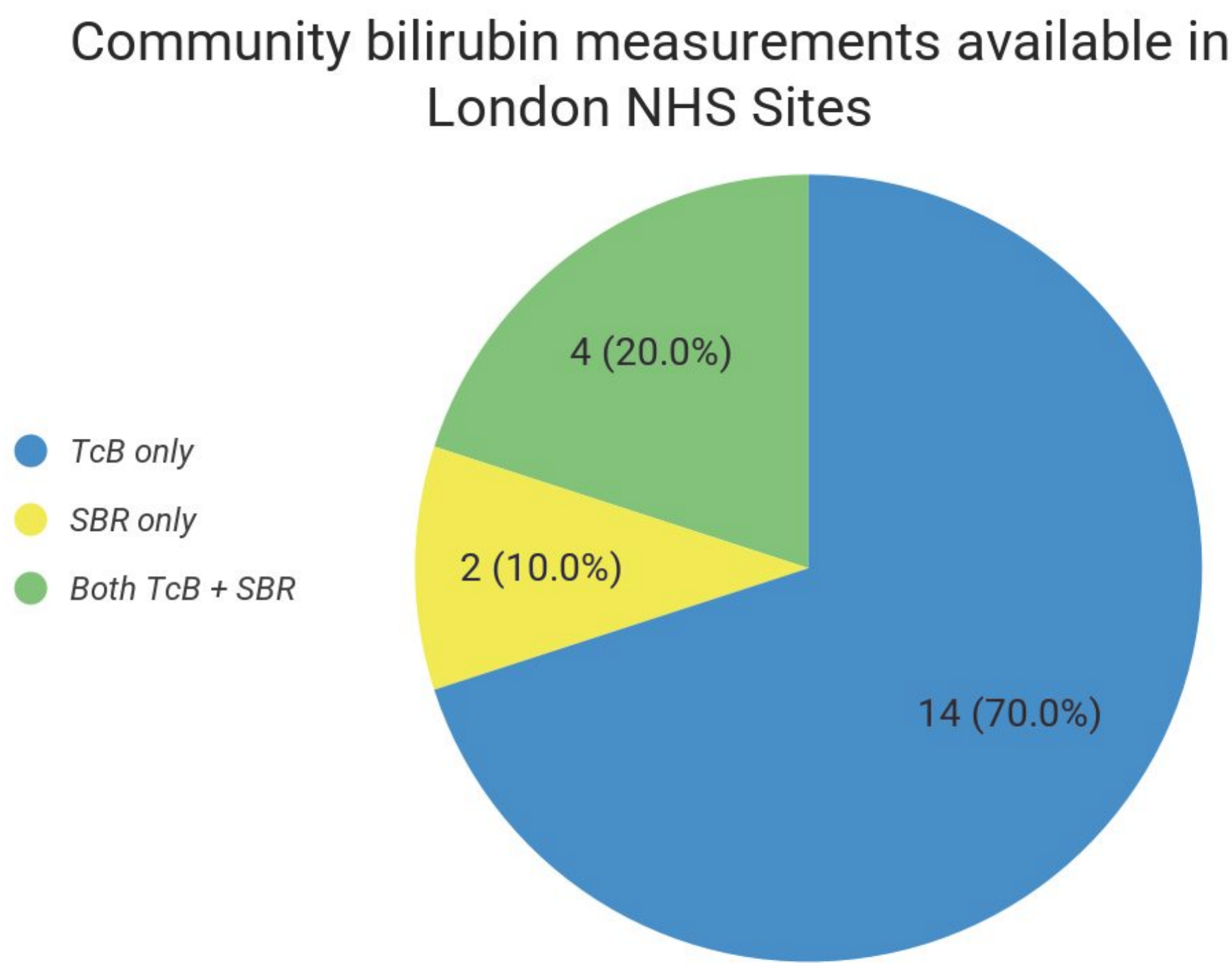


Figure 2: Pie chart demonstrating availability of different community jaundice testing methods

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Contact:

reachnetworklondon@gmail.com
[@reachnetworklondon](https://www.reachnetworklondon.com)