



**Leeds  
Cancer  
Programme**



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## Media Release

26 November 2019

### **Leeds achieves 60% bowel screening target through new initiatives**

The NHS in Leeds has achieved its 60% bowel cancer screening target set by NHS England. Bowel cancer is the second most common cause of cancer deaths in the UK with more than 16,000 dying each year across the country<sup>1</sup>.

To detect cases of bowel cancer sooner, all men and women in the UK aged 60 to 74 are invited to complete a home screening kit every two years. This is used to detect blood in stool samples which then prompts further tests. Monitoring of people completing their screening test in Leeds has shown a vast inequality across the city. In some of the poorer areas of Leeds only 21.6% of people completed their test kits whilst in the more affluent areas completion was as high as 73%.

**Dr Andrew Robinson, GP Clinical lead for Prevention, Leeds NHS Clinical Commissioning Group** said:

“We are delighted with the impact our Bowel Cancer Screening Champions initiative has had in helping Leeds achieve the national target of 60% for the first time. Practices were supported to increase bowel screening uptake for 60-74 year olds. From the focused activity in following up patients who hadn't completed their test, a number of practices have seen an increase in bowel screening uptake, with 11 out of the 50 GP practices (22%) making significant increases ranging from between 6.1% - 16.4%.”

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk/about-bowel-cancer/bowel-cancer/>

To address this inequality and improve rates of bowel cancer being detected sooner, health and care organisations across Leeds have worked together to create a “Bowel Screening Champions Programme”. Leeds City Council ( Public Health) working together with Cancer Research UK have supported these 50 GP practices to identify their own in house bowel screening champion and provided education and resources to enable the champion to promote engagement within their practice populations. The continued efforts and dedication of the 50 Bowel Screening Champions, alongside all the other practices in Leeds, has been a key factor in enabling Leeds to achieve 60% compliance, the national target for patients completing their screening tests (aged 60 – 74) and now exceeding that target to currently reach 60.5%<sup>3</sup>

The Bowel Screening Champion work is one of many initiatives being rolled out across Leeds as part of the Leeds Cancer Programme. Following the success of the Bowel Screening work, Leeds Cancer Programme has secured £2m worth of funding from Yorkshire Cancer Research to improve the take-up of national bowel, breast and cervical cancer screening in Leeds as well as build awareness of risk factors and signs and symptoms of cancer in our communities.

## **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.
- **Yorkshire Cancer Research** is Yorkshire’s very own cancer charity; helping people in Yorkshire avoid and survive cancer.