

WELCOME FROM **Richard Flinton, Chief Executive**

Young people are in the spotlight again as they prepare to return to school while further efforts are made to encourage more to take up both doses of the Covid-19 vaccine.

Cases remain high across North Yorkshire, with an average of 312 per 100,000 people, slightly above the England average of 306. While this is not driving the high level of hospitalisations we saw earlier, people can still become very ill, even outside hospital.

The vaccination programme in the county is going well, with recent good progress on targeting younger age groups, but we need to think about those high rates.

Schools are about to go back. This time last year, the rates before schools went back and worse weather arrived were considerably lower than those we see now. Last year, we saw another big spike in cases, so we need to be very aware that that can still happen.

That said, we have heard positive words this week from young people and head teachers.

Student Erin, 16, said she felt an obligation and duty to protect not only herself but also the elderly and vulnerable, and that vaccination felt like the country stitching itself back together. She told us she was motivated to act partly to counter misinformation on social media. All her friends had been vaccinated, she said.

Several of our head teachers told of the preparations being made and praised their communities for the amazing support throughout the pandemic.

Colburn Community Primary head Jane Knowlson said some systems introduced during the pandemic would be kept because they helped to create a calmer learning environment. For example, children enjoyed eating lunch with their year group and working and playing with their own equipment.

Ian Mottram, head of Le Cateau Primary, said the school would be as near normal as possible, but added that many systems put in place had become helpful and supported children.

Emma Lambden, head of Thirsk School and Sixth Form College, said a big challenge had been working in bubbles. Now, students would have to get used to again working how they used to, with the hope that there would be no need to return to bubbles.

So, we are moving forward, learning to live with Covid, but we remain in a risky environment where we all can and should do our bit to support each other, whether that is getting both jabs, wearing face coverings where it's appropriate or just washing our hands regularly.

Public health and social care

North Yorkshire Coronavirus data

At 30 August 2021, there have been 50,925 positive tests since 3 March 2020, with 1,609 new cases reported in the past week. The weekly rolling average of new cases is 230 cases per day,

allowing for incomplete data in the most recent days. The seven-day rate for North Yorkshire was 312.1 cases per 100,000 people, higher than the England seven-day rate of 306.5. Work continues to ensure effective monitoring of all areas, with support for incidents being provided across a range of settings, which are reviewed daily.

[Find further information on North Yorkshire data provided at county, district and local area level.](#)

Testing update

If anyone has symptoms, they must book a PCR test. Testing sites across North Yorkshire, as elsewhere in England, are operated and managed by the Department of Health and Social Care and private contractors employed by them. We try to help the Department by promoting the testing site locations and hosting information on how people with symptoms can book a test via the national government portal.

[Find information about where you can get a PCR test on our website.](#)

Everyone is encouraged to test themselves twice a week with home testing kits and report the results to NHS Test and Trace. You can order rapid lateral flow device (LFD) tests online or collect them from participating pharmacies.

[Find out how to order or collect free LFD tests.](#)

Schools return for autumn term

All secondary school pupils will undertake two on-site lateral flow device (LFD) tests three to five days apart, on their return in the autumn term. Settings can begin testing from three working days before the start of term and can stagger return of pupils across the first week. Pupils and staff should continue to test twice weekly at home until the end of September, when a review will take place.

It remains vitally important that we continue with the key messages:

- Get your first and second dose of the vaccine.
- Continue to think about the vulnerability of loved ones.
- Outdoors is always safer than indoors.
- Keep getting tested regularly, even without symptoms.
- Continue to follow social distancing where possible, when out with friends and family, including work places, pubs, restaurants etc.
- Hands. Face. Space. Fresh Air.

Supporting our schools and childcare

As schools prepare to welcome students back to the classroom, we would like to thank head teachers, teachers and support staff for all their hard work in getting us to this point.

The vast majority of schools in North Yorkshire reopen to pupils on Tuesday. Many of the previous restrictions in schools have been lifted, with the priority of the updated national guidelines focusing on delivering face-to-face education for all pupils. Evidence shows that being out of the classroom harms educational attainment, life chances and mental and physical health in children and young people.

School bubbles will no longer be needed, but in very limited circumstances they may be brought back temporarily, if needed.

Anyone under the age of 18 will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with the virus, but will be strongly advised to take a PCR test.

Those school pupils aged 16 or over can also now get a vaccine and are encouraged to do so as soon as they can.

They include 16-year-old York student, Erin, who has just had the vaccine. She said getting the vaccine gave her and her peers some power and control over their situation and protected those who are elderly or vulnerable.

Schools will continue to update and review covid risk assessments and put proportionate measures in place, such as maintaining hygiene and cleaning regimes and good ventilation in classrooms. Face coverings will also be recommended for pupils aged 11 and over on public or school transport.

Head teachers in some North Yorkshire schools said some of the adjustments they made during the pandemic proved popular with pupils and helped with their learning, so they will be integrating them into every day teaching.

They include schools such as Le Cateau Primary School in Catterick Garrison, which said it found keeping teaching assistants based with the same, small year groups, rather than moving them across the school site, had reduced disruption for pupils and proved popular.

But schools agree that pupils and staff are looking forward to resuming uninterrupted, face-to-face teaching again.

Ian Mottram, head teacher of Le Cateau Primary School, said: "For anyone in school that's why we're there; to see the children and get them engaged and learning."

Growing our local economy

Help to Grow: Management programme

The Government has launched the Help to Grow: Management programme. As part of the Plan for Jobs, courses will help senior leaders of small and medium businesses to lead their businesses to their full potential.

The [Help to Grow management training programme](#) offers one-to-one mentoring for senior business leaders of small and medium businesses. The [12-week programme](#) costs £750 and is 90 per cent subsidised by the Government as part of [the Plan for Jobs](#). It is delivered across the UK by leading business schools accredited by the Small Business Charter.

You can [find the upcoming courses in the North here](#).

[Help to Grow: Management Programme - Business Services - University of Derby](#)

Coronavirus job retention scheme reminder

The Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will end on 30 September. Businesses are encouraged to submit their claims for September by the deadline of 14 October and any amendments must be made by 28 October.

[Find out more](#).

Keeping in touch

[Keep up to date with Covid-19 news for North Yorkshire](#).

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