

WELCOME FROM **Richard Flinton, Chief Executive**

This week unfortunately brings with it increasing concerns about the worrying rise in positive coronavirus tests in North Yorkshire.

In response to this situation, last night I chaired a meeting involving many very senior figures in a broad range of partner agencies to assess the latest data and direction and to discuss what action we should take – collectively.

I want to be clear that the actions we decide to take will have only one aim – to protect people, communities, schools and businesses from the impacts that we are seeing elsewhere in areas going back into lockdown to contain this virus.

I am telling you this to reassure you – that we are here and working hard together to manage the virus and to prevent it taking a hold of our lives once again.

So – we are stepping up our oversight and management once again and to do this we will reinstate what we call a ‘major incident’ status - we will be communicating some very important messages with you over the coming days and weeks. Your response to the ‘asks’ we put to you will be critical. Only your actions – the choices each and every one of you make in the days and weeks ahead – will turn the tide in the areas where we are seeing worry positive cases rise and help protect those where we are not. To be clear, we cannot do this without your support.

As I mentioned last week, the rise in positive tests in the Selby and Harrogate areas, as well as Scarborough, were being carefully monitored. We have watched these extremely carefully and examined the data daily and over the past week. I am sorry to say that positive tests in Harrogate remain a worry, but of particular concern is the rapid increase in Selby and Scarborough, specifically Whitby. Like you, we are extremely keen to avoid enforced lockdowns if that is possible. We desperately want our children to be able to attend school and other education settings so everything we ask, or action we take, will look to preserve their learning. It’s so important for their future prospects and for their mental health.

As a county – we also need to protect our economy and to do all we can to ensure our businesses are able to continue to stay open. Another lockdown, as the furlough scheme comes towards its end, could cost more jobs and will inevitably have a negative impact on businesses striving to recover from the body blow delivered by the first wave of Coronavirus.

As things stand, the number of people being admitted to hospital is not escalating at the same rate as the positive tests. Largely this is due to the fact that it is a younger age group seeing cases grow. This age group may well be less vulnerable to the more serious symptoms, and therefore less likely to require hospital care. However, unfortunately we are also seeing a rise in the number of positive tests in our care settings – home to many of our most vulnerable residents. We are

managing this, with the care sector, dynamically on a daily basis and a whole host of prevention and infection control measures are already in place. Our oversight of this issue across the sector will remain robust so that we can offer your parents and grandparents, friends and family, the best protection possible.

We are also heading towards winter months – this in itself bring its own pressures on the NHS, but we know that covid type viruses thrive in the colder temperatures.

When we put together the pieces of the jigsaw nationally, regionally and locally – it's not hard to see the picture.

Sadly, we are indeed heading towards a second wave of coronavirus and we must take definitive and consistent action – every single one of us – to contain it here. Of course there are rules and the police, councils and other relevant agencies will do our best to limit the spread by enforcing them where necessary – but wouldn't it be altogether better if we just did our bit and stuck to them? Otherwise, we will all have to bear the consequences - and I don't say that to finger wag. You have only to look elsewhere across Europe and the UK to see what can happen. Following the introduction of the new 'rule of six', I noted with interest the words of Harrogate hotelier Simon Cotton yesterday, when he talked in the local press about the potential impact of a lack of compliance with the covid rules as 'nothing short of devastating' he goes on to 'urge people to think about the consequences of businesses having to shut their doors for a second time' the article is here and I would urge you to read it.

<https://www.harrogateadvertiser.co.uk/business/consumer/harrogate-hotels-boss-issues-stark-warning-avoid-horrendous-and-devastating-second-lockdown-2970917>

We are also aware of the current high profile issues nationally involving laboratory capacity to process covid swab tests. We have raised our concerns about this at a national level. While we promote the mobile testing sites across North Yorkshire and host information for the NHS on how to access tests and advice here, we do not control or manage the process or systems here. We continue to press for a resolution, as you would hope and expect, and understand capacity will be increased in the weeks to come, which is hopeful.

While we are reinvigorating our approach to the fight against covid in response to the latest data in North Yorkshire, we are also continuing to deliver the many services that we know matter a great deal to you. Recently we have had two successes in supporting people's mental health – an area we know is particularly important following the extended lockdown period we all experienced earlier this year. We have secured national **funding for grassroots projects in North Yorkshire which promote good mental health**. NHS England has awarded us £34,000 in a third year of funding for projects in the county which promote wellbeing and positive mental health. The aim of the funding is to support a national initiative to reduce suicide rates in England by ten per cent by 2020-21, with the statistics showing that, at some point in their lives, one in four people will experience mental health issues. You can read more on that here:

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/news/article/funding-local-projects-improve-mental-health>

In addition, a **new hub has been launched to deliver mental health and suicide awareness training across North Yorkshire**. Called 'Headfirst', it's a new facility which aims to create healthy communities and workplaces across the county. There are more details on that here and I hope you will agree they are both important initiatives:

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/news/article/new-training-hub-launched-improve-mental-health-and-wellbeing>

Please take care and help make a difference in North Yorkshire to save lives, save jobs and protect our communities. Stick to the guidance, every day – thank you and stay safe.

Keeping in touch

NYCC's website has a dedicated area for all the latest COVID-19 related news. Visit:

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-and-information>

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

UPDATE FROM Dr Lincoln Sargeant, Director of Public Health

There have been 3075 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in North Yorkshire to date. Over the last few days we have seen increases of around 30 new cases per day, particularly in younger and working age groups. Most spread continues to be between people who spend extended time together in household and social settings. However, this will inevitably include individuals who work in local businesses (including care homes) or attend local schools, and so we are seeing an increase in cases associated with these settings. It is important to note that in the majority of cases the transmission is occurring outside of the settings themselves – schools, care homes and businesses have worked very hard to make premises COVID-secure.

On Monday 14th September, the Government introduced new legislation to limit the number of people you can meet socially to no more than 6 individuals, both indoors and outdoors. More information on meeting others safely is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing>.

I am sure that everyone is aware there are challenges with access to swab testing across the UK, including in North Yorkshire. The limiting factor is with the capacity in national labs, rather than our ability to take swabs locally. We have fought very hard to maintain our access to Mobile Testing Units across the county, which we have so far managed to achieve. However, we do not have any control over how many slots are available to book on the national portal at each of the sites that we put on. I appreciate that this is very frustrating for people who are doing their best to follow the guidance for symptomatic individuals to isolate and access testing. The latest information available nationally is that lab capacity will be increased from the start of October – in the meantime we continue to look for local solutions to support testing for key workers in particular.

There are a number of events planned across the county over the next few weeks and months. We are working with partners to produce guidance on holding events safely. However, we are also in a position where we are seeing rapidly increasing numbers of new cases in various parts of the county (particularly Harrogate, Scarborough and Selby districts). We will monitor the level of COVID-19 in areas closely, as decisions about events proceeding may need to change at short notice in light of local infection rates.

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.**

We are aware of current issues with the availability of tests and laboratory capacity and we have raised our concerns at a national level.

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:

- **Thursday 17 September - Whitby** - Whitby Park and Ride, Whitby, YO21 1TL
- **Thursday 17 September - Richmond** - Round Howe Car Park, Reeth Road, Richmond, DL10 4T
- **Friday 18 September - Northallerton** - Newby Wiske Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 9HA
- **Friday 18 September – Harrogate** - Dragon Road Car Park, Dragon Road, Harrogate, HG1 5DB
- **Saturday 19 September – Selby** – South Entrance, Drax Power Station, New Road, Selby, YO8 8PH
- **Sunday 20 September – Scarborough** – Scarborough Park & Ride, Seamer Road, Scarborough YO12 4LW
- **Monday 21 September - Skipton** - Coach Street, Skipton, BD23 1LH
- **Monday 21 September – Northallerton** - Newby Wiske Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 9HA
- **Monday 21 September – Whitby** - Whitby Park and Ride, Whitby, YO21 1TL
- **Tuesday 22 September - Sherburn in Elmet** - White Rose Sports Club, The Recreation Ground, Tadcaster Road, Sherburn in Elmet, LS25 6EL
- **Tuesday 22 September – Harrogate** - Dragon Road Car Park, Dragon Road, Harrogate, HG1 5DB
- **Wednesday 23 September - Scarborough** - Scarborough Park & Ride, Seamer Road, Scarborough YO12 4LW
- **Wednesday 23 September - Thornton Le Dale** - National Trust Car Park, No.5. Chestnut Avenue, Pickering, North Yorkshire, YO18 7RR

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

<https://youtu.be/QawyKwllfKQ>

See the latest dates and locations, find out more and how to book at www.northyorks.gov.uk/testing

Supporting our schools and childcare

Where we have had individual cases of coronavirus confirmed in a school, Public Health North Yorkshire and Children and Young Peoples Service have been working with the school individually to determine the best approach to take.

Families are contacted if their child is a close contact of the person who has tested positive for coronavirus and needs to self-isolate. For those who haven't been contacted by the school, their child is not a contact of the person and can continue attending as normal.

We are currently recommending schools follow the national guidance on the wearing of face coverings. The guidance allows headteachers to decide on their approach to the use of face masks in school.

The national guidance states that schools which teach pupils in Years 7 and above which are not under specific local restrictions will have the discretion to ask pupils to wear face coverings in areas outside the classroom where social distancing can't be maintained. In areas where local lockdowns or other restrictions are in place, face coverings should be worn by teachers and pupils in communal spaces outside classrooms.

Primary school-aged children are not required to wear face coverings under the national guidance.

Teamwork to support our residents

People across the county continue to be supported by local volunteers through a network of community support organisations – with countless examples of neighbours looking out for each other.

Skipton resident Sarah Wilson has gone above and beyond to make life during Covid-19 that bit easier for her neighbours by helping with shopping and being there for a chat. She says it has been heart-warming to see residents come together and says the camaraderie shown by people has reduced her to tears on occasion.

Sarah is a member of Skipton Step into Action, a group working alongside the CSO response in North Yorkshire.

Sarah said: "The situation we have all found ourselves in has brought us together. People I am helping support now, I would probably never have met. Skipton is a friendly town and I have enjoyed being able to help. It has made me feel so humble and grateful at the same time. I think we have a lovely community here. People are looking out for their neighbours and those we only knew to nod to or smile at before the pandemic are now good friends."

Each afternoon, weather permitting, Sarah and neighbour Bryan Robinson enjoy a chat over the garden fence.

Bryan, 83, added: "She goes and gets bits for me when I need them though sometimes the shopping list gets a bit long. I enjoy our chats in the sun. The neighbourhood is definitely closer than it was and people are looking out for each other and making sure they are safe".

People who are self-isolating and need support with shopping, prescriptions and other essentials but don't have anyone to call on, 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 find details of local voluntary and community groups offering support at www.northyorkshireconnect.org.uk

For more information go to www.northyorks.gov.uk/help-you-during-coronavirus-covid-19

Growing our local economy

LEP News

Online Business Start-Up Masterclass

FREE online course: 12 – 16 October & 9 – 13 November (over 4 days, 9:30am – 12:30pm)

York & North Yorkshire Growth Hub and Blue Orchid are hosting free online Master classes on how to set up and run a successful business in the first 12 months.

Visit the events page at www.ynygrowthhub.com for further details and to register.

Please share this opportunity with your networks using our communications pack [here](#).

PAPI Innovation Workshops

PAPI have recently launched their October innovation workshops for SMEs in York, North Yorkshire and East Riding.

Taking place via Zoom on Thursday 8th October (day 1) and Tuesday 20th to Friday 23rd October (day 2), Dr Jo North of The Big Bang Partnership will once again lead these sessions, along with topic experts for day 2 of activity.

Businesses can register their interest through our [Eventbrite](#) page or via the [PAPI website](#) for further info. Alternatively they can email papi-project@york.ac.uk for further information.

ShopAppy offer passes 100 signups

Over 100 businesses in York & North Yorkshire have taken up our offer of [12-months fully funded membership](#) to the online, community led shopping platform, ShopAppy.com.

Some new businesses registered on ShopAppy in our area have not validated their free offer. If you refer anyone to the scheme, make sure they sign up with us to get 12 months free.

If you have any questions you can [contact us](#), the ShopAppy.com team or drop in to a virtual advice session on a Tuesday, which can be [booked here](#).

New ESF Community Grants Applications

A new round of Community Grants funding is now available. To find out more about the funding criteria, eligibility and how to apply please follow this link - <http://yourconsortium.org/projects/esf-community-grants/>

Your Consortium will be specifically looking for projects that can be delivered and adapted to continue throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Deadline for Applications is Friday 25th September at 2pm.

NHS Test and Trace App launch

The [NHS Test and Trace app](#) will launch in England and Wales on 24 September.

Local businesses will be required to display NHS QR posters so visitors and customers can start checking in safely and securely to venues using the app.

Businesses will have a clear duty to support NHS Test and Trace. From Friday 18 September, it will be mandatory for certain businesses to have a system to collect NHS Test and Trace data, which must be kept for 21 days.

- Downloadable resources are available at <https://covid19.nhs.uk/information-and-resources.html>.
- More information about new COVID-19 measures is available at: <https://bit.ly/3k178cN>.
- A video on Hands Face Space can meanwhile be seen at: <https://bit.ly/2DHZBjB>

Scale up Survey 2020

This is a crucial moment in which the UK's scaling companies need to make their voice heard.

The Scaleup Survey is now in its seventh year and is an influential and important feedback mechanism.

Access the survey [here](#) before the deadline for completion on 5 October 2020.

Stay informed

- GOVERNMENT: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support>
- Y&NY LEP: <https://www.businessinspiredgrowth.com/covid-19/>
- Y&NY GROWTH HUB: <https://www.ynygrowthhub.com/how-we-can-help/coronavirus/>

Learning in lockdown

Lockdown was a strange time for everyone, but it also gave us time to focus on ourselves and try new and different things. We asked people what they did during lockdown, whether this be learning a new language, a new skill, cooking from scratch, a new hobby or even starting up a business from home.

Learning in lockdown has allowed people to adjust and spend time on things they otherwise may not have had chance to do.

This week's learning in lockdown features the story from Sophia Wigglesworth, a social care coordinator from NYCC.

Sophia started gardening and growing her own food during lockdown.

"I started it because I have always had an interest in healthy eating and being outdoors, so I decided to mix the two together.

“During lockdown I have been lucky enough to have a garden and doing gardening really helps me to relax and take my mind off everything else

“Also I get a great sense of achievement when things grow. So far, I have grown potatoes, runner beans- which are still growing at about 9 feet high! And herbs and sugar snap peas.

“I have garlic, broccoli and cauliflower planted and lettuces waiting to be planted”

If you know of anyone who has spent their lockdown time learning then get in touch and email:
Jessica.highfield@northyorks.gov.uk
