



Transforming cancer care together

Media Release

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CEO of Macmillan Cancer Support Lynda Thomas thanks Leeds's

Dynamic Transformation of Cancer Services

World Cancer Day – 4th February

Over the past few years, cancer services in Leeds have been rapidly developing to help the city reach its ambition for being the best city in the UK for Health and Wellbeing. Since 2016, external funding initially invested by **Macmillan Cancer Support** to establish the **Leeds Cancer Programme** has brought upwards **£6.5m** of extra funding to cancer services in the city, alongside the breadth of services already provided by the **NHS in Leeds** at the world-class **Leeds Cancer Centre at St James's University Hospital**.

Thursday 4th February marks **World Cancer Day** and Lynda Thomas, CEO of Macmillan Cancer Support, has made a video 'thank-you' to recognise the significant contribution the Leeds Cancer Programme has made to Macmillan's goals:

[Lynda Thomas thanks Leeds Video](#)

Leeds Cancer Programme Clinical Director, Professor Sean Duffy:

"It is fantastic to see such appreciation and support for the transformational work the Leeds Cancer Programme and its partners have achieved. By working together as an integrated health and care system, we have been able to make real change and investment and I am grateful to my colleagues including Leeds City Council, Public Health, Yorkshire Cancer Research, CR-UK and our own NHS in Leeds for their role

in this dynamic programme of work. Thank you Lynda Thomas for acknowledging Leeds's complex and progressive strategies”

“By working together to help improve cancer outcomes for the people of Leeds, we have been able to achieve lasting transformation in technology, diagnostics and support, as well as addressing health inequalities apparent in our communities by ensuring we improve the health of our poorer neighbourhoods.”

Over the last year, whilst cancer screening and services have been disrupted by the huge pressure on the health and care services with the effects of COVID-19, the programme has continued to adapt to ensure a focus on prevention, earlier diagnosis and supporting people who have been diagnosed with cancer. This includes the ongoing development of Rapid Diagnostic Services, optimizing the referral processes from GP to urgent hospital appointments, as well as establishing the Cancer Community Support Service in some areas of Leeds. The Cancer Programme has also focussed on addressing significant 'Health Inequalities' that are apparent across the city. For example, across Leeds, residents in poorer, inner-city and southern areas on average live ten years less than residents in the more affluent northern areas, and also suffer many more years of ill-health. Sadly, cancer screening test uptake rates are much lower in the deprived areas of the city, compared to the north. Some of the work the Programme is undertaking to address this is:

- Developing a **Health Inequalities** programme of work with colleagues in Leeds City Council and Public Health and aligning this to Leeds Health and Well-being Strategy
- Working with GP's to create '**Cancer Champions**'
- Delivering key cancer prevention, diagnosis and support messages in new ways, including the **live streaming on Facebook** of 3 GPs and a cancer specialist to reach new audiences in new ways, so far reaching 1,700 views
- Developing **patient-shaped services**, such as the new Saturday cervical screening hub in Bramley, Wortley and Middleton Primary Care Network following feedback from local women who told us there were barriers to accessing existing services
- Ongoing support and resources to an army of GP based '**Screening Champions**' who contact patients and non-responders to invitations for bowel and cervical screening appointments about the importance of screening
- Working with **Leeds Cancer Awareness** services on projects such as equipping vulnerable young people with knowledge of cancer signs and

symptoms, and ensuring access to correct online advice for all by establishing 'Digital Champions.'

In Leeds there are approximately 25,000 people living with and beyond cancer and around 4,000 new diagnoses every year.

World Cancer Day is an annual event held on the 4th February. Its aim is to empower all across the world to raise a collective voice about cancer, and to celebrate cancer in a positive and inspiring way.

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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.