

Leeds Fast-Track Cities

3 years on



Background

Leeds became a Fast Track City in February 2023.

Fast-Track Cities is a global initiative and means that we have signed up to work towards:

ZERO

new HIV infections and zero AIDs related deaths in Leeds by 2030

ZERO

new TB infections in Leeds by 2030

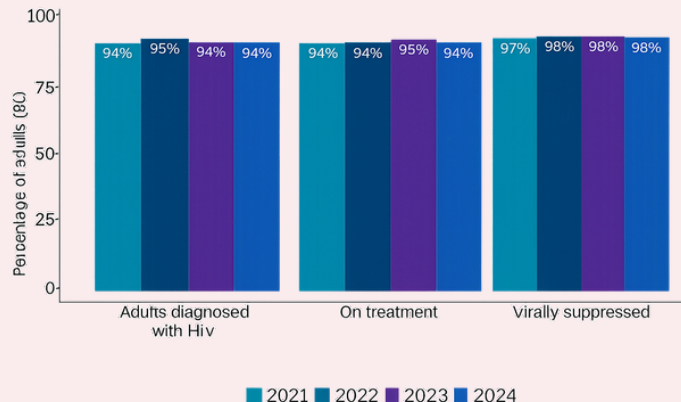
ZERO

new viral hepatitis infections in Leeds by 2030

ZERO

stigma related to all these infections in Leeds by 2030

HIV



As a city we are proud that we are making great progress towards the UNAIDS 95:95:95 targets for HIV. In Leeds*:

- 94% of people living with HIV are diagnosed with HIV
- 94% of people living with HIV are on Antiretroviral Treatment (ART)
- 98% of people living with HIV are virally suppressed, so are unable to transmit HIV.

We are yet to reach our ultimate goal of no new HIV infections plus the elimination of stigma in relation to HIV infections in Leeds by 2030, so we still have lots more work to do.

*This year changes in methodology were made in reporting the estimated number of people living with diagnosed HIV to better account for people not retained in care, which has impacted on the 95:95:95 targets

Tuberculosis (TB)

9.5 people per 100,000 are affected by TB in Leeds.

Active TB - In 2025 85 patients started treatment, of which 35 completed treatment, 7 died (4 of the 7 died as a direct consequence of TB, the other 3 died of health conditions unrelated to TB) and the rest remain on treatment. The TB service also screened 136 contacts for TB from the 85 active cases in 2025.

Latent TB - 322 patients started on latent TB treatment in 2025, which is an increase from 2023 when the TB service saw 213 patients start on latent TB treatment. The increase in referrals is across all indications, but new entrants continue to make up 70% of the latent TB cohort.

Viral Hepatitis

The number of patients treated for Hepatitis C (HCV) fell to 274 in 2025/2026, down from 332 in the previous year, reflecting both the shrinking untreated cohort and the continued impact of earlier case-finding efforts.

Opt out testing for BBV's in Leeds ED (Sep 24-March 26) to date 64 HCV cases and 139 HBV cases identified.

Community Liver Health Checks project - 5,581 fibroscans (ultrasound measuring liver stiffness and fat content) delivered, the highest number nationally. This streamlined service enabled 653 referrals to secondary care and optimised healthcare resources by returning over 4,926 patients to primary care.

PCR testing using Cepheid machines - supported early case detection, with 459 patients tested, 43 individuals who returned a PCR-positive result were referred directly into the viral hepatitis service in Leeds for timely assessment and treatment.

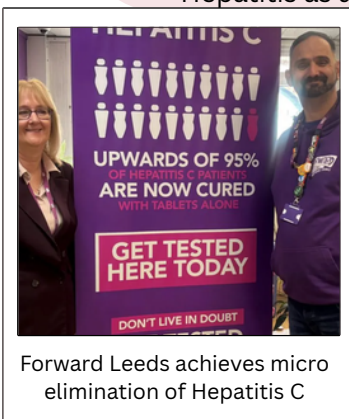
Highlights

Since becoming a Fast-Track City three years ago our main achievements to date have been:



- ✓ In March 2025 Forward Leeds (drugs and alcohol support service) achieved micro elimination of Hepatitis C within key populations in Leeds – a groundbreaking achievement in public health. Forward Leeds is the largest service in the UK to achieve micro-elimination. Helen Cook (Director, Forward Leeds) emphasised that the impact of the achievement is ultimately measured in improved health outcomes for people across the city. ***“What this means in practice is that more people in Leeds are being reached, tested and treated,”*** she said. ***“It shows that when we work together and remain focused on those most at risk, we can reduce harm, improve health and save lives.”***
- ✓ Developed and delivered 2 Fast Track City information sessions on TB, Hepatitis and HIV to raise awareness amongst wider partners of key messages and signposting to further information and services. Attendees included representation from NHS, social work, Forward Leeds, Hep C Trust.
- ✓ The continuation of our Leeds Fast-Track Cities Community Grants Programme - successful project grants awarded & many other projects in the pipeline.
- ✓ Forward Leeds employed a dedicated Hep C outreach worker, they, have worked to engage people in a range of settings, building relationships and supporting individuals into testing and treatment, particularly those less likely to access traditional services.
- ✓ Strengthened engagement with the Leeds social work workforce to raise awareness of TB by developing an information document outlining the impact of TB, available support pathways and good practice when supporting someone with TB to circulate across the social work workforce to increase staff awareness and support more coordinated care for patients.

- ✓ Fantastic response to our Leeds Fast-Track Cities Health Improvement Fund - 2 successful projects awarded funding in Round 1.
- ✓ BHA Leeds Skyline’s hosted their annual World AIDS Day event at Civic Hall, bringing together community members, professionals and people living with HIV to reflect and raise awareness. Through speeches, personal stories and a “Tree of Wishes” (wishes for people living with HIV), the event highlights progress in testing and care, celebrates support services, and calls for an end to HIV stigma while providing a safe, supportive space for reflection and connection.
- ✓ With the increasing TB incidence, the TB team in partnership with Leeds Public Health are raising awareness of TB primary care and across the city alerting them to this increase, via quarterly GP bulletin, as well as in digital posters across LTHT and local CDCs.
- ✓ The TB team have presented to Leeds Health Protection Board and Leeds Drugs and Alcohol Partnership, and are using these links to arrange further meetings and regular education with drugs and alcohol and probation teams, as well as within LTHT.
- ✓ Developed the Leeds Fast Track Cities Road Map a statement of intentions to show our commitments as a system wide partnership.
- ✓ BHA Leeds Skyline working in partnership with Hep C Trust and Leeds Teaching Hospitals to employ two Peer Navigators to provide peer support to people who have tested positive for HIV or Hepatitis as a result of ED op out BBV testing



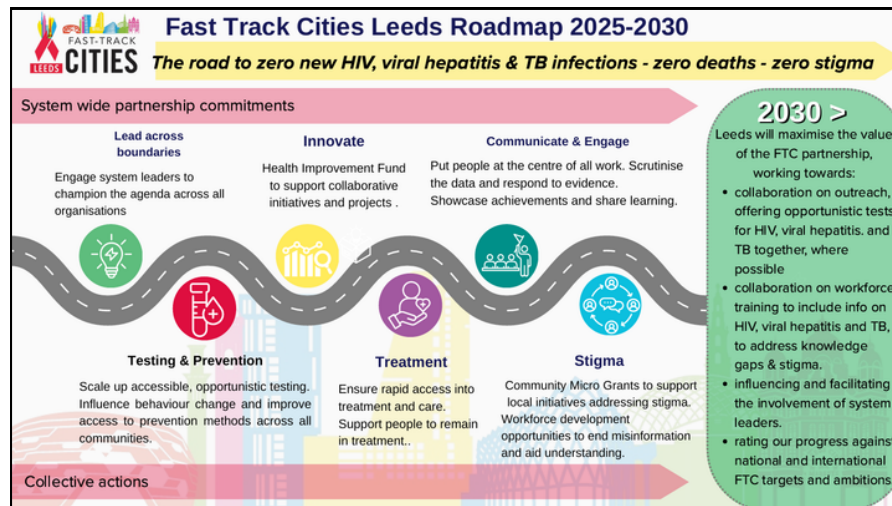
Forward Leeds achieves micro elimination of Hepatitis C

Community Representative for HIV Update - Nas Hussain

- Nas told his story to over 400 people at National Health Stories at the Montgomery Theatre, Sheffield.
- Nominated for the Queens Nurse Award for services to HIV awareness
- Regularly holds talks with first year doctors when they join the Trust - to talk about HIV and his journey as a Healthcare Professional.

Fast Track Cities Leeds - Roadmap

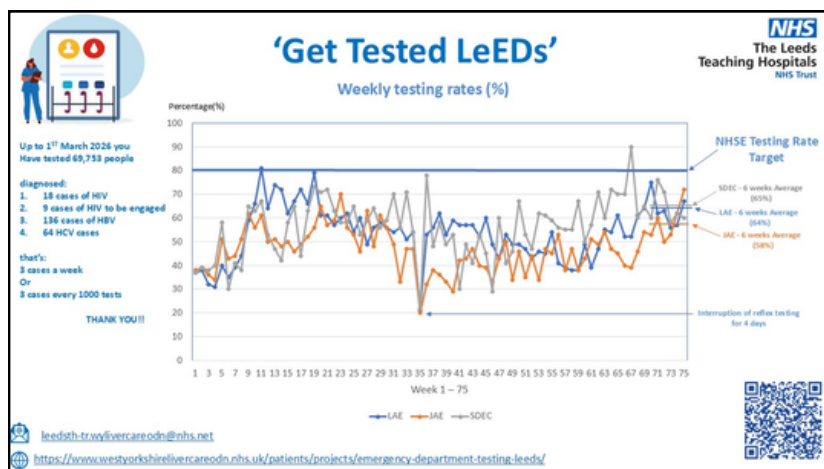
The Leeds Fast Track Cities Road Map is a statement of intentions to show our commitments as a system wide partnership for how we will work together to reach zero new HIV, Viral Hepatitis and TB infections, zero deaths and zero stigma.



Get Tested Leeds - Emergency Department Testing

Get Tested LeEDs is a programme of opt-out testing for bloodborne viruses (BBV) in emergency departments at Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust.

- Opt-out HIV, hepatitis B and C testing re-established in Leeds emergency departments in September 2024 – results to 1st March 2026 (see image below).
- 69,753 patients tested, 227 patients with untreated BBVs have been identified and offered treatment.





Community Grants Projects



Leeds Fast-Track Cities Community Grants Programme is a joint initiative between Leeds City Council and Yorkshire MESMAC, which relaunched in April 2025.

These grants are designed to empower local communities to tackle stigma and discrimination related to these conditions, centring the experiences and amplifying the voices and stories of those with lived experience. Community grants projects that have been completed so far:

- **HIV Awareness Poster Campaign:** A HIV awareness campaign featured a poster designed by a local individual, Akhona, who is living with HIV. BHA Skyline supported with the production of the poster which was displayed on the big screen at Millenium Square for World Aids Day.
- **Multi-Lingual Educational TB Videos:** In partnership with Touchstone and the Leeds Community Healthcare TB Service, Leeds City Council has developed educational tuberculosis (TB) videos in 16 local languages to improve awareness and understanding within Leeds communities. The videos are available on the Leeds City Council YouTube channel and the Leeds Fast Track Cities website and are a valuable resource for public health partners, healthcare services and community organisations.

Health Improvement Fund

The Health Improvement fund has been developed by the Fast Track Cities (FTC) leadership group to facilitate opportunities for innovation and cross-partnership working on projects that address the FTC goals and ambitions. The fund allows organisations in Leeds to bid for grants that work towards raising awareness of symptoms and testing, addressing stigma and improving access to treatment.

Projects that were funded in round 1 were:

- **Fresher PrEP project – funded from April 2026 to March 2029:** Excellent example of partnership work between Leeds Sexual Health (LSH), Leeds Student Medical Practice (LSMP) and Mesmac. This 3-year programme aims to improve uptake and continuation of PrEP and sexual health care in under 25-year-old university students who identify as MSM (men who have sex with men).
- **Don't Forget About B pilot project – funded from April 2026 to March 2027:** A one-year pilot project to be undertaken by the Hepatitis C Trust, to address a recognised service gap in hepatitis B (HBV) testing, building on the organisation's successful experience in engaging communities and increasing testing and treatment rates.

Hopes for Leeds Fast Track Cities for the next year

- More community involvement through ongoing community grants programme and encouraging the involvement of people with lived experience of viral hepatitis and TB.
- Further collaboration with wider partners to join up work around TB and social determinants of health.
- Increased awareness and work with inclusion health groups around TB via new community engagement role within MESMAC.
- Introduce BBV testing as part of TB screening. A grant from Gilead has been received for a one-year pilot of introducing BBV screening (HIV, hep B and hep C) for new entrants who are receiving TB screening in the community.
- Health Improvement Fund Round 2 is scheduled for applications.
- The TB team are looking forward to providing ongoing education to increase awareness of TB, and having dramatically improved the latent TB waiting list, are in a much better position to provide timely care for the latent TB patients found as a consequence.
- The West Yorkshire Liver Care Network (WYLCODN) will build on its hepatitis C experience to expand early intervention into other liver diseases, such as hepatitis B and alcohol-related liver damage.
- Leeds Sexual Health are expanding their PrEP programme to include an online/digital HIV prevention portal which will include information videos for service users.

