

WELCOME FROM **Richard Flinton, Chief Executive**

If ever there was a time to take stock and reflect on the ravages of the Covid-19 pandemic on our communities, this is it. This week we pass the grim milestone of 100,000 deaths from Covid in the UK, one of the highest death rates in the world. More than 100,000 people have lost their lives to this deadly virus in the last year and even more - many more people - are affected by grief and loss of a loved one. In North Yorkshire in the last 12 months, 917 people have lost their lives to Covid. We have come on a very long and difficult journey since the first two people in the UK were reported with the virus in York last January.

But this is also a week where we can see the light in the darkness growing ever brighter as the nation pushes ahead with the vaccination programme and lockdown brings the infection rate down. Here in North Yorkshire and York, more than 126,000 of our most vulnerable residents, those aged over 80 and in care homes as well as care home staff, have now been vaccinated – one sixth of the population. Residents and staff in all of the county's 235 residential care settings, apart from those settings with outbreaks and individuals with Covid or recovering from the virus, have been offered the vaccine. We have new mass vaccination sites coming on stream over the course of this week and next at Ripon racecourse and Scarborough rugby club and some of our residents in the west of our county will be given the option of getting vaccinated at the large site in West Yorkshire being set up at Elland Road. Also, despite reports of vaccines being diverted from Yorkshire to other areas in the country that are lagging behind with the roll-out and despite concerning reports about a block on vaccine exports from Europe, we continue to expect that our North Yorkshire roll-out programme remains on track. This is a huge achievement and I wish to thank all our NHS colleagues and social care teams and all our volunteers across the county who have worked so hard to make this happen and continue to work hard as the vaccination programme progresses.

We continue to support those who are isolated by the pandemic and need help, working with our 23 partner community support organisations. This week a letter from the county council is dropping into the letterboxes of every household in North Yorkshire setting out the support that is available for people who are alone and vulnerable and shielding.

And while our most vulnerable residents wait for their vaccines, our trading standards teams are ready to give support and raise awareness about people becoming prey to scammers offering fake vaccines and tests and who might get a scam email or call in the future. Trading standards wishes to remind people that the Covid vaccine is free and administered by the NHS, which would never ask for personal or bank details in exchange for getting a vaccine. Also, for people who need to pay for a test because they must travel for work purposes, the gov.uk website <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/list-of-private-providers-of-coronavirus-testing/list-of-private-providers-of-coronavirus-testing> is the best place to find reputable private providers. Anybody who fears they may have been the victim of such scams should contact **Action Fraud: 0300 123 2040**

I must thank the vast majority of people who have complied with lockdown rules as the infection rate shows signs of falling. There is evidence from North Yorkshire Police that more people are complying, though there are still those who do not think the rules apply to them, like the couple who travelled more than 100 miles for a roast dinner. Last week, the police issued 87 fixed penalty notices, compared to 134 the week before.

The North Yorkshire rate for people infected with Covid per 100,000 population is 208 – significantly below the England average of 369. The county's rates vary with Selby and Richmondshire showing the highest rates (256 and 248 respectively) to Scarborough at 113. However, compared to summer months these rates are still high and this is no time for complacency. The death toll is a grim reminder that we must stick to the rules of staying home, wearing face masks, keeping a social distance and washing hands regularly. The background rate for Covid is still comparatively high and it is too soon to say that we have turned a corner; that this is a sustainable downward trend. With the highly transmissible variant of the virus now in every part of North Yorkshire, it would not take much for infection rates to shoot back up again. The vast majority of our population is still susceptible to contracting Covid.

And we must not forget that while infection rates are falling now, the death rate continues to rise and our hospitals and clinical staff remain under enormous pressure. There are 504 patients with Covid in the four hospitals for York and North Yorkshire, an increase of 33 from last week and the highest we have ever had. As many as 61 are in intensive care. And we still have one or more cases of Covid in 87 of our care settings, not as high as last spring, but 11 up on last week. We continue to work in partnership with care providers with training, reviews and advice in the 24/7 effort to get cases and outbreaks down as quickly as possible.

Our schools remain open for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers with attendance overall at 18 per cent. We know only too well how difficult it is for children and young people to be confined to learning at home without their teachers and peers and the opportunities for activities and play and all the things that enrich learning and contribute to well-being and lively minds. We continue to wait for clarity from the Government on school re-opening, but in the meantime we continue to work with our schools to give training and support to teachers about maintaining the welfare and well-being of children and we have increased the number of vulnerable children attending schools. We wish to thank all our teaching and support staff, who are doing such a fantastic job, and parents, who are working under great pressure to continue with home schooling.

Finally, I wish to give you an update on our roads and how the network is coping after Storm Christophe and days of icy conditions. Our highways teams worked around the clock to keep the county on the move and minimise the impact of flooding due to the storm which hit the county after days of snow and which has been followed by rapidly falling temperatures and widespread ice across the region.

River levels are dropping, but some roads remain closed and monitoring and inspection of roads and bridges continues before reopening. A pumping operation continues in Norton, Malton and Old Malton. Near Selby, floodwater overtopped the A19, which is currently closed for reconstruction. The main issue arising from Storm Christoph is the level of the ground water as rain fell on saturated ground. With more rain forecast for parts of the county this week we are keeping a close eye on the highways network and areas susceptible to flooding and ask people to stay at home as much as possible. If you have to go out on the road, continue to drive with extreme caution and do not go past road closure signs or drive through floodwater.

Find the latest information on road closures at www.northyorks.gov.uk/roadworks-road-closures-and-diversions.

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 24 January, there have been 24,829 positive tests since 3 March, with 2,999 new cases reported in the past two weeks. The weekly rolling average of new cases is 228 cases per day, allowing for incomplete data in the most recent days. The seven-day rate for North Yorkshire is 222.1 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

The national lockdown is still in force, and after passing the 100,000 deaths yesterday, it is still more important than ever that we all stick to the rules. Cases may be decreasing, but we are urging you to continue to remember the basics and when you leave home, act like you've got it, as anyone can spread it. You must stay at home to protect the NHS and save lives.

The gov.uk website has the detail on what this means for you. Staying at home and avoiding contact with anyone you do not live with (even other family members or your friends) is the best way of stopping the spread of the virus.

You are allowed to leave home only to:

- shop for essentials for your household or a vulnerable person/people you are helping, and this should be done as locally as possible
- go to work, or provide voluntary or charitable services, if you cannot work from home
- exercise with your household (or support bubble) or one other person. This should be limited to once per day and you should stay local
- meet your support bubble or childcare bubble where necessary, but only if you are legally permitted to form one
- seek medical help or avoid injury, illness or risk of harm (including domestic abuse)
- attend education or childcare, for anyone who is eligible.

If you live alone, or you are a single parent who lives only with your children, you can meet one other household without social distancing. This is called a support bubble.

Not everyone meets the criteria for a support bubble. You can check if you do on the [government website](#).

Vaccination Update

The roll out of the Covid-19 vaccine is being run nationally by the health service. Find out more on the [NHS website](#).

Help if you are clinically extremely vulnerable is still available. If you have been declared clinically extremely vulnerable and can't get help from family or friends, you should register for assistance with things like getting food and prescriptions. For more information on support available in North Yorkshire, please visit <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/help-you-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.

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 to get a test only 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 28 January - Whitby** - Whitby Marina car park, Langbourne Road, Whitby, YO21 1YW
- **Thursday 28 January - Malton** - Wentworth Street car park, Smithson Ct, Malton, YO17 7BQ
- **Thursday 28 January - Leyburn** - Harmby Road Parking, Harmby road, Leyburn, DL8 5EE
- **Friday 29 January - Sherburn in Elmet** - Pasture Way car park, Sherburn in Elmet, LS25 6LY
- **Friday 29 January - Stokesley** - Stokesley Sports Club, Broughton Road, Stokesley, Middlesbrough, TS9 5JG
- **Friday 29 January - Richmond** - Round Howe car park, Reeth Road, Richmond, DL10 4TL
- **Saturday 30 January - Selby** - South Entrance, DRAX Power Station, New Road, Selby, YO8 8PH
- **Saturday 30 January - Settle** - Greenfoot car park, Settle, BD24 9RW
- **Saturday 30 January - Filey** - Filey Country Park, Church Cliff Drive, Filey, YO14 9ET
- **Saturday 30 January - Thornton Le Dale** - National Trust car park, No.5. Chestnut Avenue, Thornton Le Dale, Pickering, YO18 7RR
- **Sunday 31 January - Scarborough** - Scarborough Park and Ride, Seamer Road, Scarborough, YO12 4LW
- **Sunday 31 January - Richmond** - Round Howe car park, Reeth Road, Richmond, DL10 4TL
- **Sunday 31 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/QawyKwlfKQ>

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

www.northyorks.gov.uk/testing

Supporting our schools and childcare

Coronavirus testing in schools

Swab tests for coronavirus are now being introduced to schools in North Yorkshire, as part of a national Government scheme.

The tests will allow teaching staff in primary and secondary schools, colleges and nurseries to test themselves for covid twice a week.

Young people in Year 7 and above at secondary schools, special schools and colleges will also receive the tests in school. But younger children in primary school will not be tested.

Primary schools and nurseries are being provided with the Lateral Flow testing kits this week, which will be used at home and provide results within 30 minutes.

Secondary schools will be providing tests for children of key workers and vulnerable students who are currently attending school, as well as staff. The tests are voluntary and no child or young person will be tested without consent from their parent or carer. Pupils will not be prevented from receiving face-to-face education if they are not tested.

The idea of the initiative is to provide an added layer of protection for schools, in addition to the safety measures and risk assessments already put in place at each individual school.

The council is providing schools with support and advice for schools. We recently held a webinar for headteachers on the introduction of the tests and once they are up and running will be holding drop-in sessions to answer any further questions or provide more support. We are also matching schools who do not have enough staff to carry out the testing with volunteers and will also help those lacking a space suitable for testing find a suitable, alternative site for testing.

Teamwork to support our residents

Richard Blackshaw didn't let the recent winter weather stop him from delivering essential prescriptions to Harrogate residents who are shielding. Richard has been volunteering with Harrogate and District Community Action, one of 23 community support organisations helping people across North Yorkshire, since last March.

Richard said: "We had a good six inches of snow on one of the days. Driving would have been quite perilous. One collection was a mile away and the other was half a mile, so I thought I'd just walk. The people I delivered to were both very pleased. I even built a snowman on the way back home!"

Before the Covid pandemic began, Richard volunteered with the Woodland Trust and other local groups.

He added: "It's given me something to do. I'd normally be very active with running, football and golf but, of course, I haven't got those things for now. It gets me out of the house. It's nice seeing people and I'm doing some good.

"I've mainly done prescriptions collections and there are half a dozen people who I help regularly. I do a little bit of shopping aided by my wife, because she's a much better shopper than I am, knowing what to get if something isn't available.

"People have been very, very grateful for the support with things like getting groceries or prescriptions and being able to get what they need, but also for the contact as well. It takes that worry away that someone is there to help."

Lizzie Hughes, Project Development Worker at Harrogate and District Community Action (HADCA), said: "Richard has been volunteering with us since the very start of the pandemic and helps on a weekly basis to get food and prescriptions delivered to people across Harrogate. He's always very willing and carries out his volunteering in such a cheerful way. He wouldn't let something like snow stop him from helping out!"

People who need support with shopping and other essentials are encouraged to contact family, friends, neighbours or groups to which they belong. 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

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 are 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.

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: Think local in lockdown to support the county's businesses

Residents of North Yorkshire are being encouraged to help themselves and to support the county's businesses by taking advantage of goods and services being offered by local shops and traders during the lockdown.

We must all stay at home at the moment except for essential journeys, and many businesses that serve North Yorkshire are able to help by offering Covid-safe local collection or delivery, with many ready to deliver services and shopping directly to customers.

The Buy Local website was developed by North Yorkshire County Council last year at the start of the first lockdown specifically to bring together local customers with county businesses. More than 850 businesses serving North Yorkshire have already signed up to the site. Customers can search at www.northyorks.gov.uk/buylocal for a wide range of goods and services, from groceries to a plumber.

County Council Leader Cllr Carl Les said: "While we all follow the lockdown rules by staying at home, lots of great North Yorkshire businesses are standing by to deliver services and goods to your door.

"There has probably never been a more important time to support local businesses. I would encourage you to shop locally to support jobs and the economy at this difficult time. Please look at our Buy Local website for details of businesses in your area.

"If you are looking for food deliveries, find them on Buy Local. Many farm shops, butchers, grocers and village shops are stepping up to provide essential supplies to those that need them.

"Making small changes to our shopping habits can go a long way to helping to keep local businesses alive so that they can survive and prosper after lockdown. Our local supply chains are essential to support our local communities and high streets."

Sharon Davis is founder of Dales PR and Marketing and Dales Business Women networking group and recommends Buy Local to both shoppers and businesses.

“Even though many businesses can’t trade as they normally would, there are many who are selling in alternate ways, be that a takeaway service, online, vouchers, online consultations,” she said.

“This might be the lifeline that keeps them going and local support is more important now than ever.

“When buying something, stop and think of local businesses who supply the same service. Also, are you able to buy a voucher now from a small business and give it as a gift to a loved one later in the year? The Buy Local website is an ideal resource for finding new local businesses. With more than 850 listed, you’re bound to find many selling goods and services you need.

“If you’re a business, then please do use this resource as you never know, you may get a few sales through it and every single penny counts right now.”

Sharon’s call to residents to shop locally can be viewed on the county council YouTube channel, <https://youtu.be/t4SwS71COOc>

If you own a business, register on Buy Local now at www.northyorks.gov.uk/buylocal to help you to reach new audiences. It is quick, easy and free to set up and the site is promoted through the county council’s social media channels, @northyorksc. If you know someone who owns a business, tell them about Buy Local. Hear more from Sharon on why businesses should sign up here: <https://youtu.be/bVNCurUlcC4>

LEP News: Love Local Day

Love Local Day is a ShopAppy initiative centred on sharing the love of all things local - you can find full details [here](#).

The campaign encourages places to showcase local businesses, promote their importance and encourages shopping local. The campaign culminates on 14 February with a selection of nominated business receiving a gift (locally bought, of course!) as a token of appreciation from their communities.

Tell your favourite shop or business how much you love them [here](#).

Upcoming business support webinars

As part of our ongoing webinar programme, there are several events taking place this week. For more details and information on how to book, use the links below:

- **Thursday 28 January:** [Building the foundations – doing the right thing in year one](#)
- **Thursday 28 January:** [Creating great content to promote your business and your ShopAppy profile](#)

BREXIT TRANSITION UPDATE: EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement Analysis

The West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce has published a summary of the key points from the new UK-EU Trade deal from a business perspective.

- Read the summary [here](#).

Short video explainers

The Business Department has launched a series of on-demand videos to help you familiarise yourself with the new rules and the actions you should take. There are 18 topics, including importing and exporting, trade, data, and audit and accounting.

- [Register now](#) for immediate access the videos

Webinars

A collection of webinars for businesses that trade with the EU can be accessed [here](#).

The following live webinars are taking place within the next week:

- What are customs import declarations? [Register here](#).
- Exporting: Actions you need to take now. [Register here](#).
- Importing: What you need to know about Staged Controls. [Register here](#).
- Trader responsibilities when using an intermediary. [Register here](#).

Case Studies - Exporting and Importing

The Border Protocol Delivery Group (BPDG) has produced a series of case studies that showcase end-to-end scenarios for businesses exporting and importing goods between GB and the EU under the new rules.

These include importing and exporting the following goods:

- mechanical parts
- textiles
- fish
- plants
- auto parts
- alcoholic drinks

The case studies can be viewed [here](#).

Get in contact for additional Brexit support

If you have used the government's business checker tool and you require further information or additional support with the steps that your business needs to take, please use the contact form [here](#) or email brexit@businessinspiredgrowth.com

York & North Yorkshire LEP National Apprenticeship Week Webinar

As part of National Apprenticeship Week (8-14 Feb), the LEP is hosting a session for businesses to find out about funding opportunities and to have a wider discussion about taking on an apprentice. Here is the link <https://www.ynygrowthhub.com/events/leverage-apprenticeships-to-build-back-better/>

Businesses needed to help region's young people

Could you or someone from your business volunteer as an **Enterprise Adviser (EA)** and partner with a local secondary school or college to support them in the development and implementation of their careers strategy, ensuring all students are prepared and inspired for the fast-changing world of work?

As well as helping others, this opportunity could improve your personal and professional development. Now, more than ever, young people need our support. Click [here](#) to find out more.
