

## A message from Richard Flinton, Chief Executive

Today is an important day in North Yorkshire's fight against COVID-19 for two big reasons. The first is that the latest Public Health analysis indicates that new cases and further loss of life in North Yorkshire are plateauing. That means that, unless there is a change of circumstance, we will not see the surge of cases linked to earlier predictions. This is testament to the high level of compliance in the county to the lockdown rules – for which you should all be proud.

Today is also the day that we witness a piece of history – with the opening of the new NHS Nightingale Hospital Yorkshire and the Humber. The facility has been constructed in less than three weeks – an outstanding feat. Based in Harrogate Convention Centre, it is reassuring to know it is there to serve the region if it is needed.

Understandably, there remains a big focus on, and public interest in, testing. As a Local Resilience Forum, we are working towards opening a super centre to serve key workers in the York and North Yorkshire area. We anticipate this will be operating next week which will be a huge help. Testing in care homes is being facilitated by the Care Quality Commission, and hospitals and emergency services have access to testing via a number of additional routes. As a County Council, we are working really closely with our NHS colleagues to help protect care homes from further infection. Care homes are particularly vulnerable and, so, we are looking to provide what we are calling step-down facilities to ensure that when people are discharged from hospital – before they return to care homes – they can receive their support in a separate environment while tests are carried out and results are received. This should be reassuring and is an important move.

From a Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) perspective, our staff are being issued with the protection they need and our supply chains appear to be reliable which is very welcome. As an LRF, we have now had two national emergency deliveries to support the care sector and allocation of these supplies is working really well. While we know our NHS colleagues remain concerned around the provision of gowns, things are looking much better in broader terms for the time being. It's essential this supply is maintained.

I continue to be humbled by the innovation across our schools and in our local businesses who are responding dynamically to the challenges; and by their generosity in donating PPE to our frontline staff. It is both welcome and appreciated. Equally, we now have 263 registrations by businesses on our new Buy Local website. This aims to link businesses and trades people who are allowed to work through COVID, with customers. It is proving popular and useful – which is terrific. North Yorkshire Buy Local can be found at [www.northyorks.gov.uk/buy-local](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/buy-local). Please also promote this via your social media channels.

You may also be aware of the announcement over the weekend of more Government funds for local authorities who are at the front of supporting communities and providing key frontline services. The costs of this, including the loss of income, are into many tens of millions. We are grateful for the government allocations, but will desperately need significantly more national

financial support if we are not to carry the cost of this outbreak once we are through it. We can't lose sight of the importance of that – whilst making sure we do what we must to fight the pandemic here.

On recovery, we are about to undertake a major intelligence gathering exercise to ensure, as a county, we know all the impacts that need to be considered and managed as we start to prepare for life beyond the current emergency status. This will be a strong and collaborative approach including the county and district councils, as well as other partners, and we will keep you informed throughout.

So, as we look ahead, please keep up your tremendous work! Carry on looking after your neighbours, continue sticking to the lockdown rules and stay strong. While there is some considerable way to go, we are getting there, even if it may not feel like it sometimes. We are with you through this – no one is alone. If you know anyone in North Yorkshire who is alone and unable to get the help they need from their families and friends, please ask them to call 01609 780780 8am to 5:30pm seven days a week.

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## A message from Dr Lincoln Sargeant, Director of Public Health

Around the world levels of COVID-19 continue to increase. World Health Organisation data shows that there have been 2,397,216 confirmed cases globally, with 162,956 deaths across 213 countries, areas or territories. At a national level, Public Health England data shows there were 129,044 cases in the UK on 21st April. Of those hospitalised in the UK who tested positive for coronavirus, 17,337 have sadly died.

We currently have 656 confirmed cases of COVID-19 across North Yorkshire. However, this focuses on those who have been tested in hospital settings, which will only be a proportion of the total number. We expect that hospital cases are around 8% of the total number of cases across the community.

There have been 306 deaths in hospital trusts covering North Yorkshire (Airedale, Harrogate, South Tees, York) to date. Data are reported at trust level and it is not yet possible to determine deaths for North Yorkshire residents reliably. All trusts apart from Harrogate serve large populations outside North Yorkshire.

Over the last week we have seen that the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in hospitals have remained roughly the same. This suggests we have entered a 'plateau' phase; we are not likely to see a sharp rise in cases from this point but expect to remain at the current level of activity over the next few weeks.

### **Looking after your heart is still important**

Stats show a reduction in attendance to hospital with suspected heart attack / strokes during lockdown period.

If you think you might be having a heart attack or stroke - don't delay because you think hospitals are too busy. The NHS still has systems in place to treat people for these conditions. If you delay, you are more likely to suffer serious heart damage and more likely to need intensive care and to spend longer in hospital.

More information on how to look after your heart visit:

- <https://www.bhf.org.uk/coronavirus>
- <https://www.humbercoastandvalehealthyhearts.co.uk/>
- <https://www.westyorkshireandharrogatehealthyhearts.co.uk/>

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## North Yorkshire County Council

### Schools and childcare

#### School support

We have acted to establish an urgent financial package for early years providers in recognition of their vital work in supplying places for the children of critical workers and for vulnerable children and their families. This includes up to £1.4m in an early years support fund.

This funding package is over and above the financial support provided by the Government and is on offer for those private, voluntary and independent sector providers who have remained open despite extreme challenges and the financial disincentives inherent in the system to do so.

We took the decision to draw from our own funds for this crucial support which will be focused on providing financial assistance to those early years' providers that have remained open during this extremely challenging period and are committed to remain open in future months.

We believe very strongly that early years' providers are an essential part of the current childcare support network across the county and we recognise that many have gone above and beyond their normal offer in order to support families with critical workers as well as vulnerable families and we are extremely grateful for this.

The financial support package will include an up-front rather than monthly payments for the summer term for registered funded providers; payment for providers that remained open during the Easter holidays, and a support fund of up to £1.4 million for providers to continue being open and also to support the sector to recover on the removal of the current restrictions.

The fund is cash limited and funding allocations will need to be capped within the constraints of monies available. They are intended to support the ongoing operation of a provider, and will have regard to their operating context, their opening hours and numbers of children currently attending their provision. We will not be able to resolve all of the financial concerns of early years providers but we are determined to help where we can.

- **The closing date for applications for the North Yorkshire County Council Covid-19 Early Years Provider Financial Support Fund is 9am April 29<sup>th</sup>.**

Queries should be sent to [eyft@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:eyft@northyorks.gov.uk)

### Support for people in isolation

Working with our district council partners, we have telephoned 6,524 people who are particularly vulnerable to being hospitalised as a result of Covid-19. If people who are being shielded cannot be

contacted by telephone, a Ready for Anything volunteer is deployed to knock on their door to check they are safe and make sure they have support in place.

The 23 community support organisations (CSOs) provide assistance with shopping, picking up prescriptions and other essentials, to those in need who do not have local networks or help from family, friends and neighbours. Last week, volunteers, coordinated through the CSOs, helped 2,625 people and there are many more individuals looking out for their neighbours across the county.

The Covid-19 support grant scheme is also providing financial assistance, for those who need it during isolation, to pay for food and household essentials. So far, 119 grants have been approved and awarded to eligible applicants, the majority of which are people with long-term health conditions and weakened immune systems.

As lockdown continues, it becomes increasingly important to keep looking out for people in our neighbourhoods. If you helped someone in the first couple of weeks, with shopping or collecting a prescription, please keep checking they are ok and remember that anyone over 70 or with underlying health conditions should not be leaving their homes.

Moira Wellbourne is 82 and lives alone. She is being supported by Community Works in Thirsk.

Moira said: “My daughter lives in York and gave me the number to ring as she’s also being shielded because of an immune system condition so can’t get out either. My friends are all as old, if not older, than me, so they’re stuck in as well. I’ve had two shops done so far and they’ve picked up my prescription. I live in a flat on the first floor, so they bring it up the stairs and leave it outside the door then step back. I open the door and take it in. I think it’s absolutely brilliant.

“Aside from the shopping, a few times I’ve had something to post but can’t get out to the post box. So, I write a note asking if anyone who is going out can take it, paper clip it to the letter and stick it to my front door. So far, it’s always been done for me. The chap living in the flat upstairs has phoned me a few times, too. There are so many people just helping one another.”

People in need of help, who don’t have the support of family, friends or neighbours, or, anyone concerned about the welfare of someone else, should call North Yorkshire County Council’s customer service centre on 01609 780780. The centre is open seven days a week 8am-5:30pm. For more information go to [www.northyorks.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/coronavirus)

## Local economy

### **LEP News**

#### **Business support finder tool live**

Employers, and the self-employed, can access a new tool to see what COVID-19 support they can claim, including loans, tax relief and cash grants.

Visit <https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder> to use this.

#### **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme extended and now open**

This scheme has now been extended until the end of June 2020 and opened yesterday.

**Employers are advised to read all guidance on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)** before applying. Here you can access a claim calculator and further advice in the [calculation guidance](#) . There is also a [step-by-step guide](#) for additional help.

Once a claim has been made, funds should be received six days afterwards, so this will provide a critical lifeline to businesses.

HMRC are running a series of webinars today and tomorrow on the Job Retention Scheme. You can book [here](#) .

### **£1.25bn support package for innovators**

The government has announced a £1.25bn support package for UK businesses – ranging from tech to life sciences – which are driving innovation and development.

This includes a new £500 million loan scheme for high-growth firms, called the [Future Fund](#) to be launched in May and £750 million of targeted support for small and medium sized businesses focusing on research and development. For further information, visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/billion-pound-support-package-for-innovative-firms-hit-by-coronavirus>.

### **Stay informed on local support during and post COVID-19**

The LEP, its Growth Hub, and many partners are working hard to support the businesses in our region. We are updating all information on a regular basis and are keen to promote the following as main sources of local business support information:

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

## Social care and the NHS

The national Adult Social Care Plan was published last week and we are now working through it.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-social-care-guidance?utm\\_source=7b82ff8d-5f8b-4b32-a235-570c632863c2&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-social-care-guidance?utm_source=7b82ff8d-5f8b-4b32-a235-570c632863c2&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

The main points include:

- Proposals to develop an intermediate tier of beds for people being discharged from hospital – we have started work on this already with the NHS, building on the work we are already doing with care providers. We are finding solutions to ease some of the pressures and concerns in the sector in terms of admissions of new Covid-positive residents
- **Testing** – this is a major logistical challenge and, again, we have started work with our NHS colleagues who are leading on this issue. Our key workers are accessing the testing facilities in Leeds and Keighley where appropriate and plans for a ‘super centre’ in York are progressing well. We remain confident the York facility will be up and running next week.
- **PPE** – The multi-agency North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum has taken delivery of its second delivery of PPE from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government which means that for the next 7 days there is better confidence we can cope with demand

from the care sector. Nevertheless we are aware that the issue around gowns remains one for our NHS partners.

### **Richard Webb, Corporate Director for Health and Adult Services**

#### **NYnet supports vital health services**

Broadband upgrades and support are being provided to vital health services in North Yorkshire to help them to keep running smoothly as they tackle the Covid-19 outbreak.

NYnet, a company owned by the County Council, provides high-speed internet connections to more than 750 public sector sites across the county, including those of the County Council and other local authorities. It has temporarily upgraded all its health sector sites to offer 24/7 support, enabling any issues to be dealt with as a priority. This free upgrade has been in place since last month.

NYnet ensures sufficient capacity at businesses and homes to meet demand for increased levels of video conferencing and other virtual communication. This includes providing same-day bandwidth upgrades for hospitals and GP surgeries, in some cases doubling the available bandwidth. NYnet also this week increased the County Council's web capacity to support its work.

#### Communications

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

#### Advice on things to do

##### **Virtual links**

Lots of museums, zoos and other tourist spots are live-streaming their days and most are offering virtual tours as something to do whilst staying at home. See links below to find out what is going on across the county. Take a look and see if somewhere local to you is live-streaming their day:

- Natural History Museum- virtual activities: <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/visit/virtual-museum.html>
- Edinburgh Zoo- <https://www.edinburghzoo.org.uk/webcams/penguin-cam/>
- Chester Zoo- <https://www.facebook.com/pg/chesterzoo1/videos/>
- Forestry England- <https://www.forestryengland.uk/blog/10-ways-keep-the-kids-entertained-through-covid-19>

##### **Find my Past**

You can now access Find my Past from home using your NYCC library card and pin, allowing you to search our parish registers and some school log books. Follow the link and click on ancestry resources: <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/libraries-online-information-resources>

##### **Sport England**

A new campaign has been launched called 'Stay In, Work Out' which provides advice on physical activity during this lockdown period at <https://www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout>

##### **Food Waste**

Reduce food waste and make your food go further, by using Love Food Hate Waste's leftover recipe search <https://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/>



**GOV.UK**

**The P.M. is holding daily press conferences the highlights from the latest one are:**

