

Some Key dates

1767 – General Infirmary opened

1842 - Leeds Improvement Act 1842 - New powers for the Council, particularly in public health, eg. sanitation and improved housing.

1875 - The Public Health Act 1875 imposed on local authorities the responsibility for building and maintaining hospitals for infectious diseases. The Manston Hall Hospital (Seacroft) was set up in response to this and opened in 1898.

1890 – Lunacy Act. This required Councils to maintain institutions for the mentally ill.

1902 – Midwives Act gave the Council supervision of local midwives.

1904 – Killingbeck Hospital opened to cater for smallpox patients in isolation. With the decline in smallpox, it became the Killingbeck Sanatorium in 1913 to cater for TB patients.

1906 – Leeds Pure Milk Supply Movement founded to ensure undiluted milk for children. According to a survey at the time, 25% of all food in Leeds was adulterated.

1906 - Education Act allowed the Council to provide free school meals to the needy

1913 – Mental Deficiencies Act. The Council were obliged to provide accommodation for the "feeble-minded" and "moral defectives". This led to the establishment of the Meanwood Park Hospital (Colony).

1948 - NHS established

Opening times

Monday – 9.00am – 8.00pm

Tuesday – 9.00am – 8.00pm

Weds – 9.00am – 8.00pm

Thursday 9.00am – 5.00pm

Friday – 9.00 – 5.00pm

Saturday – 10.00am – 4.00pm

Sunday - Closed

For more information

Local and Family History

**Leeds Central Library, Calverley Street,
Leeds, LS1 3AB**

T: 0113 378 6982

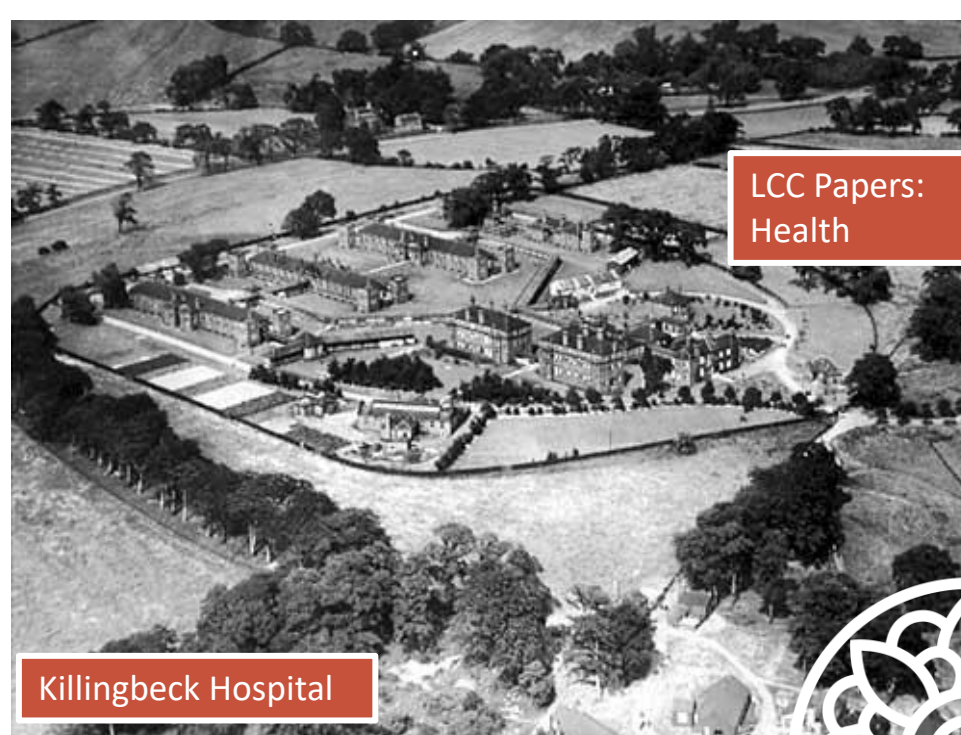
E: localandfamilyhistory@leeds.gov.uk

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Tickets:

ticketsource.co.uk/Leedslibraryevents



Leeds City Council Papers: Health

Our Research Guides list some of the most useful, interesting and unique items at Leeds Central Library. Many others are listed in our online and card catalogues. Items marked * may require 24-hours notice to view.

Contact us for more information:

Visit: www.leeds.gov.uk/localandfamilyhistory

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Background

Leeds Corporation (now Leeds City Council) has been deeply involved in the development of the fast-growing city in the 19th century and onwards. Over 200 years of Council papers are lodged in the Central Library, and these give details of how it has contributed to making the city what it is today. Many of these papers are annual publications, while others are for specific activities.

Health

Prior to the establishment of Leeds Corporation in 1835, a combination of overcrowded slums and poor sanitation meant that the town was rife with disease. Treatment for illness was rudimentary and unaffordable for many. The Poor Law Commission ensured those in most need received some basic healthcare in the workhouses. Others would pay what they could afford.

19th Century

Throughout the 19th century, the Corporation took on many health-related functions, often reluctantly and following Acts of Parliament. These functions originally focused on issues of public health, such as sewers, water and street cleaning. Later on, the Corporation became responsible for building and maintaining hospitals for infectious diseases and caring for those with mental illness. Housing improvement, clean air, public baths and recreational space soon became important functions of the Corporation.

20th Century

More powers were added in the 20th century, including the care of children, the absorption of all Poor Law functions, supervision of midwives and even ambulance services. Throughout this time, general hospital and GP services remained outside the Council's remit, and it was these services that were nationalised upon the formation of the NHS in 1948.

Despite the founding of the NHS, the Council retained many health functions, including: Care of mothers/children, Domiciliary midwifery, Health visitors, Vaccination and immunisation, Home nursing services, Domestic help, Ambulance service, Prevention of illness, care & after care.

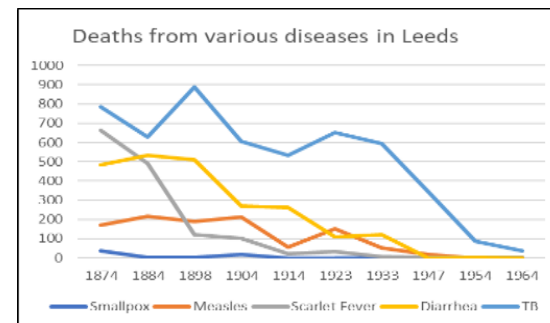
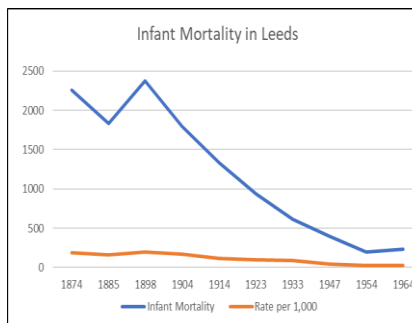
Medical Officer of Health/Director of Public Health

Between 1866 and 1973, the Council had a statutory duty to appoint a Health Officer.

J Johnson Jervis

Appointed as the Medical Officer for Health from 1919 to 1947. He transformed the Council's role to fully incorporate all aspects of public health and spent much time unifying and improving services. During his time in office, the annual infant mortality rate fell from 135 to 51 per 1,000. He campaigned tirelessly for a state medical service, but was bitterly disappointed that the NHS would be run by Central Government rather than local authorities.

The library contains all the Health Officers' annual reports and these chart the incredible health improvements made in Leeds during this period. This is highlighted by the frighteningly high infant mortality rates and deaths by infectious diseases that were the norm at that time. Rates were high throughout the 19th century and highs and lows were generally the difference between epidemic and non-epidemic years.



Health Committee

Health issues were managed for many years by the Sanitary Committee, reflecting the Corporation's leading role in public health issues. It was not until the 20th century that a separate Health Committee was formed. It took a more strategic view of health, and at an exhibition in 1923, the Committee's stand covered the various sections of health effort across the city, and included: general sanitation, tuberculosis, venereal diseases, maternity and child welfare, milk and food, smoke, vermin destruction, hospitals and statistics.