



Transforming cancer care together

## Media Release

28 September 2021

At the end of this month we see the retirement of a prominent and dedicated strategist and clinician who has worked tirelessly to improve cancer outcomes in Leeds and both regionally and nationally. Professor Sean Duffy works jointly as Leeds Cancer Programme Strategic Clinical Lead / Programme Director, and Clinical Programme Lead and Alliance Lead for the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Cancer Alliance, as well as until very recently, holding his clinical surgery sessions at St James's Hospital.

Professor Duffy has always been a strong advocate, champion and clinician for cancer patients and their services. For many years, over his extensive career, he has held strategic positions which allow organisations to work better together to create improved services and patient experience. Before returning to join the Leeds and regional health and care system in 2016, Professor Duffy was the National Clinical Director of Cancer for NHS England for three years, in which he was responsible for overseeing all aspects of cancer care for England.

**Professor Sean Duffy, Leeds Cancer Programme Strategic Clinical Lead and Programme Director and West Yorkshire and Harrogate Cancer Alliance Clinical Programme Lead and Alliance Lead** said:

“I have been fortunate to have worked for so long in cancer care and to be able to help improve the quality of care at local, regional, and national levels. It has been an honour to serve on behalf of people affected by cancer and to work with such dedicated colleagues over the many years.”

**Tim Ryley, CEO, NHS Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group** said:

“Professor Duffy has been a wonderful servant of the people of Leeds. I have only known him in the last few years but am very conscious that alongside his knowledge and wisdom he embedded values of compassion and collaboration that have been instrumental in delivering personal care for his patients and improving the system, not just in Leeds, but across West Yorkshire for the

way that we support people living with cancer. Thank you and enjoy whatever follows.”

Prior to the Lead Cancer role Professor Duffy was the Chair of the Cancer and Blood Programme of Care, NHS England and Chair of the Specialised Cancer Clinical Reference Group, NHS England. Before taking up these roles he already had extensive understanding of the Leeds and regional Health and Care systems in his roles as Clinical Director, Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust; Director of Learning and Teaching, University of Leeds, School of Medicine; and Director and Medical Director, Yorkshire Cancer Network.

Professor Duffy has extensive published research and a strong platform of research work encompassing Heath Services Research (HSR), endometrial function and dysfunction, and medical education. He is currently Chief investigator for Machine Learning for Cancer Risk, University of Leeds and an advisor for the Prolaris project to predict high risk prostate cancer. Alongside these roles, Professor Duffy also provides a full range of gynaecology out-patient services (diagnostic and treatment) and holds a regular operating session.

Professor Duffy has also received prestigious awards: Ethicon Travelling Fellowship (RCOG), William Blair-Bell Lectureship (RCOG) and Bernard Baron Travelling Fellowship (RCOG).

He will retire to spend time in West Cork, Ireland, with his family.

## **ENDS**

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### **Note to editors:**

Leeds Cancer Programme is a partnership between Macmillan Cancer Support, the NHS in Leeds and Leeds City Council to transform cancer services across the city. Through its dynamic and ambitious strategy, it is committed to delivering the best outcomes for all in Leeds through world class cancer services shaped by patients, carers and the wider public.

Some of the initiatives brought to Leeds by the Leeds Cancer Programme include:

- Funding from Yorkshire Cancer Research is enabling a city-wide infrastructure to be put in place to ensure that people who do not take up their cancer screening invitation for breast, bowel and cervical cancers are identified and followed-up to support and encourage attendance. An initial focus will be on working with the most deprived areas of Leeds and will also ensure people are aware of the signs and symptoms of cancer and the lifestyle factors that can increase the risk of cancer.
- The implementation of ‘Teledermatology’ technology which allows patients to be seen within their GP practice in suspected skin cancer cases. Images taken by a dermatoscope are digitally transferred from GP surgeries to the hospital where they are triaged within 48

hours by a consultant dermatologist. From 1st June 2018 to 30th September 2019, 12,294 patients were referred in Leeds for suspected skin cancer and 8,261 patients were triaged this way. This saved 2,108 patients avoiding travel to an unnecessary hospital-based appointment.

- The development of ACE, (Accelerate, Coordinate and Evaluate), a pathway for people with non-specific but concerning symptoms of cancer. The pathway aims to enable patients to be diagnosed quicker, avoid multiple tests and avoid unnecessary admissions. So far, the service has received over 2,106 referrals, (Jan 2017 – Jan 2020). Of these, 132 cancers have been diagnosed and 577 other serious conditions diagnosed.
- The implementation of Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) in GP practices is a test is for patients with concerning symptoms who are classed as “low risk, but not no risk” of having colorectal cancer. The test was introduced to all Leeds GP’s in April 2019 with the aim of detecting cancer at an earlier stage, therefore increasing the chance of successful treatment.
- The ‘Community Cancer Support Service’, initiated by Leeds Cancer Programme, is a new service in Leeds that will be based in local areas, but also work across GP practices, hospitals and the voluntary sector. The service will provide personalised support to cancer patients in their local area throughout and beyond their cancer treatment, ensuring access to the right care, in the right place and at the right time.