

Media Release

Immediate Release

15th July 2019

Yorkshire Cancer Research announce £2m of funding for Cancer Prevention work in Leeds

Cancer prevention and early diagnosis in Leeds will receive an investment of £2m thanks to Yorkshire Cancer Research. Delivered in partnership with Leeds City Council, the funding will significantly drive cancer prevention and early diagnosis strategies across the Leeds Cancer Programme's Prevention, Screening and Awareness work.

Yorkshire Cancer Research will work with lead partner Leeds City Council to develop local projects to improve participation in the national screening programmes for bowel, breast and cervical cancers in Leeds. Screening uptake rates in Leeds vary across the many diverse communities and it is recognised that approaches and techniques to encourage screening may differ from one community to the next. Initially, the project will focus mainly in areas of deprivation in Leeds that have traditionally had low screening uptake with the aim of providing true equity of access to healthcare for all patients.

Funding from Yorkshire Cancer Research will enable a city-wide infrastructure to be put in place to ensure that people who do not take up their screening invitation, or find hard to engage in traditional cancer services, are targeted and followed-up. Leeds City Council (Public Health) will manage the ambitious programme and also provide project and communications support. A delivery team will be procured from partners to recruit up to 18 'Screening and Awareness Coordinators' to increase the number of people completing screening tests in Leeds. By ensuring screening tests are completed, cancer can be diagnosed at the earliest possible stage, increasing the chances of curable treatment. The programme will also ensure people are aware of the signs and symptoms of cancer and lifestyle factors that can increase the risk of cancer.

Dr Stuart Griffiths, Director of Research and Services at Yorkshire Cancer Research, said:

“We are delighted to be working in partnership with the Leeds Cancer Programme to increase participation in the three national screening programmes and raise awareness of signs and symptoms of cancer and risk factors. Early diagnosis saves lives. It's vital that we

work in local communities to support people in completing their tests. We'd like to thank the charity's supporters for making this unique initiative possible."

Cllr Rebecca Charwood, Leeds City Council Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Health, said:

"This is welcome additional funding to support prevention, awareness and increased uptake of cancer screening in Leeds. It will play an important part in our commitment to increase the health of the poorest fastest and a city wide focus on addressing health inequalities which often result in poor cancer outcomes."

"Screening provides a vital role in detecting cancers early and we know there are many people who have been able to have prompt and effective treatment because of it."

This project will complement an existing project funded by NHS Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group where 50 GP practices in the city's most deprived areas have received some funded time from a 'Bowel Cancer Screening Champion' to follow up people who had not completed their screening test. Of the 4,311 people followed up by the champions since June 2018, 1089 people went on to complete the test that might otherwise have not done so. Alongside this, the project also complements Leeds City Council's commissioning of The Leeds Cancer Awareness Service.

This three-year ambition is one of many projects within the Leeds Cancer Programme to reduce cancer mortality rates in Leeds, reduce cancers diagnosed at emergency admissions in Leeds, and lower the staging of cancer at diagnosis.

Leeds Cancer Programme is a dynamic partnership between Leeds City Council, Macmillan Cancer Support and the NHS in Leeds to transform cancer services in Leeds.

Yorkshire Cancer Research is Yorkshire's very own cancer charity, helping people in Yorkshire avoid and survive cancer.

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Notes to editors:

Cancer screening uptake performance for NHS Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group is:

- **Bowel Screening Uptake** (Extended Age Range (60-74)): 59.16% (National Target: 60%) - September 2018
- **Breast Screening** (Standard Age Range (50-70)): 71.22% (National Target: 80%) – August 2018
- **Cervical Screening** (Target Age Range (25-64))- 72.41% (National Target: 80%) -December 2018