

WELCOME FROM **Richard Flinton, Chief Executive**

We're well into the school holidays and many people are taking their summer break in North Yorkshire. That's no surprise, we have a beautiful county and we welcome visitors.

From being out and about, it's clear many people continue to wear face coverings and keep up hand hygiene, and many businesses continue to ask customers to observe precautions. That makes a difference, and supports our message to respect and protect ourselves and each other.

The Covid-19 infection rate is falling – North Yorkshire's average is 251 per 100,000 people, compared to an England average of 282 – but this is still high and it's too early to be sure we're seeing a sustained trend.

I've said it many times, but vaccination is our best protection. Uptake in North Yorkshire is good, but to anyone who has not yet come forward, irrespective of age, please do so and get both doses.

Much has been said about encouraging young people to get the jab, and we heard from Dr Abbie Brooks, a GP with the Priory Medical Group in York. She has seen young people presenting with troubling symptoms, and to young people she said: "Definitely get vaccinated. If you want to talk about it before you get your job, there are clinicians and pharmacists who can talk you through the pros and cons and benefits.

"Some people might feel unwell for a day or two afterwards, but the vaccines are safe and they can protect you from being so unwell. And also, if you are not doubly vaccinated there are going to be implications around travel and self-isolation going forward."

Dr Uwe Franke, an intensive care consultant at James Cook Hospital, says almost all cases the hospital sees are the Delta variant and he, too, is seeing younger patients, most of whom are unvaccinated or have had only one dose.

"Please do get double-vaccinated," he said. "It does make a difference. We see a huge risk if this Delta variant keeps circulating and replicating in the population."

[Find information on vaccination, including details of walk-in clinics near you.](#)

While we work to support the county's progress through the pandemic, we are also moving ahead from the Government's decision that North Yorkshire will have a single new council from 2023 and are beginning to bring people together to build that council.

Dedicated, skilled staff across the existing eight councils will come together into one workforce, joining up all the everyday services to make life easier for everyone. This will align everything from planning, roads and housing to job opportunities, education and skills and will support health, leisure, culture and more, enriching lives and offering opportunities.

So let's continue to work together, as we have so well over the past 18 months, to put this pandemic behind us and build a future that realises our great county's potential.

Public health and social care

North Yorkshire Coronavirus Data

At 1 August 2021, there have been 43,471 positive tests since 3 March 2020, with 1,409 new cases reported in the past week. The weekly rolling average of new cases is 201 cases per day, allowing for incomplete data in the most recent days. The seven-day rate for North Yorkshire is 251.9 cases per 100,000 people, lower than the England seven-day rate of 282.6. Work continues to ensure effective monitoring of all areas, with support for incidents being provided across a range of settings, which are reviewed daily.

Further information on North Yorkshire data provided at county, district and local area level can be found here: <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/coronavirus-data>.

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.](#)

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

- Get your first and second dose of the jab
- 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.

Changes to the sexual health service – have your say

Since 2015, North Yorkshire County Council has had a formal agreement with York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, which provides sexual health services on our behalf as Yorsexualhealth.

A consultation began this week asking for views on proposals to make changes to the service. The proposals are in light of the public health grant reducing and the changing way people have been using the service as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The consultation runs until 4 October. Please have your say on this important service.

[Read the proposals and fill in the survey.](#)

[Read more about the consultation.](#)

Supporting our schools and childcare

More than 100 North Yorkshire employers have now signed-up to a scheme designed to improve employment opportunities for young people.

The Kickstart scheme is a national initiative introduced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Richmond MP Rishi Sunak last year to help unemployed people aged 16 to 24 into high-quality jobs.

It was part of an emergency package announced to off-set the impact of the pandemic on young people, when it became clear they were most likely to be in jobs affected by the pandemic.

In North Yorkshire, more than 100 employers are now offering hundreds of Kickstart job placements to young people. They include work placements as nursery nurses, site assistants, teaching assistants, dispensing pharmacy placements and even as heritage maintenance workers, restoring and transforming local historic sites for community benefit.

Under the scheme, the Government pays the national minimum wage, national insurance and pension contributions for 25 hours a week during the six-month work placement and employers can top up the wage, if they wish.

North Yorkshire County Council has acted as a gateway organisation, allowing employers to apply and access the Kickstart scheme through the council and putting in place employability support for small businesses and charities.

The County Council has appointed 83 Kickstart candidates in this way, directly employing 28.

On Friday, Chancellor Rishi Sunak visited Kickstart candidates in Northallerton, calling in on a number of them at County Hall, as well as visiting the charity Chopsticks in the town, which has taken on three Kickstart participants.

If you are an employer looking to provide a Kickstart job in North Yorkshire, [find out more](#).

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A holiday club programme for children and young people in the county has enjoyed a strong start, with 44 organisations signing up to provide drama, sports sessions, cookery and art activities.

The sessions help children to stay active, healthy and socially connected over the summer holidays, as well as giving them an opportunity to develop new skills and try new experiences.

The activities are open to all children in North Yorkshire, but are free to children who would normally receive benefits-related free school meals during term time and include a hot meal or packed lunch each day. Eligible families will also get a booklet with ideas and inspiration for holiday activities.

There are also activities for families of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), which will include day trips to North Yorkshire venues and attractions.

Funding for the scheme has come from the Department for Education's Holiday Activities and Food Programme. The County Council has commissioned North Yorkshire Together, a partnership between Rural Arts, North Yorkshire Sport and North Yorkshire Youth, to run the programme in the county, under the banner of FEAST North Yorkshire.

For further ideas to keep children active and creative over the summer holidays, families can [visit the North Yorkshire Together website](#), where there are ideas and video tutorials, as well as details of activities in your area happening across the county.

Growing our local economy

Small Business Peer Network

Would you like more support in your small business? Do you wish you had a group of like-minded people who “had your back” and could support your vision to grow your business? The Small Business Peer Network, facilitated by Andrea Morrison and Philip Bolson and fully funded by Y&NY Growth Hub, could be for you! [Find out more.](#)

Specialist Skills Support Programme

The European Social Fund-funded Specialist Skills Support Programme is providing the opportunity for York, North Yorkshire and East Riding-based SMEs to access specialist consultancy, support, advice and training around a number of key issues facing small businesses right now. The programme will run until at least October 2022. [Find out more](#)

Keeping in touch

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

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