

WELCOME FROM **Richard Flinton, Chief Executive**

Is it any wonder the great British public end up talking about the weather a lot? It is January, so perhaps the snow late last week and over the weekend, ice and freezing temperatures and now the seemingly relentless rain are not entirely a surprise. But, given the pandemic, they also feel even less welcome than usual.

The current lockdown 'stay at home' message continues to result in significant reductions in traffic on the highways and that in itself led to some challenges for us during the worst of the snow and ice. The grit and salt with which we treat the highways depend on traffic travelling over them to be at their most effective. The lack of vehicles meant that those making essential journeys had to be extra careful. Our gritters were out continuously. Particularly challenging was Sutton Bank, as you can imagine, where our ploughs and gritters were flat out.

And now we have the rain – lots of it, courtesy of Storm Christoph! While we aren't expecting any widespread flooding across the county, there will be a lot of surface water on the highways and in some areas there may be occasional road closures. In case it should be needed, we are also working with partners to be prepared for the worst and you can read more about that here. It includes some information on how covid-secure local level evacuation plans are in place, should they be required: <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/news/article/north-yorkshire-prepares-storm-christoph>

Our highways crews and contractors work extremely hard to keep roads open, whatever the weather, and are out and about as I write, inspecting routes and impacts from the seemingly endless rain. I would like to thank each and every one of them for doing so in some pretty awful conditions lately.

Where the conditions do have an impact, you can find information here along with advice on how to be prepared, just in case: <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/flooding-advice-and-information>

The weather is sadly not our only challenge. While we are seeing some early indications that the transmission rate for Covid-19 here is beginning to reduce, the figures are volatile and the clear message from the NHS in York and North Yorkshire is that we are not yet at the peak for hospital admissions.

I have mentioned before that there is a lag of 10 to 14 days, more in some cases, between someone testing positive for covid and that person requiring hospital care, if they develop the more serious symptoms. Today, the latest data shows that there are 471 people in the hospitals serving our area needing treatment for covid. That is an increase of 84 patients in just a week and a staggering 169 more people than were admitted in the first wave back in spring last year. There are more than 50 people in our hospitals right now in intensive care. Each one of those people has a family desperately hoping for good news. Each one is being treated by NHS staff selflessly battling on in extremely difficult conditions, wearing full PPE and often working long, exhausting shifts fighting to save people to send them back to their loved ones.

We understand that the third lockdown is hard and we are incredibly grateful for the vast majority of people in North Yorkshire sticking to the rules. We fully appreciate how heart-breaking it must be when you see the tiny minority of people flouting them as though they don't apply to them. However, please be reassured that our colleagues in the police are out and about to keep you safe

and to deal with those who think the rules are optional. Despite all the appeals, even last weekend North Yorkshire Police had to hand out 79 fines to people who had left home and travelled without a reasonable excuse, decided to have a get-together indoors or broken another covid-related regulation. On one occasion, a car full of people had travelled 160 miles for a non-essential journey and when stopped police colleagues found someone in the boot! There is a full list of the breaches and fines issued here: <https://northyorkshire.police.uk/news/fpns-issued-since-12-january-2021/>

But this tiny minority of rule breakers is not representative of the spirit and resilience of North Yorkshire folk or the tens of thousands of acts of kindness and neighbourliness going on all day everyday throughout this pandemic here. So to everyone who has, and is continuing to, contact someone who might be lonely to have a chat with them, walk a neighbour's dog who may be shielding so they don't have to go out, dropped off prescriptions or shopping for someone, been a friendly face and offered a smile – we thank you. Team North Yorkshire has a spirit that won't be broken and that is exactly how we will come out the other side of this together.

When we do get through this, there will be other very significant challenges that will continue to require a strong and focussed approach. Driving post-pandemic economic recovery, supporting job retention and creation, helping high streets, market towns and communities to recover and ensuring that our young people particularly have the best possible chances in life. We have not forgotten these vital matters and we continue to progress our bid for devolution and the powers and money that come with that and which will make a massive difference in the recovery process. We remain completely committed to protecting North Yorkshire and its future and we believe, now more than ever, the opportunities linked to devolution and a mayoral-led combined authority should not be delayed. That is exactly why we are pushing ahead with our proposals to deliver that for every person in North Yorkshire.

Please stay safe and well and continue to play your part, as you have done for so long. Thank you.

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: @northyorksc on Facebook and Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

Public health and social care

North Yorkshire Coronavirus Data

At 17 January, there have been 23,502 positive tests since 3 March, with 4,085 new cases reported in the past two weeks. The weekly rolling average of new cases is 313 cases per day, allowing for incomplete data in the most recent days. The seven-day rate for North Yorkshire is 311.3 per 100,000 people, which remains below the England seven-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>.

COVID-19 Vaccination FAQs:

Why should I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Vaccines are the way out of this pandemic. They save millions of lives worldwide and are safer now than ever before. Any vaccine must first go through a rigorous testing and development process and be shown to meet strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness, before it can be given to the public. It is strongly recommended that all frontline social care workers who can receive a vaccine choose to take it. Getting vaccinated will help protect you and the people you care for from becoming seriously ill from Covid-19, so you can continue to be there for their family, friends and the people you care for.

I'm worried that the vaccines aren't safe.

The vaccines approved for use in the UK have met strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness set out by the independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). Any coronavirus vaccine must go through all the clinical trials and safety checks all other licensed medicines go through. The vaccine has been shown to be effective and no safety concerns were seen in studies of more than 20,000 people. No long-term complications have been reported.

Will the vaccine protect me?

The Covid-19 vaccination will reduce the chance of you suffering from Covid-19 disease. It may take a week or two for your body to build up some protection from the first dose of vaccine. The vaccine has been shown to be effective and no safety concerns were seen in studies of more than 20,000 people. Like all medicines, no vaccine is completely effective – some people may still get Covid-19 despite having a vaccination, but this should be less severe.

Will the vaccine protect those I care for?

The evidence on whether Covid-19 vaccination reduces the chance of you passing on the virus is less clear. Most vaccines reduce the overall risk of infection, but some vaccinated people may get mild or asymptomatic infection and therefore be able to pass the virus on. It is highly likely that any infection in a vaccinated person will be less severe and that viral shedding will be shortened. We therefore expect that once vaccinated, you will be less likely to pass infection to your friends, family and to the people that you care for.

What are the side effects of the Covid-19 vaccine?

Like all medicines, Covid-19 vaccines can cause side effects. Most of these are mild and short-term, and not everyone gets them. Common side effects include a painful arm, feeling tired, headache, general aches and mild flu-like symptoms. However, these symptoms are normal and are a sign that your body is building immunity. These symptoms normally last less than a week. Further details can be found [here](#).

Can the Covid-19 vaccine give you Covid-19?

The vaccine does not contain a live virus so you cannot catch Covid-19 from the vaccine. However, it is possible to have caught Covid-19 and not realise you have the symptoms until after your vaccination appointment. Although a mild fever can occur within a day or two of vaccination, if you have any other Covid-19 symptoms (new continuous cough, high temperature, a loss of/change to sense of taste or smell), or your fever lasts longer, stay at home and arrange to have a test. You should continue to follow guidance on wearing PPE, hand washing using soap and water or hand sanitizer, as well as other protective measures.

Can I refuse a particular vaccine?

Not currently. All vaccines given by the NHS have been approved by the MHRA, so people should be assured that they are safe and effective. All three of the vaccines available offer more protection than not receiving a vaccine. The NHS has no say over which vaccine they are given to administer.

After I've had the vaccine will I still need to follow all the infection prevention and control advice?

Yes. No vaccine is 100% effective, and it will take a few weeks for your body to build up protection. While the approved vaccines provide protection to a vaccinated person from becoming seriously ill from Covid-19, we do not yet know if they prevent someone from passing on the virus to others.

All staff will still need to follow the guidance in your workplace, including wearing the correct personal protection equipment and taking part in any screening programmes. To continue to protect yourself, your residents, your family, friends and colleagues you should follow the general advice at work, at home and when you are out and about:

- practise social distancing
- wear a face mask
- wash your hands carefully and frequently
- follow the [current guidance](#)

I am a vegetarian, can I have the Covid-19 vaccine?

The MHRA has confirmed that the Covid-19 vaccines do not contain any components of animal origin, including pork, gelatine and eggs.

I'm Muslim, can I have the vaccine?

The British Islamic Medical Association recommends that the Covid-19 vaccines that are currently available in the UK for eligible individuals in Muslim communities. Further information from the British Islamic Medical Association can be found [here](#).

If I've already had Covid-19, why do I still need to have the vaccine?

If you have a confirmed case of Covid-19 you should wait at least four weeks after you had symptoms, or four weeks since your positive test if you didn't have any symptoms, and until you have recovered from your Covid-19 infection, before having the vaccine. You may not have developed enough of an immune response to protect you against a subsequent Covid-19 infection. It is also unknown how long any immunity may last. [A recent study](#) demonstrated that naturally acquired immunity as a result of past infections provides some immunity, but this immunity is a lower level and for a shorter time than if they have been vaccinated.

I'm pregnant, should I still have the vaccine?

There is no known risk with giving inactivated virus or bacterial vaccines or toxoids during pregnancy or whilst breast-feeding. However, the Covid-19 vaccines have not yet been tested in pregnant women, so it has been advised that until more information is available, pregnant women should not routinely have these vaccines. As a matter of caution, Covid-19 vaccine is therefore not routinely advised in pregnancy but there are some circumstances in which the potential benefits of vaccination are particularly important for pregnant women. This may include women who are at very high risk of catching the infection or those with certain medical conditions that put them at high risk of suffering serious complications from Covid-19 infection. In such circumstances, a woman may choose to have Covid-19 vaccine in pregnancy following a discussion with her doctor or nurse.

If a Covid-19 vaccine is given to a pregnant woman, she should be reassured that the vaccine does not contain live SARS-CoV-2 virus and therefore cannot cause Covid-19 infection in her or in her baby. Some Covid-19 vaccines contain a different harmless virus to help deliver the vaccine – whilst this virus is live, it cannot reproduce and so will not cause infection in a pregnant woman or her baby.

What if I find out I'm pregnant after having the vaccine?

If you find out that you are pregnant after you have had the vaccine, don't worry. The vaccines do not contain organisms that multiply in the body, so they cannot cause Covid-19 infection in your unborn baby. As they have done for other vaccines, PHE is establishing a monitoring system to follow up women who are vaccinated in pregnancy to help reassure women as time goes on.

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 21 January - Whitby** - Whitby Marina Car Park, Langbourne Road, Whitby, YO21 1YW
- **Thursday 21 January - Malton** - Wentworth Street Car Park, Smithson Ct, Malton, YO17 7BQ
- **Thursday 21 January - Leyburn** - Harmby Road Parking, Harmby road, Leyburn, DL8 5EE
- **Friday 22 January - Sherburn in Elmet** - Pasture Way Carpark, Sherburn in Elmet, LS25 6LY
- **Friday 22 January - Stokesley** - Stokesley Sports Club, Broughton Road, Stokesley, Middlesbrough, TS9 5JG
- **Friday 22 January - Richmond** - Round Howe car park, Reeth Road, Richmond, DL10 4TL
- **Saturday 23 January - Selby** - South Entrance, DRAX Power Station, New Road, Selby, YO8 8PH
- **Saturday 23 January - Settle** - Greenfoot Car Park, Settle, BD24 9RW
- **Saturday 23 January - Filey** - Filey Country Park, Church Cliff Drive, Filey, YO14 9ET
- **Saturday 23 January - Thornton Le Dale** - National Trust Car Park, No.5. Chestnut Avenue, Thornton Le Dale, Pickering, YO18 7RR
- **Sunday 24 January - Scarborough** - Scarborough Park and Ride, Seamer Road, Scarborough, YO12 4LW

- **Sunday 24 January - Richmond** - Round Howe car park, Reeth Road, Richmond, DL10 4TL
- **Sunday 24 January - 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

Supporting our schools and childcare

Schools and academies in North Yorkshire have now been invited to place orders directly with the Department for Education for more laptops, tablets or modems to access the internet.

They can apply for devices for children in Years 3 to 11 who do not have access to a laptop or tablet in their home, or who only have a mobile phone to work on. Children are also eligible if they have to work on a device shared with more than one other family member in their home.

Parents, carers and pupils cannot apply for laptops or modems through the Government scheme themselves and should contact their school if they are in need of a device.

In the meantime, children who cannot access learning online can attend school for face-to-face teaching.

We know that there are some schools still waiting for digital devices. We have completed a digital survey across all our schools in North Yorkshire to ascertain need. As a follow-up, we are encouraging our schools to ensure that they apply for their Department for Education entitlement of digital devices and we currently exploring ways of providing further support.

To ensure children are working safely online, Children and Young People's Service have issued a model guidance policy for remote learning for all schools.

The vast majority of families of pupils eligible for free school meals were provided with supermarket vouchers when lockdown began.

Schools in North Yorkshire are free to make their own decisions on whether to use a voucher scheme to distribute food hampers to those children who are eligible, or make different arrangements.

Most schools in North Yorkshire chose to provide parents with supermarket vouchers, to the value of £15 per child, per week.

We know that many families have seen their incomes hit hard by the pandemic and are putting as much support in place as possible to help people through these difficult times.

During the February half term, this support will continue to be provided to families via the Covid Winter Grant scheme, which also provides supermarket vouchers to families who need them.

Any families not eligible for free school meals who are struggling financially can apply to the North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund, which makes emergency awards for food or utility vouchers. The County Council has increased its award entitlement for emergency provision for a temporary period to help those hit hardest by the pandemic.

Teamwork to support our residents

During the current national lockdown people who are clinically extremely vulnerable and at higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus are being asked to shield again. While people are shielding

they must stay at home as much as possible and limit their contact with others. Support is available for anyone who is shielding and needs help with shopping or other everyday tasks, through the network of community support organisations. To make sure people have support in place while they are shielding we are contacting anyone who needed help during the March or November lockdowns.

All North Yorkshire residents who need help can be reassured that support put in place last March will carry on throughout the months ahead, even after the current national lockdown is lifted.

Malcolm and Hazel Boyes were left with a greater need for help than many when the pandemic struck. Malcolm, 78, was diagnosed with cancer seven years ago and as a result was advised to self-isolate at his home in Norton while Hazel, 76, has Parkinson's. Their circumstances were made more difficult because they have no children or family in the area.

Malcolm and Hazel contacted the County Council and were put in touch with the Ryedale community support organisation headed up locally by Scarborough and Ryedale Carers Resource and Ryedale Carers Support.

They were allocated a volunteer who took on their weekly shopping runs. When that volunteer was able to return to full-time work she had to give up the role and volunteer Jenny Potter took over.

Hazel said: "Jenny has been brilliant. Malcolm makes a shopping list on the computer and sends it every week. She is very, very helpful and asks that if there is anything else we need, to let her know."

The Boyes have praised Jenny's commitment, which has allowed them to stay at home while shielding.

Over the coming weeks, 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. The centre is open 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

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. People can also find details of other local voluntary and community groups offering support at www.northyorkshireconnect.org.uk.

We're urging people to keep checking on neighbours and those in their communities who might need help and support, particularly during the bad weather. Find advice on how to help safely and information about volunteering with a local organisation in your community at 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.

Growing our local economy

Buy Local – Northallerton therapist continues to treat customers virtually with Buy Local support

As the third lockdown is in full swing, looking after the mental health of ourselves and others is more important than ever.

Tapping therapist Justine Forrest holds appointments at Northallerton Wellness Centre but was forced to turn all attention to virtual methods during the pandemic.

Justine is one of more than 850 businesses to register on [North Yorkshire Buy Local](#), our free online marketplace promoting the services of those that can continue under Covid-19 restrictions.

Justine specialises in Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), also known as tapping. This method helps release anxiety or phobia and teaches a practical tool to calm your body's physical response to panic, stress and worry.

Having launched her business in April 2019, Justine was offering appointments in Northallerton when restrictions allowed. She has always offered Skype or Zoom appointments.

Justine, who is a representative for Hambleton Federation of Small Businesses, joined Buy Local to increase awareness and enhance her online marketing.

"It was very easy to sign up and it's a great place for people to go and find those businesses that are still operating," said Justine. "I'm able to include links to my website, social media channels and details of how to get in touch.

"This last year has taught us that taking care of our mental health is more important than ever. Unfortunately, a lot of people are suffering from isolation, anxiety and grief in silence. It's important to showcase my business on Buy Local to show that help is available.

"Lockdown has been difficult as some people prefer face-to-face appointments and I loved working at the Centre. Having said that, many people find it easier to have virtual appointments due to their long working days or if they have far to travel."

Justine is used to dealing with a variety of issues, including phobias, panic attacks, weight management and PTSD.

"The positive news of a vaccine is playing on all of our minds and I've seen that in my line of work," added Justine. "Recently I've been increasingly treating needle phobias and the anxiety around that. This support has been vital for so many people."

Please support local businesses like Justine's now during lockdown and into the future - they need it more than ever. Have a look at the [Buy Local website](#) for details of businesses in your area.

Businesses can register and advertise free – just go to the site and click 'register your businesses – over 850 businesses already have!

The site is advertised on @northyorkscs social media, getting your name in front of 55,000 followers and our residents' newsletter, NY Now, is emailed to almost 40,000 residents in North Yorkshire.

If you know someone who owns a business, tell him or her about Buy Local – it's quick and easy to set up a profile.

LEP News: Business Grants for York Businesses

York's businesses will be among the first in the country to get the latest lockdown grants as the amount of coronavirus business relief distributed by the council tops £140m.

City of York Council has also published proposals that could extend grant support to even more York businesses. Hundreds of York business can expect payments by 20 January after the council issued another £14.5m of grants, including one-off top-up payments of between £4,000 and £9,000 for retail, leisure and hospitality businesses.

This means that the council has processed all payments for businesses it knows are eligible for Local or Lockdown Restrictions Grants until 15 February, the Government's first review date of the current lockdown. The council hopes to complete the Additional Restrictions Grant payments next week. For more information visit [our website](#)

Grow your business internationally

The Department for International Trade (DIT) is partnering with up to 100 MPs across the UK for a three-part series of online sessions for local businesses. These webinars will give you guidance to help grow your business internationally, providing information about the support available and discussing how to take advantage of the UK's new trade agreements. All sessions are chaired by local MPs and include a Q&A session.

In North Yorkshire, the next event is Harrogate and Knaresborough - hosted by Andrew Jones MP - 12 February, 2pm-3pm.

To find out if your constituency is involved and to register for the series, please click [here](#).

Business leaders sought for board positions

Business leaders are being sought to help drive forward the York & North Yorkshire economy.

The York & North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership is seeking leaders for several board positions. Successful applicants will play a key role in the LEP's work.

The LEP is keen to see applicants who represent key sectors, such as manufacturing, food manufacturing, bio economy, Agri-tech, construction and visitor economy, or businesses using circular business models. Positions are open on the main board, skills board and business board.

The closing date for applications is Sunday 14 February. A board recruitment pack is available on the LEP website [here](#). To request an informal discussion about the role, please email enquiries@businessinspiredgrowth.com

'How businesses can leverage apprenticeships to build their future beyond Covid'

9 February, 12:30pm

To celebrate National Apprenticeship Week 2021, the York & North Yorkshire LEP invites you to attend a free webinar event to learn how businesses, both small and large, can benefit from apprenticeships.

We will introduce an expert range of speakers and host a Q and A session to answer all your questions. All attendees will be signposted to an up to date, practical apprenticeships toolkit developed by the LEP to support SMEs with apprenticeships.

To register for this event, visit <https://leverageapprenticeships.eventbrite.co.uk>

Big Energy Saving Week

This week is Big Energy Saving Week, which is a national campaign to encourage people to save energy, money and the environment through everyday actions.

As part of Circular Yorkshire month last November, the York & North Yorkshire LEP and Growth Hub worked with partners including CBI, FSB and Chamber of Commerce to produce some helpful e-guides looking at how SMEs can profit from becoming more circular and sustainable.

SMEs can download the Energy e-guide free from here:

<https://www.ynygrowthhub.com/resources/how-to-reduce-energy-costs-and-cut-emissions/>.

It's full of practical advice about how businesses can save money and cut their carbon emissions.
