

Fast Track Cities: One year on (2024)

Date: 16th October 2024

Report of: Director of Public Health

Report to: Executive Board

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

- The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Fast Track cities (FTC) initiative, the achievements in Leeds in the last 12 months as well as the ambitions for the next year.
- The Fast track City initiative aligns with the Leeds Best City Ambition, working together in partnership to reduce inequalities and tackle poverty.
- Fast Track Cities is a global partnership between cities and municipalities around the world. In February 2023, Leeds became the first city in the Yorkshire and Humber region to become a 'Fast-Track City' joining over 500 cities globally who have declared their commitment to ending HIV, viral hepatitis and tuberculosis (TB) epidemics by 2030.

1. Executive Board are recommended to:

- 1.1. Recognise the achievements of the Fast Track City (FTC) initiative.
- 1.2. To support the future ambitions of the FTC initiative, support the development of the Leeds: Getting to Zero Action Plan and reduce the stigma and misinformation associated with TB, HIV and Hepatitis

2. What is this report about? Context and background

- 2.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Fast Track Cities (FTC) initiative, the achievements in Leeds in the last 12 months, its approaches to addressing health inequalities as well as the ambitions for the next year.
- 2.2. In line with many other cities in the UK, there are significant and persistent inequalities across a range of outcomes in Leeds. Leeds has a population that is becoming younger and more ethnically diverse and an increasing number of people living in the poorest neighbourhoods. The Leeds system has 'improving the health of the poorest the fastest' at its centre and has well-established approaches and partnerships in place to support achieving this aim. The Fast Track City Initiative compliments these, addressing inequalities by taking the opportunity to be 'joined up' across the health and care sector, working alongside those with lived experience and advocates, scaling up what is working well, and adopting a wide range of strategies to improve the health outcomes of those most vulnerable.
- 2.3. Tuberculosis (TB), HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) and Hepatitis are major public health challenges that disproportionately affect marginalized and vulnerable populations, exacerbating health inequalities. The social stigma associated with these conditions can deter individuals from seeking diagnosis and treatment and thus worsening outcomes. Addressing them demands a holistic approach.
- 2.4. Fast-Track Cities is a global partnership between cities and municipalities around the world who have declared their commitment to ending HIV, viral hepatitis, and tuberculosis (TB) epidemics by 2030. In February 2023, Leeds became the first city in the Yorkshire and Humber region to become a 'Fast-Track City' signing the Paris and Sevilla declaration, joining over 500 cities globally. ([Paris and Sevilla Declarations – International Association of Providers of AIDS Care \(iapac.org\)](#))
- 2.5. By becoming a Fast Track City, we have committed to put people at the centre of our work and to ensure that health responses meet local needs. Achieving these commitments requires the elevation of communities from having a seat at the table to leading our HIV, TB, and viral hepatitis responses.
- 2.6. The FTC initiative is a powerful example of how targeted city level interventions can lead to significant improvements in public health particularly in tackling HIV, TB and Hepatitis.
- 2.7. The Fast Track city initiative works as a system wide partnership approach to address stigma and reduce new HIV, Hepatitis and TB cases. It is a multiagency partnership with leadership from Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust, Mesmac (organisation working with people most at risk of HIV), and Public Health, alongside representation from the NHS, third sector and people with lived experience.
- 2.8. The initiative provides strong local leadership to identify groups most at risk, encourage the uptake of testing and facilitate early access to treatment to help people live healthier lives, and reduce the risk of contracting HIV, TB and viral hepatitis. Addressing stigma through community engagement and workforce development is a key component of this approach, an example of this is the Leeds community grants scheme launched this year.
- 2.9. Partners from the leadership group have made links with FTC in the UK through sharing learning and good practice. They have presented the Leeds approach nationally and achieved global recognition partnering with International Association of Providers of AIDS Care.
- 2.10. Future ambitions of the FTC initiative are to ensure we have more people with lived experience represented on the leadership group so they can shape future work, address stigma via the community grants scheme and improve testing. This will be supported by

improving data collection, workforce development, community engagement and attracting external funding.

3. Achievements in Year One

- 3.1. FTC Leadership group established chaired by Dr Schoeman, HIV consultant.
- 3.2. FTC subgroups established: Data and intelligence; Reducing stigma and Testing and prevention.
- 3.3. Community grants programme launched on World Aids Day 2023 to address stigma and discrimination, and its impacts on people living with HIV, TB, Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C.
- 3.4. Partners from the Leadership Group have made links with other Fast Track Cities UK and Global, to share learning and good practice.
- 3.5 One Year on Report produced. (see Appendix 2)
- 3.6 Fast Track city Leeds Video produced ([Fast-Track Cities Leeds \(videos 1-5\) \(youtube.com\)](#)) to explain what a FTC is and what it means to those involved.
- 3.6 Successful workshop to map current service provision across the city identifying gaps and opportunities.
- 3.7 The Department of Health and Social Care have funded opt-out blood borne virus testing for one year and will commence in Leeds General Infirmary and St James University Hospital Emergency Departments on Monday 23rd September 2024. People aged 16 years and older who attend Emergency Departments in Leeds and have bloods taken as part of their routine care will additionally be tested for HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C unless they decline. This testing initiative supports the Leeds Fast-Track City goals and will help achieve our shared ambition re getting to zero.

4. Community grants

Leeds City Council, BHA for Equality (formerly Black Health Agency) and MESMAC are working in partnership to oversee a Fast Track Cities community grants programme of around £18,000, to be used to award micro grants to community groups with or at risk of HIV, TB, Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C. Grants awarded to date;

- 4.1. Podcast discussing experience and stigma of living with HIV.
- 4.2. Refugee community choir writing a song to release on world aids day to fight stigma with music.
- 4.3. A woman with lived experience of HIV will front a poster campaign to be displayed in places of workshop.
- 4.4. LGBT+ Youth group making a new HIV quilt, to be displayed in local museums.
- 4.5. Knitting group to launch 40 bears on HIV testing week with QR code to direct people to the FTC website.

5. What impact will this proposal have?

- 5.1. The impact of the Fast Track City will improve health outcomes for those most at risk, through increased testing and early diagnosis, better access to treatment, reduction in new infections and addressing stigma.
- 5.2. Health and third sector services will be strengthened and integrated in their approach to improve outcomes for service users.
- 5.3. The success of the initiative will position Leeds as a global leader, attracting research and development monies whilst continuing to address stigma, inequalities and putting the service user at the heart of everything we do.

6. How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 6.1. Fast track cities are captured in priority 8 of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 'promoting prevention and improving health outcomes through integrated health and care' an example of how working collaboratively can improve outcomes and strengthen prevention.

7. What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: All.

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

The Fast Track City Initiative was initially presented to the Executive Board on the 26th July 2023 to outline the progress being made in Leeds to end the HIV/AIDS, the report specifically highlighting that Leeds has become a 'Fast-Track City' and as such has declared its commitment to ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic by 2030

- 7.1. People with lived experience play a central role in the development of priorities and ambitions. We are working hard to get representation from people with lived experience of Hepatitis and TB.

8. What are the resource implications?

- 8.1. The Fast Track City Initiative does not come with any associated funding. Partners are committed to identifying ways of working together more efficiently, utilising existing resources, skills and services. We have used opportunities to pool resources to enable a community grants scheme and produced a 'one year on video' from goodwill and great partnership working. External investment and funding via joint funding bids will be maximised.
- 8.2. There are no direct resources/value for money implications arising from this paper.

9. What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 9.1. There is an identified corporate risk related to mitigating risk of infectious disease outbreaks under which this commitment would act as an action. Additional risks hope to success will be identified and discussed within the FTC Leadership Group. Where risks are identified they will be escalated via existing organisational governance arrangements.

10. What are the legal implications?

- 10.1. This is an update report. There are no legal implications surrounding the Fast Track City Initiative, there is no statutory duty imposed upon the local authority to partake in the initiative. There are no grounds for keeping the contents of this report confidential under the Access to Information Rules.

11. Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 11.1 The decision to become a FTC was driven by its commitment to tackling HIV and AIDS and its ambition to achieve zero new HIV infection, zero HIV deaths and zero stigma. The key

rational supporting the approach was the high number of HIV cases as well as more people diagnosed at a later stage of infection compared to national and regional averages. Leeds has significant sexual health inequalities particular in HIV diagnoses, becoming a FTC connects Leeds with a network both nationally and internationally, harnessing expertise and best practice.

11.2 Other options considered included working as a Fast Track region alongside partners in West Yorkshire. Other areas were unable to commit to this approach at the time it was discussed, and it was agreed we would stay connected and share practice.

12. How will success be measured?

12.1. Success will be measured through a combination of community led insight and intelligence, representation of those with lived experience on the leadership group, surveillance of data as well as performance against the Leeds Fast Track City ambitions. Success cannot solely rely on achieving zero we may detect more TB, HIV, and hepatitis as we reduce the stigma to testing, address the barriers and normalise these conditions.

12.2. The initiative is still in its infancy and aims to evaluate its effectiveness as the initiative progresses and the action plan is developed.

13. What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

13.1. Leeds Fast Track Cities is an ongoing partnership between key system partners who are all responsible for the development and delivery of the initiative. The officer leading on the project is Sharon Foster.

14. Appendices

14.1. Appendix 1: Leeds Fast Track City Partners

14.2. Appendix 2 FTC One year on Report

14.3. Appendix 3 Equality Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening

15. Background papers

15.1. None