

WELCOME FROM **Richard Flinton, Chief Executive**

I am sure many of us were standing on our doorsteps last night with candles and torches, taking a few moments to stand and reflect on the past year we have all been through and of those who have lost their lives to Covid 19. I am sure many of us joined the millions up and down the land who held a minute's silence yesterday at midday. If we had been told this time last year how our lives would be totally changed by the pandemic, that 12 months on we would still be in lockdown and how many people would go on to die of coronavirus, we would have found it hard to believe.

Our county, as our nation, has gone through so much during this time. People have lost their jobs, their way of life, they have been separated from friends and family and many have been bereaved. The pandemic has taken its toll on mental health, on the education of children and young people, on business, on so many freedoms we previously took for granted.

The suffering has been great, but the way that friends, neighbours, and communities have pulled together to help each other has been great, too. Nowhere else is quite like North Yorkshire for team work, and across our market towns and villages, dales and moors many, many people, from refuse workers to teachers, care workers to highways staff backed by thousands of volunteers, have come together in a huge collective effort to make sure people are safe, have necessary help, have access to teaching and learning, medication, food and social contact.

Over the last 12 months, Team North Yorkshire has put in more than 100,000 volunteer hours and 50,000 calls to check people are OK. An impressive record of dedication to the needs of others among countless other acts of kindness.

I want to say a big thank you to everybody.

At our North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum press conference yesterday, held especially for the Day of Reflection, we heard many stories of people from the front line and from our community support partners who have pulled out all the stops to help the sick and the lonely and vulnerable.

We heard from Dr Matt Shepherd, a consultant in emergency medicine and acting Chief Operating Officer and Clinical Director at Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust, of the great flexibility and commitment shown by hospital doctors and nurses and NHS community teams in preventing the NHS from becoming overwhelmed, even during the most difficult second and third waves of the pandemic.

We heard how our staff working in social care moved into a 24/7 operation to support hospital discharge and safety in North Yorkshire's care settings. We heard from Helen Flynn, Executive Director of Nidderdale Plus, how community support organisations like hers with their thousands of volunteers, rose to the challenge of supporting people isolated by the pandemic and are committed to continuing to support people and develop community resilience as society unlocks.

We must remember our businesses which repurposed their operations to make face masks and hand sanitiser or sent out take-away food to care homes to cheer up staff and residents.

Of course, we have to take our hats off to people like Jim McDermott, who spoke to our media colleagues yesterday about how, when the pandemic struck, his touring schedule as a drummer for the Red Hot Chilli Peppers, with Kylie Minogue and other bands like Simple Minds came to a

grinding halt. But, instead of putting his feet up, he decided to do his bit for the community and took up a job as a relief domestic assistant at Ashfield, one of our care homes in Skipton. He described the experience as “humbling” and “a privilege,” particularly in witnessing “the way everyone mucked in, got on with things and try to keep people smiling”.

He went on to say: “I’ve played all over the world - Wembley Stadium, Broadway, everything - but working this year and helping with the staff and the residents has just been one of the best moments actually of my life.”

Not many people have a glittering career like Jim, but many like Jim have made a huge step-change during the last year to make the time to help others. We have all been changed by the pandemic.

And as we now look forward to a summer of increased freedoms we would do well to think of the words of Nick Moxon, a resident at [Disability Action Yorkshire](#)’s home on Claro Road, Harrogate, chair of Harrogate and District Disability forum and chair of a care home visiting task group we set up last year. Nick paid tribute at the press conference to care workers’ dedication to keeping their residents safe and still smiling during the pandemic. He regarded their commitment as “humbling”. He also described the great moment on March 8 when care home visiting by family and friends started up again and he was able to hold his mum’s hand for the first time for months. What a moment that must have been.

But Nick also talked about how people in his care home are now getting tired, how they need to see friends and go outside and have those freedoms again.

So we all now have a part to play in making sure those freedoms can happen. We must not forget that the road map to unlocking is dependent on data, not dates and we must all do our bit every step of the way. We must proceed with caution in order to keep those infection rates coming down. We need to stick to the basics of washing hands, wearing face masks, keeping our social distance and while we can enjoy the outdoors together in groups, during the whole of April we must refrain from mixing indoors.

We also need to take up our offer of a vaccine when the offer is made. More than 375,000 people in North Yorkshire and York have now had their first vaccination – almost half of the population and most of those over 50 and with underlying health conditions and nearly 30,000 have had their second dose. We are reassured that the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is safe, gives protection and reduces transmission and so for our own sake and for the sake of others we should take up the offer.

Let’s continue to pull together as Team North Yorkshire.

Finally, can I once again remind you that the Government is currently consulting on the future of local Government in York and North Yorkshire. There are two proposals. The county council believes that it is important to keep the strong brand of North Yorkshire intact, to ensure that we have the strongest possible services available for the public and to retain the identity of the City of York as it is. This is set out in our proposal for a new single council for the whole of North Yorkshire. The alternative option has been put forward by some of the district councils and outlines how the county would be split into east and west. The east side incorporating the City of York. Both proposals are available to view on this consultation link

<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/governance-reform-and-democracy/northyorkshire>

Please stay safe.

Keeping in touch

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

- Covid-19 related news: <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-and-information>

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

Public health and social care

North Yorkshire Coronavirus Data

At 15 March, there have been 28,946 positive tests since 3 March 2020, with 559 new cases reported in the past two weeks. The weekly rolling average of new cases is 45 cases per day, allowing for incomplete data in the most recent days. The seven-day rate for North Yorkshire is 44 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>.

Coronavirus update

Coronavirus remains a serious threat across the country and we are still in a national lockdown. Some of the rules on what you can and cannot do changed on 8 March as part of the government's road map out of the Coronavirus pandemic [COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021](#). You must still stay at home, leaving only where permitted by law, and continue to follow the national guidance. However, restrictions will begin to ease from 29 March.

Changes on 29 March

The following changes will come into force from 29 March:

Social contact

The evidence shows that it is safer for people to meet outdoors rather than indoors. This is why from 29 March, when most schools start to break up for the Easter holidays, outdoor gatherings (including in private gardens) of either six people (the Rule of 6) or two households will also be allowed, making it easier for friends and families to meet outside.

Business and activities

Outdoor sports facilities such as tennis and basketball courts, and open-air swimming pools, will also be allowed to reopen, and people will be able to take part in formally organised outdoor sports.

Travel

The 'stay at home' rule will end on 29 March but many restrictions will remain in place. People should continue to work from home where they can and minimise the number of journeys they make where possible, avoiding travel at the busiest times and routes. Travel abroad will continue to be prohibited, other than for a small number of permitted reasons. Holidays abroad will not be allowed, given it will remain important to manage the risk of imported variants and protect the vaccination programme. The government has launched a new taskforce to review global travel, which will report on 12 April.

Staying vigilant

The virus has been with us for over a year now, and we are all perhaps feeling demotivated about following recommended behaviour to protect ourselves and others from the virus. At this crucial time, it is even more important to look after ourselves and those around us. Some suggestions are:

- Think about how you complied with the rules in the first few months, and remind yourself of the basics – social distancing, maintaining hand hygiene and wearing a face covering.
- Stay up to date on trustworthy facts about COVID-19 but avoid information overload by choosing two or three trusted sources and check them only once or twice each day.
- Take care of yourself by engaging in daily activities that build your physical and emotional strength, and remember that the COVID-19 pandemic will not last forever.
- Remember that COVID-19 safety protocols aren't just about protecting yourself – they're meant to keep everyone safe. Think about risks that may be created for others, and commit to keeping everyone safe. Encourage friends and family that may be struggling to stick with the rules to keep going.

By staying vigilant as we start to lift lockdown we will protect others, continue to drive down infection rates, reduce the pressure on our NHS and move closer to a more normal way of life.

Working together towards recovery

Testing

There are three types of testing available:

- tests for people with symptoms
- tests if you live or work with a nursery/school/college student
- workplace testing

Find more information and the latest dates and locations at www.northyorks.gov.uk/testing

Tests for people with symptoms

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.

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

Permanent sites are open **every day** for testing between 8am and 11:30am:

- **Harrogate** – Dragon Road Car Park, Dragon Road, Harrogate, HG1 5DB
- **Scarborough** – William Street Car Park, Scarborough. YO12 7PL
- **Northallerton** – The Forum, Bullamore Road, Northallerton, DL6 1LP
- **Selby** – Portholme Crescent Car Park, Selby, YO8 4YR
- **Skipton** – Cavendish Street Car Park, Skipton, BD23 1RP

Mobile sites are open for testing from 9am to 3pm on the following days:

- **Thursday 25 March - Whitby** - Whitby Marina Car Park, Langbourne Road, Whitby, YO21 1YW
- **Thursday 25 March - Malton** - Wentworth Street Car Park, Smithson Ct, Malton, YO17 7BQ
- **Thursday 25 March - Leyburn** - Harmby Road, Car Park, Leyburn, DL8 5EE
- **Friday 26 March - Sherburn in Elmet** - Pasture Way Carpark, Sherburn in Elmet, LS25 6LY
- **Friday 26 March - Stokesley** - Stokesley Sports Club, Broughton Road, Stokesley, Middlesbrough, TS9 5JG
- **Friday 26 March - Richmond** - Round Howe Car Park, Reeth Road, Richmond, DL10 4TL

- **Saturday 27 March - Selby** - South Entrance, DRAX Power Station, New Road, Selby, YO8 8PH
- **Saturday 27 March - Settle** - Greenfoot Car Park, Settle, BD24 9RW
- **Saturday 27 March - Filey** - Filey Country park, Church Cliff Drive, Filey, YO14 9ET
- **Saturday 27 March - Thornton Le Dale** - North York Moors National Park Authority car park, No.5. Chestnut Avenue, Thornton Le Dale, Pickering, YO18 7RR
- **Sunday 28 March - Scarborough** - Scarborough Park and Ride, Seamer Road, Scarborough, YO12 4LW
- **Sunday 28 March - Richmond** - Round Howe Car Park, Reeth Road, Richmond, DL10 4TL
- **Sunday 28 March - Thirsk** - Millgate Car Park, Marage Road, Thirsk, YO7 1PE

Tests if you live or work with a nursery/school/college student

If you live, work or are in a support bubble with nursery, primary or secondary school pupils or college students you should carry out lateral flow device tests at home twice a week. Tests can be collected from locations across North Yorkshire.

Testing kits can be collected **every day** between 1pm and 8pm from the following permanent testing sites:

- **Harrogate** – Dragon Road Car Park, Dragon Road, Harrogate, HG1 5DB
- **Scarborough** – William Street Car Park, Scarborough. YO12 7PL
- **Northallerton** – The Forum, Bullamore Road, Northallerton, DL6 1LP
- **Selby** – Portholme Crescent Car Park, Selby, YO8 4YR
- **Skipton** – Cavendish Street Car Park, Skipton, BD23 1RP

Testing kits can also be collected between 9am and 3pm from our mobile distribution unit, which will be at the following locations in the coming days:

- **Thursday 25 March – Stokesley** – Stokesley Sports Club, Broughton Road, Stokesley, Middlesbrough, TS9 5JG
- **Friday 26 March – Easingwold** – Easingwold Town AFC, Stillington Road, Easingwold, York, YO61 3DZ
- **Saturday 27 March – Malton** – Wentworth Street Car Park, Smithson Ct, Malton, YO17 7BQ
- **Sunday 28 March – Whitby** – Whitby Park and Ride, Whitby, YO21 1TL

Workplace testing

All businesses registered in England are eligible to apply to join the national workplace rapid testing programme if employees cannot work from home. They must register before 31 March.

You can register at www.gov.uk/get-workplace-coronavirus-tests

Businesses will be provided with all the information they need to plan and deliver their testing programme, along with promotional materials.

For more information, please contact p-and-psector@dhsc.gov.uk

Supporting our schools and childcare

We are making sure families can continue to provide the essentials for children this Easter holiday, as we continue to provide food voucher payments.

Parents and carers who are struggling financially due to the pandemic, or are on low incomes, will receive supermarket vouchers worth £15 per child per week, plus an additional one-off voucher of up to £20 through the Covid Winter Grant Scheme. The one-off payments are designed to meet the increased cost of food and other household bills for families during the school holidays.

We are also launching North Yorkshire FEAST, a holiday activities and food programme for children in receipt of free school meals over the Easter holidays. Run in conjunction with North Yorkshire Youth, North Yorkshire Sport and Rural Arts, we will be providing children on low incomes with activity packs for the holidays. It is hoped that over the summer holidays, face-to-face activities will be run, with a focus on healthy food and physical activities.

The packs are funded from the Department for Education's Holiday Activities and Food programme in response to the increased pressure school holidays can bring to many families due to the increased cost of food and childcare for families.

Richard Linsley, Headteacher of Alverton Community Primary School in Northallerton, said: "We know the food vouchers have really helped families balance their budgets over the holidays during the difficult times brought about by the pandemic. So we're delighted to be able to offer the vouchers again.

"The children will be delighted with their activity packs. The ideas for activities will be really useful over this lockdown holiday and they contain plenty of resources to keep children active and engaged."

All families across North Yorkshire can access the school holiday activity ideas online at www.northyorkshiretogether.co.uk/feast

Teamwork to support our residents

Teamwork to support our residents

One year on from the first national lockdown, the county has reflected on the tremendous resilience, commitment and community spirit of those living and working in North Yorkshire. Since last March, volunteers have given an incredible 110,000 hours of their time. Delivering shopping, medication and other essentials as well as making more than 56,000 befriending calls and telephone check-ins.

Gail Hall from Reeth and district community transport said: "So many volunteers came forward. We just couldn't keep up with it. On the very first afternoon we were set up. We had papers on the wall with the days of the week. We sat there and waited for the first phone call to come in.

"I just feel so proud and humbled of our achievements, especially the dedication of those that have made it all happen. We've brought a community together, which can only accurately be measured by the compassionate action of its members. We hope to make it even stronger and closer, physically and mentally. I think life is full of challenges. Challenges are what makes life interesting, but overcoming them is what makes life meaningful.

"Volunteers have never been so well respected. My volunteers have said they get just as much out of it as the person they're helping. It hasn't taken much, just a little bit of kindness."

As part of the roadmap to end coronavirus restrictions in England, people who are clinically extremely vulnerable are no longer advised to shield from 1 April and will receive a letter from the Government with updated advice. Since shielding measures were reintroduced in January, cases of Covid-19 have fallen considerably across all parts of the country and over 22 million people have had at least one dose of the vaccine.

Although people will no longer be advised to shield, Government advice is to take extra care while the virus is still spreading in our communities and continue to follow the rules that are in place for everyone during the pandemic.

Many people who have been shielding may still need help with shopping and other essentials. Our support will continue despite the lifting of some restrictions, whether that's helping people who are asked to self-isolate after testing positive for Covid-19 or being contacted by NHS Test and Trace, or supporting North Yorkshire residents who are clinically extremely vulnerable.

North Yorkshire residents without local support networks who need help with shopping and other essentials, 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 at www.northyorks.gov.uk/covidhelp.

To find local businesses offering food deliveries and takeaways, 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.

Find advice on how to help others safely and information about volunteering with a local organisation in your community at www.northyorks.gov.uk/helpingduringcovid

Growing our local economy

LEP News: Changes at the top for Local Enterprise Partnership

At a challenging yet pivotal time for our region's economy, we are hugely excited to welcome Helen Simpson OBE into post as our new LEP Chair.

Helen, who has held senior roles at BT, brings a wealth of experience in leadership through change, digital innovation, business growth and community development and also chairs Broadacres Housing Association. Helen is the first female chair of the LEP's main board.

[Read the full story here](#)

Alongside the appointment of Helen Simpson as LEP chair, today we welcome a host of new board members who bring with them valuable business insight, a drive for innovation and a passion to ensure that our region has a strong story to capture every opportunity for UK Government and private sector investment. [Meet our new board members](#)

Leadership Webinar Series: Empowering your team – learning to delegate and let go

30 March, noon

Designed for business owners and managers, this webinar, hosted by leadership expert Michelle Mook, will help leaders to consider what gets in the way of delegation and how important it is to empower the team to deliver on your behalf.

Booking link: <https://www.ynygrowthhub.com/events/leadership-series-empowering-your-team-learning-to-delegate-and-let-go/>

Connect. Develop. Achieve Programme

A free programme that aims to support women in the workplace, who are looking to develop their skills or qualifications. This can be to support their current role, develop their personal skills or progress into another role.

If you require further information or wish to sign up to the programme, email anna-mae@nybep.org.uk, call **07852 939061** or visit [Connect, Develop, Achieve | NYBEP](#)

Low-carbon support for businesses

Join Aura Innovation Centre for a free bite-sized breakfast event designed to keep you up-to-date on low-carbon and green energy solutions for your business.

For more information, go to [Building back greener: What does it all mean?](#)

Ignite Founders Challenge

Are you at the start of your venture journey? Now is the time to challenge yourself and put your founding team and idea in front of one of the world's most successful start-up environments. Take on the Ignite Founders' Challenge this spring with Cambridge Judge Business School's Entrepreneurship Centre.

To find out more email support@businessinspiredgrowth.com

We recognise businesses are under pressure for time, so our aim is to collate the best, latest news and share this with you on our website <https://www.businessinspiredgrowth.com/covid-19/>.

For information on the latest government support, visit: [Financial support for businesses during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
