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Media Release

An Urgent Plea from a Leeds GP - Cancer Signs and Symptoms

GPs across Leeds are calling for anyone with concerning cancer symptoms not to delay consulting their doctor due to the much publicised pressure on the NHS. GPs are still welcoming telephone triages of patients with concerning symptoms as the earliest diagnosis and treatment is vital.

Across Leeds, there has been a significant reduction of urgent cancer referrals from General Practices to hospitals, a worrying indicator that residents may be delaying talking to their doctor due to the current Coronavirus pandemic.

To reassure residents in Leeds, **Dr Andy Robinson, Lead GP for Cancer Prevention, Screening and Awareness, Leeds NHS Clinical Commissioning Group**, said:

“The earliest diagnosis and treatment of cancer is absolutely vital. As GPs we appreciate people’s concerns in contacting their doctor in these unprecedented times, but we urge you to still telephone us if you have any worrying or concerning symptoms. GPs will be able to triage you over the telephone and support you in the next steps with an urgent referral, so please do not delay to get the help you need.”

The four main symptoms to look out and act upon for are:

1. Unexplained blood that doesn’t come from an obvious injury
2. An unexplained lump
3. Unexplained weight loss, which feels significant

4. Any type of unexplained pain that doesn't go away, not including long standing pain where there is already a cause, (i.e. back pain).

Anyone noticing these symptoms should feel confident to contact their GP to arrange a telephone triage in the first instance.

ENDS

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Note to editors: The main symptoms listed below are for the four main cancers, but any other worrying changes could also point to another serious or long term condition.

Bowel Cancer

- persistent blood in poo
- persistent change in bowel habit
- persistent tummy pain, bloating or discomfort.

Most people with the symptoms do not have bowel cancer – other health problems can cause these symptoms. It is important people contact their GP if they have 1 or more of these symptoms and they have persisted for more than 4 weeks.

Breast Cancer

Breast cancer can have several symptoms, but the first noticeable symptom is usually a lump or area of thickened breast tissue. Most breast lumps are not cancerous but it's always best to have them checked by a GP. Other symptoms include:

- a change in the size or shape of one or both breasts
- discharge from either of your nipples which may be streaked with blood
- a lump or swelling in either of your armpits
- dimpling on the skin of your breasts
- a rash on or around your nipple

- a change in the appearance of your nipple, such as becoming sunken into breast.

Lung Cancer

Symptoms of lung cancer include:

- a persistent cough
- coughing up blood
- persistent breathlessness
- unexplained tiredness and weight loss
- an ache or pain when breathing or coughing.

Cervical Cancer

The most common symptom of cervical cancer is abnormal vaginal bleeding including:

- bleeding in between periods
- bleeding during or after sex
- bleeding after menopause.

Abnormal bleeding does not mean cervical cancer but contact a GP to get this checked out.

- **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.