

## WELCOME FROM **Richard Flinton, Chief Executive**

Yesterday, for the first time since March last year, the UK recorded no deaths from Covid-19.

There will be more good days, and difficult ones, but we should hold on to this moment, while remembering the 1,166 people who have died from Covid-19 in North Yorkshire.

Currently, the county's infection rate is 14 per 100,000 people, slightly under half the England average of 32 per 100,000. We could not have reached this point without the concerted effort we've seen across North Yorkshire.

In Volunteers Week, it's fitting to recognise again the county's thousands of volunteers. Since March 2020, community support organisation volunteers have given 125,000 hours. They are the lifeblood of many communities. They run support hubs, provide foodbanks, community fridges and pantries, help to run vaccination centres and look out for neighbours, family and friends.

At our weekly press conference, we heard from leaders of two community support organisations.

Gail Hall, of Reeth and District Community Transport, explained how the organisation redefined itself, from taking people to get what they needed, to getting it for them.

"It has been a rollercoaster, but the rollercoaster has only been ups," she said. "We are indebted to the people that have so generously given their time. There is no present like time."

Helen Flynn, of Nidderdale Plus Community Hub, spoke of the huge effort by Harrogate district's six community support organisations to recruit hundreds of volunteers to support vaccination sites.

"These volunteers are absolutely brilliant," she said. "They love doing the work."

The new challenge for both organisations is to help people to regain confidence as restrictions ease.

Marie-Ann Jackson, head of our Stronger Communities programme, acknowledged that volunteers are doing the heavy lifting. "I can't thank those volunteers enough," she said. Our role, through Stronger Communities, is to support and enable those groups.

Finally, for anyone able to visit Harrogate, I recommend In Memoriam, an art installation on West Park Stray until Sunday. Luke Jerram's work comprises flags made from hospital bed sheets that form a blue cross, acknowledging the NHS. As Harrogate International Festival chief executive Sharon Canavar says, it provides a space for people to consider the impact of the past 15 months.

Perhaps the milestone of a day with no Covid-19 deaths is an appropriate time for us all to contemplate what we have been through and refresh ourselves for the continued effort ahead.

[Read more about North Yorkshire's army of volunteers.](#)

## Public health and social care

### North Yorkshire Coronavirus Data

At 30 May 2021, there have been 30,278 positive tests since 3 March 2020, with 159 new cases reported in the past two weeks. The weekly rolling average of new cases is 10 cases per day, allowing for incomplete data in the most recent days. The seven-day rate for North Yorkshire is 13.4 cases per 100,000 people, lower than the England seven-day rate of 30.6. 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 or testing sites.

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

**As the roadmap continues to allow us to get back to normal, it is important that we remember the key messages:**

- Get your first and second dose of the jab when it's your turn. The latest ONS data shows that three out of four people now have anti-Covid antibodies, and for the over-50s it is over 90 per cent.
- 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 when out with friends and family, including work places, pubs, restaurants etc.
- Hands. Face. Space. Fresh Air.

**Let's keep going. Everyone can play their part... together, we can beat this.**

## Supporting our schools and childcare

In the final weeks before the half term holiday, North Yorkshire schools recorded good attendance across the county with over 90 per cent on average.

In addition, we have seen the number of Covid cases among staff and students reducing in line with the background rates across the county. In the final week of term we recorded seven confirmed cases among students and 83 suspected cases with all students taking precautionary measures; five confirmed cases among teachers and no suspected cases and six confirmed cases among teaching assistants and support staff and only three suspected cases.

We are tracking cases with extreme vigilance and welcome the fact that Covid safety measures and regular and frequent testing undertaken in schools seems to be paying off. As a consequence, Covid cases at the end of the school term were lower than at the start. We therefore look forward to a successful final term with high attendance.

**Reminder:** organisations interested in contributing to a wide-ranging programme of sports coaching, creative and performing arts sessions for children across North Yorkshire this summer have **only until June 7** to apply to provide activities.

The funding for the programme has come from the Department for Education's Holiday Activities and Food Programme, to provide holiday club places to children eligible for free school meals. The holiday clubs will involve engaging activities, including activities around health, nutrition and well-being, as well as provide children with healthy food.

We have commissioned North Yorkshire Together – a partnership between Rural Arts, North Yorkshire Sport and North Yorkshire Youth – to oversee the FEAST holiday activities programmes.

Voluntary groups, sports coaching organisations, existing holiday activity providers, arts organisations and schools can all apply for a grant to provide activities.

[Find information on applying and download an application form.](#)

Anyone with further questions can email [grants@northyorkshiretogether.co.uk](mailto:grants@northyorkshiretogether.co.uk)

## Growing our local economy

### LEP News: Local Skills Report and NEETs Research

We are proud to publish two reports that further our vision for York and North Yorkshire as a place where people are empowered to achieve their potential in a greener, fairer, stronger economy.

#### [York and North Yorkshire Skills Advisory Panel's Local Skills Report – April 2021](#)

- A comprehensive overview of strategy, achievement and ambition produced by the York & North Yorkshire LEP skills team on behalf of the local Skills Advisory Panel for York & North Yorkshire.

#### [Exploring the capacity of the FE system to engage and support 19-24 year old NEETs](#)

- Research to understand how the Further Education system across York and North Yorkshire is supporting 19-24-year-old NEETs, and to make recommendations on how this might be strengthened.

Sam Alexander, Chair of our Skills and Employability Board, said, "I am delighted to introduce this report, which we have produced in collaboration with local partners, other skills and advisory partnerships (SAPs) from across England and colleagues from the Department for Education. I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone for the invaluable insights and guidance they have given us over recent months."

Read these reports along with all our latest skills research [on the Skills page of our website.](#)

## Keeping in touch

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

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