



**Leeds
Cancer
Programme**



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Press Release

25 March 2019

Teledermatology Speeds Up Skin Cancer Diagnosis in Leeds

Skin cancer diagnosis waiting times in Leeds have been cut and patients with benign moles have received speedier reassurance after the introduction of innovative new cameras at GP surgeries.

In June 2018 all GP practices in Leeds were provided with a tele-dermascope - a high definition camera added onto an iPod which enables GPs to send high quality images of suspected skin cancers directly to hospital-based Consultant Dermatologists.

By equipping GP practices with a tele-*derma scope*, GPs in Leeds have been able to take high-quality images of suspect areas or moles and send them direct to a group of hospital-based consultant dermatologists to decide whether the patient needs further investigation.

Dr Sarah Forbes, Associate Medical Director, NHS Leeds CCG:

“By enabling patients to be seen in their community and by shortening the time between doctors’ appointments and diagnoses, this new method has reduced patient anxiety, enabled them to be seen in their local community, as well as helping to reduce the burden on hospitals.”

Since launching the initiative two thirds of patients (3,799 out of 5,998) with a suspected skin cancer referral have been assessed by the teledermatology clinic within 48 working hours. The rate of discharge back to GP based on 'image assessment' reached 28% in January 2019. Experience of implementing this technology has been shared across the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Cancer Alliance and also across the country on request.

Walayat Hussain, Consultant Dermatologist at The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust:

"There's a national shortage of dermatologists and so all departments are receiving an increasing number of potential skin cancer referrals from primary to secondary care. In Leeds, we very quickly realised that when the patient actually comes to hospital we're able to reassure the patient just by looking at their mole that it's benign."

The Leeds Teledermatology initiative is part of The Leeds Cancer Programme - a pioneering partnership which aims to transform cancer services across the city. It aims to achieve the best in cancer care for the people of Leeds and work with all communities to ensure that everyone affected by cancer has access to the same high quality care.

The Leeds Cancer Programme brings together Macmillan, the NHS, Leeds City Council and other partners citywide to address some of these challenges. Together we are committed to delivering the best outcomes for all in Leeds through world class cancer services shaped by patients, carers and the wider public.

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