

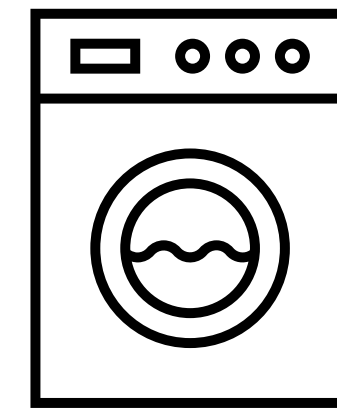
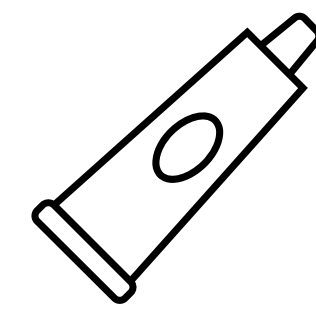
# Scabies in the Community: A Local Leeds Health Protection Response

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## What is Scabies?

- Scabies is a common and very itchy skin rash caused by a tiny mite called *Sarcoptes scabiei*. <sup>(1)</sup>
- The mites that cause scabies are tiny parasites which are smaller than a pinhead.
- They are usually spread by direct skin-to-skin contact with someone who already has scabies and sometimes, but rarely, from shared clothing, towels or bedding.
- Scabies is not notifiable to UKHSA outside of a health care setting.

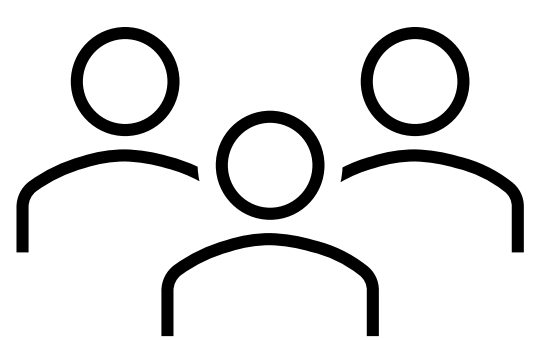
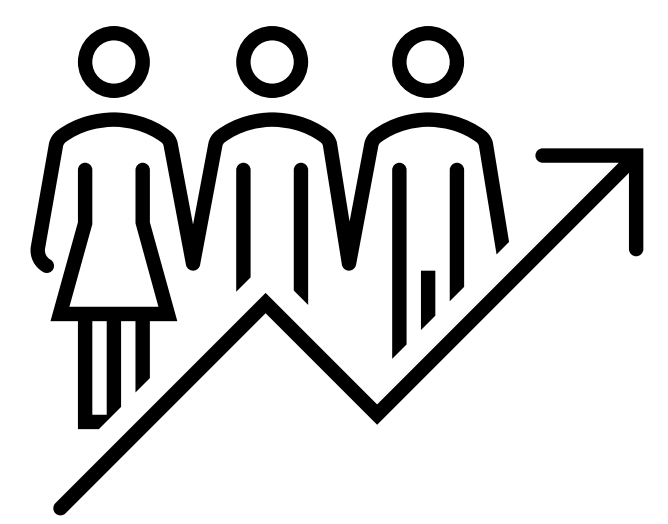


## How to treat Scabies

- Medication for the individual and all close contacts.
- Use of Permethrin treatment cream as first line defence, following detailed application instructions.
- Wash bedding and towels at high temperatures.

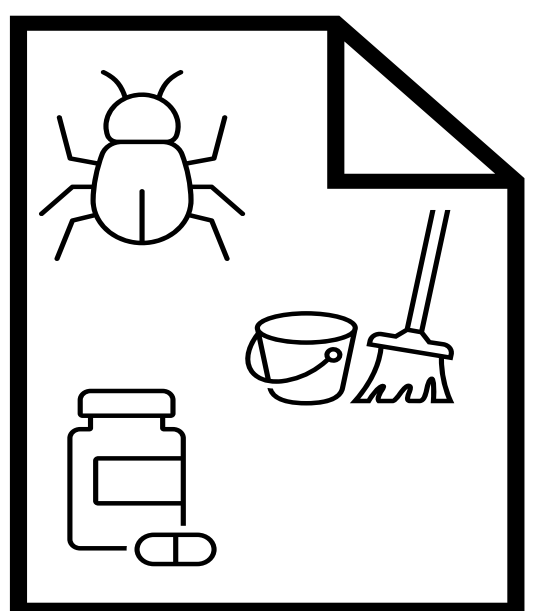
## Background and context

- In April 2023, Leeds City Council's Health Protection team were notified through their Single Point of Contact (SPOC) system that partners felt there was an increase of Scabies cases in the community.
- Primary care data was used to gather further insight and it supported the local surveillance from partners.
- The area of the city which had an increased number of people with Scabies was in an area that had high levels of multiple deprivation. Feedback from partners highlighted that managing the Scabies infection would be even more complex and difficult.



## The Leeds response

- Leeds City Council's Health Protection team co-ordinated a meeting, including who had contacted SPOC, UKHSA, Leeds GP Confederation, Leeds ICB medicines optimisation team, Local Authority colleagues, Leeds Community Healthcare Infection Prevention Control Team and Leeds Sexual Health Service.
- The huddle identified a number of barriers that the community were experiencing. Issues raised included lack of awareness of Scabies, low levels of GP registration for diagnosis and treatment, cost of prescriptions for themselves and close contacts, how to apply treatment cream correctly, non-English speaking and low literacy levels and reduced access to other control measures such as washing machines, cleaning products.



## Interventions

- Developed a **bespoke leaflet (translated in written and audio)** that contained Information about scabies, how to reduce transmission, how to apply Permethrin treatment cream.
- Worked closely with Infection Prevention Control to develop **workforce training** to raise awareness of Scabies and how to direct people to treatment and support.
- Worked with the local Primary Care Network and wider community networks to **raise awareness** of Scabies circulating **in the community**. Briefings were undertaken with the Executive Member for Adults and Health.
- Worked closely with the Leeds ICB meds optimisation team to **include Permethrin treatment cream in the Pharmacy First scheme** to support those from low-income families. The scheme was also developed to be accessed by those not registered with a GP.
- **Proactive engagement with the local services** to support families to access and apply the necessary treatment. Teams linked to access white goods, cleaning kits and additional bedding.



## Lessons Learnt

- Although **raised community levels of Scabies is non notifiable to UKHSA**, due to the multiple layers of inequalities that the families were experiencing, **local action needed to take place**.
- Without our **local surveillance system and strong partnership working** we would have not been able to identify the increased levels of Scabies circulating in the community and the impact it was having on families.
- **Working closely with our Leeds ICB medicines optimisation team** was essential when there was a shortage of Permethrin – after raising this, it was identified that there was a national shortage, a Silver Command meeting was established for West Yorkshire and national direction was provided which supported an increase of provision locally. Contacts and escalations are in place for any future issues.
- Ensure resources are readily available for families who **do not speak English as their first language**.

### Acknowledgements

With thanks to our colleagues and partners who supported this approach: Leeds GRT Outreach team, Leeds GP Confederation, Leeds ICB data and Medicines Optimisations team, Leeds Sexual Health Service, Leeds Community Healthcare IPC team.

### References

1. [Scabies-Update-September-2020-lay-reviewed-July-20202.pdf \(bad.org.uk\)](#)