

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

Today we start with another sombre milestone. The latest figures, published yesterday, which take us to the first anniversary of the pandemic in this country, showed that 1,006 people have sadly died from Covid in North Yorkshire in the past year. 539 people have sadly died in hospital. 387 have died in care homes.

Behind the numbers are life stories and memories and love. I hope you will join me in remembering those 1,006 people. We must not let this sacrifice and loss be in vain – we have 1,006 very good reasons to keep following the rules and to do everything we can to drive the infection rates down.

Those infection rates are reducing but very slowly and we are still seeing more than 100 new cases a day across the county – which is too high. Unfortunately, we continue to see new cases among the most frail of the county's residents too, with 77 care settings with one or more positive case and four with large outbreaks.

It's really hard – this lockdown does feel like a real slog. We do not have the benefit of those long warm days of last spring and we may well be feeling weary from the restrictions we must live our lives under. I am sure you will also share my frustration at the news that last weekend was the busiest for our police colleagues of any since the start of this national lockdown in our force area of York and North Yorkshire! Just shy of 170 fines were issued across the area with nearly 100 of those to residents – unbelievably of those 71 were for indoor gatherings – the very conditions in which we know the virus thrives. Included in these fines were two pubs, which opened and served alcohol to groups playing pool or watching the rugby. There was also a group of 11 visitors who travelled from Manchester to visit Whitby Abbey. I cannot stress enough the risks of taking such actions. One in three people carry Covid-19 with no symptoms. The fact that you feel fine doesn't mean you can't spread it. As half-term approaches I know many families will be struggling with what to do to entertain children not at school or involved in remote learning. It may be tempting to mix with friends or head to the coast or dales. Please don't – the risk is not worth taking. Think of the 1,006 people who have paid the ultimate sacrifice and please keep going, keep sticking to the rules, keep protecting your family and your community.

There is real hope via the vaccination programme and from next week, our NHS colleagues here will start to implement the next stage of their programme. Having nearly completed the first dose vaccines for the first four groups from over-80s to those over 70 and/or designated as extremely clinically vulnerable – the wider vaccination roll-out will commence. By way of a reminder, if you are in one of those groups and haven't been offered a vaccine or you declined and have changed your mind, then you are invited to book a slot by calling 119 or online at <https://www.gov.uk/get-workplace-coronavirus-tests>

A huge thank you must go to all the NHS staff and the many volunteers who are making sure this programme is hitting its targets and saving lives. More than 175,000 first doses have been administered across North Yorkshire and every one helps us head towards recovery and out of lockdown.

When we can start to resume a more normal life again I am sure that job opportunities will be particularly high on our list of priorities. Yesterday, Government launched a recruitment drive to health and social care roles. We welcome that and indeed, we have our own recruitment programme offering a wide range of employment opportunities called Make Care Matter. We have

all seen and read many wonderful stories of how people across health and social care sectors have been saving lives, changing lives and protecting our most frail residents. If you feel inspired, why not have a look here and see if there is an opportunity for you to join the 17,000 people working in the sector in the county as part of Team North Yorkshire, making a difference where you live <https://www.makecarematter.co.uk>

Speaking of inspiring people, I was heartened to hear of some of the excellent work being done by our military children's champions this week. These unique roles provide extra care and support to the children of our many armed service families in the county. They are talking to children to understand the impact of the pandemic on them and the replies they received are heart-warming and poignant <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/news/article/helping-children-through-lockdown-coronavirus-chats>

I am immensely proud of everyone in our children's services, which have been independently rated as outstanding, and of our health and adult services – nationally acclaimed for their innovation in helping people live better and more independent lives. Never have these services and these teams been more tested than over the last year and yet they rise time and again to the challenge.

Our highways teams continue to battle the winter weather and to support the NHS to keep the vaccination centres open and the covid testing sites accessible.

In the weeks ahead, we will see the Government's consultation on how public services should be delivered in North Yorkshire and York – to ensure they are the strongest they can be for the future. It's a significant change that will pave the way for the devolution of powers and money from Whitehall to our own region. I hope you share my passion for keeping North Yorkshire together as a single county and protecting the outstanding services the county delivers to you and with you, whatever the world throws at us. The alternative proposal would split the county in half, break up those strong services and see the greatest disruption at a critical time. We have pledged to drive a revolution in empowering your communities to lead on what matters most to you and which would deliver you a greater say in decision making to drive post pandemic recovery.

There cannot have been a more important time to have a single voice for North Yorkshire and to protect what we know and love. If you would like to find out more, please read about our proposal here <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/our-proposal-new-unitary-council>

Until next week, please take care and please keep going for North Yorkshire – there is light to head towards.

## Keeping in touch

NYCC's website has a dedicated area for all the latest news, see links below:

- COVID-19 related news: <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-and-information>
- Devolution/Stronger Together: <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/stronger-together>

**Follow us** on social media: @northyorkscs on Facebook and Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

## Public health and social care

### North Yorkshire Coronavirus Data

At 7 February, there have been 26,644 positive tests since 3 March, with 1,678 new cases reported in the past two weeks. The weekly rolling average of new cases is 128 cases per day, allowing for incomplete data in the most recent days. The 7-day rate for North Yorkshire is 126.7 per 100,000 people, which remains below the England 7-day rate. 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>.

## **Coronavirus Update**

We are fast approaching February half-term, and after a very tough winter we are all looking forward to nicer weather and brighter days, but right now we are in a very important moment of the pandemic.

We are seeing the vaccine roll-out happen at great pace and more than 12 million people have now received their COVID-19 jab. It is also very encouraging to see infection rates start to fall. This is mainly driven by the current lockdown and social distancing. However, the drop in positive cases will take longer to filter through to the number of deaths and hospitals are still under huge pressure.

## **Staying local**

We are still in a national lockdown and the rule to stay at home remains in place, including over the February half-term break. There is no doubt that it is tough, but as lots of people may have time off and children have a break from school work, it's really important that we all stay local, do not travel around the country and don't mix households. Travelling to second homes or holiday homes is still not permitted.

Staying home and taking our daily exercise locally remain two of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of the virus and help protect the NHS. Continuing to respect 'Hands, Face, Space' is also very important - washing hands frequently and as soon as you come in from the outside, wearing a face covering in all applicable settings and staying two metres away from people outside of your household wherever possible. Do not mix if unwell.

## **Staying vigilant**

We are living through a life-altering event and we are all dealing with new and in many cases difficult ways of working, living and educating our children plus really missing our family and friends. While there is certainly news to be positive about, it doesn't make the reality of the pandemic any easier and it may become more tempting as we come out of the dark, cold winter months to get out and about and venture further from home.

The more we resist this and stick to those stay at home rules the more we will see further improvements. It is important to look after ourselves and those around us in these very difficult times and by remaining vigilant we will protect people from catching the virus, we will drive down infection rates, reduce some of the pressure on our NHS and move closer to a more normal way of life.

## **Working together towards recovery**

### **Testing**

Testing sites in 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 Mobile Testing Site locations and hosting information on how people with symptoms can book a test via the national government portal.

### **We do not manage the national booking system or laboratory testing process.**

Indications are that lab testing capacity is improving but, if you are unable to book a test at a local site straight away, please keep checking as availability varies during the day.

We are also supporting the Department in asking the public only to get a test if they are directed to do so by NHS Test and Trace or other NHS services – OR – if they have symptoms, to ensure that those people who need tests the most can be prioritised.

Before you attend, you must book a test. Tests can be booked from 8pm the night before.

Testing sites operated and managed by the Department of Health and Social Care will be running at the following locations over the coming days between 11am and 3pm:

- **Every day - Harrogate** - Dragon Road Car Park, Dragon Road, Harrogate, HG1 5DB
- **Every day - Scarborough** - William Street Car Park, Scarborough. YO12 7PL
- **Every day - Northallerton** – The Forum, Bullamore Road, Northallerton, DL6 1LP
- **Every day - Selby** – Portholme Crescent Car Park, Selby, YO8 4YR
- **Every day - Skipton** - Cavendish Street Car Park, Skipton, BD23 1RP
  
- **Thursday 11 February - Whitby** - Whitby Marina Car Park, Langbourne Road, Whitby, YO21 1YW
- **Thursday 11 February - Malton** - Wentworth Street Car Park, Smithson Ct, Malton, YO17 7BQ
- **Thursday 11 February - Leyburn** - Harmby Road Parking, Harmby Road, Leyburn, DL8 5EE
- **Friday 12 February - Sherburn in Elmet** - Pasture Way Carpark, Sherburn in Elmet, LS25 6LY
- **Friday 12 February - Stokesley** - Stokesley Sports Club, Broughton Road, Stokesley, Middlesbrough, TS9 5JG
- **Friday 12 February - Richmond** - Round Howe Car Park, Reeth Road, Richmond, DL10 4TL
- **Saturday 13 February - Selby** - South Entrance, DRAX Power Station, New Road, Selby, YO8 8PH
- **Saturday 13 February - Settle** - Greenfoot Car Park, Settle, BD24 9RW
- **Saturday 13 February - Filey** - Filey Country Park, Church Cliff Drive, Filey, YO14 9ET
- **Saturday 13 February - Thornton Le Dale** - National Trust Car Park, No.5. Chestnut Avenue, Thornton Le Dale, Pickering, YO18 7RR
- **Sunday 14 February - Scarborough** - Scarborough Park and Ride, Seamer Road, Scarborough, YO12 4LW
- **Sunday 14 February - Richmond** - Round Howe Car Park, Reeth Road, Richmond, DL10 4TL
- **Sunday 14 February - Thirsk** - Millgate Car Park, Marage Road, Thirsk, YO7 1PE

Watch this video to find out what to expect and how to prepare for the test:

<https://youtu.be/QawyKwIfKQ>

See the latest dates and locations, find out more and how to book at

[www.northyorks.gov.uk/testing](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/testing)

## Supporting our schools and childcare

Families on low incomes, or struggling financially due to the pandemic in North Yorkshire are set to receive continued support this half-term in the form of supermarket vouchers.

The Covid Winter Grant Scheme provides food voucher payments to ensure parents and carers hit hard by the pandemic can continue to provide children with essentials by helping meet the cost of food during the school holidays. Care leavers are also being provided with the vouchers.



This time vouchers, worth £15 per child, per week, will be reaching 17,000 children and young people in North Yorkshire. We really appreciate the support of schools, academies, nurseries and colleges in helping us distribute the vouchers.

The scheme was rolled out successfully over the Christmas holidays, when vouchers were distributed to 17,000 young people in North Yorkshire.

The scheme ensures children eligible for free school meals continue to have access to food during the school holidays and also gives schools discretion to provide help to other families in need, in recognition of the fact that some are newly struggling as a result of the pandemic on businesses and jobs.

Alison Woodward, head of Riverside School in Tadcaster, said: "The voucher scheme we have opted to use within our Trust was particularly useful as it has enabled our families to balance out their budgets and make independent choices – this is really important as some families feel that they have little control over the current situation.

"We were also extremely pleased to receive some discretionary amounts for families that we work with and we know these are our more vulnerable households at this time.

"Many of these families have not had regular incomes for months, haven't been able to work or have seen their own businesses simply fold in the lockdown periods.

"This has had a devastating impact on both the parent and children's mental health and our pastoral teams are very busy working together with our families to support them and make sure that they have enough resources to cope, whether that be financial or emotional.

"The capacity to be able to shop and have regular food for the family has been very important and will continue to be during subsequent holiday periods while safety restrictions are in place."

Following the Prime Minister's comments that he hoped schools could reopen from Monday, March 8, we are awaiting further confirmation from the Government on the anticipated reopening date. It is expected there will be two weeks' notice prior to schools opening and we will work with education settings to support them in a smooth and safe return to the classroom.

## Teamwork to support our residents

North Yorkshire residents who continue to need help can be reassured that support put in place last March will carry on even after the current national lockdown is lifted. Community support organisations and the voluntary sector partners they are working alongside continue to provide a lifeline during these challenging times.

Thanks to a DEFRA grant, the County Council has been able to allocate funding to a number of community groups so they can help some of the most vulnerable people in the community access food and hot meals.

An initiative launched in Ryedale is helping families cook together and save money during lockdown. Helping Hampers – a project launched by Scarborough and Ryedale Carers Resource and delivered in partnership with North Yorkshire County Council and Community Smart CIC – will see cookery boxes delivered to families containing everything needed to cook nutritious home cooked meals, including all the ingredients required, recipe cards and instructions.

Claire Robinson, Business Development Manager and project lead from Scarborough and Ryedale Carers Resource, part of the community support organisation network, said: "Scarborough and Ryedale Carers Resource is thrilled to launch Helping Hampers. The idea behind the initiative is to

encourage the families receiving the boxes to get together and cook with the kids, making something nutritious and delicious.”

Simone Wilkinson, NYCC Practice and Development Officer, Early Help, added: “This is a fantastic partnership project that will make a big difference to families who are finding it hard at the moment.”

The project will source fresh ingredients from local independent businesses, encouraging people to buy local, supplemented by ingredients from the Community Smart food warehouse. Volunteers will deliver the hampers.

Recipes included have been devised and tested by Ryedale Community Kitchen chef Rob Hillary, who has provided easy-to-follow instructions for each meal, along with hints and tips on adapting the recipes to provide more variety and cut costs on ingredients for families on a tight budget.

People who need support with shopping and other essentials are encouraged to contact family, friends, neighbours or groups they belong to. North Yorkshire residents without those local networks, or anyone concerned about the welfare of someone else, can contact North Yorkshire County Council’s customer service centre on 01609 780780 seven days a week 8am to 5.30pm. People can also complete an online form to let us know what help they need. This can be found at [www.northyorks.gov.uk/covidhelp](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/covidhelp)

To find local businesses offering food deliveries and takeaways in your area, go to the Buy Local directory at [www.northyorks.gov.uk/buy-local](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/buy-local). People can also find details of other local voluntary and community groups offering support at [www.northyorkshireconnect.org.uk](http://www.northyorkshireconnect.org.uk).

We’re urging people to keep checking on neighbours and those in their communities who might need help and support. Find advice on how to help safely and information about volunteering with a local organisation in your community at [www.northyorks.gov.uk/helpingduringcovid](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/helpingduringcovid).

For information about the help available, including a link to the latest Government advice for people who are clinically extremely vulnerable, go to [www.northyorks.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/coronavirus).

## Growing our local economy

### **LEP News: York & North Yorkshire LEP supports businesses during National Apprenticeship Week 2021**

Working in partnership with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and businesses Aviva and Ellis Patents, the York & North Yorkshire LEP hosted an online event to showcase how apprenticeships can help businesses grow and become resilient.

The LEP has also updated its employers’ apprenticeship toolkit, which can be downloaded [here](#).

Details of some partner events can be accessed [here](#).

### **York & North Yorkshire Growth Hub continues to support businesses through the lockdown**

The Growth Hub’s [ShopAppy.com initiative](#) continues to support consumer-led businesses to remain trading through the current shutdown. Alongside subsidising membership to the platform, it is raising awareness of the importance of buying local through additional advertising, as well as investing in additional training for business to enhance their digital skills in the areas of social media and online marketing.

To date, the [webinar programme](#) has also delivered 50 webinars to more than 1,000 attendees on a range of current business-related topics, including leadership, marketing, finance, Brexit, wellbeing, starting up and leadership. The current programme continues until the end of March.

### **Visitor Economy Series: Understanding Your Market – Unlocking the potential of your business: 11 February, 12 noon**

John Gallery, managing director of Great Potential Marketing, is hosting an online event to help businesses identify their target markets and share ideas on how to reach them.

Booking link: <https://www.ynygrowthhub.com/events/understanding-your-market-unlocking-the-potential-of-your-business/>

### **Free Business Support Workshops from our network**

Selby District Council is offering a range of free workshops and webinars to support retail, tourism and hospitality businesses in Selby district.

See the full programme: <https://www.selby.gov.uk/free-business-support-workshops-february>

In partnership with Biskit Ltd, Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is delivering free 90-minute online workshops looking at how you can maximise potential and achieve better outcomes for your business. You can find out more about the sessions available and [book your place here](#).

### **Flexible repayment options announced for Bounce Back Loan borrowers**

The Chancellor has announced repayment flexibilities for Bounce Back Loan borrowers, with the ability to tailor payments according to individual circumstances.

For more information, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-eases-burden-on-more-than-a-million-businesses-through-pay-as-you-grow-flexible-repayment-options>

### **BEIS Webinars**

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has published a series of short, on-demand videos covering 18 topics, including importing and exporting, rules of origin, audit and accounting. [Register now to access these](#).

### **HMRC Webinars**

HMRC are hosting live webinars this week:

- Exporting: Actions you need to take now - 12 February - register [here](#).
- Importing: What you need to know about Staged Controls - 12 February - register [here](#).

### **Subsidised low-carbon retrofit training for unemployed builders and contractors**

The Centre for Sustainable Energy's low-carbon home retrofit project, [Futureproof](#), has 50 heavily subsidised places on its online training course on whole house retrofit for unemployed builders and contractors.

You can apply and pay for the subsidised low-carbon retrofit training on The Green Register's website [www.greenregister.org.uk/futureproof](http://www.greenregister.org.uk/futureproof)

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