

WELCOME FROM **Richard Flinton, Chief Executive**

A few days from now, we will reach another milestone in the Government's road map out of the pandemic. From Monday, we'll be able to meet family and friends in our homes again, albeit in limited numbers. We'll be able to eat and drink indoors at cafés, restaurants and pubs, and more opportunities for exercise and entertainment will open up.

So there are good reasons to be optimistic and confident about the coming months.

We can draw confidence from knowing that the average infection rate in North Yorkshire is currently 20 per 100,000, which is below the England average. We can take confidence from the high uptake for the vaccine and the increasing evidence of its effectiveness; from the high level of testing capacity available in the county; from the sterling work of health and social care services.

But we should temper this confidence with care. You may have seen or heard the messages of our Unlock Summer campaign, which is running across social media, in the local media, through businesses and on the streets of our towns. We have all worked so hard to reach this point and to put our county in a good position. That makes it all the more important that we continue to stick to the rules – especially the basics of hands, face, space and fresh air – so that we can unlock the next step on the road map and along with it a summer much more like the one we would hope to enjoy.

We should also exercise care and kindness towards others. While many of us are eager to embrace the opportunities offered from next Monday, we should be aware that some people – perhaps quite a few of us – will feel a little anxious at the prospect of society opening up again.

All of us, through our actions, can help to give people who feel that way the reassurance and confidence that will help them to re-enter everyday life fully.

This is Mental Health Awareness Week. No doubt the easing of restrictions will be a boon for many people's mental health, but the flipside is the anxiety others may feel as the country opens up after they have been locked down or under restrictions for the best part of the past 12 months.

We were kindly joined at our weekly North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum press conference today by Jill Quinn, CEO of Dementia Forward, a North Yorkshire charity commissioned by us and clinical commissioning groups that supports more than 4,000 families.

Jill shared early findings from a survey the charity is running among those it supports. The survey began only on Tuesday, but within the first 24 hours received more than 100 responses. These revealed that while many felt ready to invite the charity's staff back into their homes or to attend Dementia Forward groups when they restart, a significant proportion – 30% – had reservations about lockdown lifting and whether they were yet ready to start socialising.

Next week, in Dementia Action Week, one of the things the charity will be doing is handing out hidden disability sunflower lanyards. It feels these will come more into play as people venture back out. Jill believes many carers will feel the stress of taking their loved one out shopping or to a café.

She says we need to ask people to be kind, to be aware that we can't treat everybody the same, and that for some the pace of return needs to be slower. You can hear more from Jill here: <https://youtu.be/FZxVPmIVQTI>

As mentioned earlier, we have good testing capacity in the county. Some changes are being made to testing facilities, with two local testing sites closing. The site in Skipton had its last open day on Saturday and the site in Harrogate will close towards the end of this month. Both towns will be added to the mobile testing unit schedule to provide cover for PCR testing, with lateral flow tests available from pharmacies, some employers and for ordering for home delivery online or by calling 119. The local test site at Portholme Crescent car park in Selby has reverted to doing just PCR tests and will be open all day for this. We have had a temporary asymptomatic test site running in Selby offering support for lateral flow tests in response to the increased Covid rate in the district. This site has now closed, but we have the ability to set up further asymptomatic test sites in Selby or elsewhere, should they be needed. You can hear more from our public health consultant Dr Victoria Turner here: <https://youtu.be/EYCypJYkZD8>

Finally, please look out for our Unlock Summer messages and carry on doing what you've been doing to keep us on the road to a better summer. In the short term, the weather forecast suggests summer isn't here yet, so it's perhaps a good thing that we can eat out indoors from Monday. But when you do, stay safe, be careful and considerate and let's help to give everyone the reassurance they need to enjoy our returning freedoms to the full.

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

Public health and social care

North Yorkshire Coronavirus Data

At 9 May 2021, there have been 30,066 positive tests since 3 March 2020, with 263 new cases reported in the past two weeks. The weekly rolling average of new cases is 18 cases per day, allowing for incomplete data in the most recent days. The seven-day rate for North Yorkshire is 20.2 cases per 100,000 people, lower than the England seven-day rate of 21.7. 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 Prime Minister has confirmed that we are moving to Step 3 of the roadmap from 17 May; vaccine deployment has been successful, and evidence continues to show that vaccines are effective in reducing deaths and hospitalisation. However, social distancing remains a very important part of the fight against Covid, and will remain in shops, pubs, cafes and restaurants - plus business, medical and adult social care settings.

Summary of the changes from Monday 17 May

- People can meet in groups of up to 30 outdoors.
- Six people or two households can meet indoors, with overnight stays allowed.
- Up to 30 people can attend weddings, receptions and other life events
- Number of people who can attend a funeral no longer capped, but determined by the size of venue
- Up to 30 allowed to attend a support group or parent-and-child group (not counting under-fives)
- Care home residents allowed up to five named visitors, and more freedom for visits out of the home
- Pubs, restaurants, bars and cafés are allowed to serve people indoors
- Museums, cinemas, and children’s play areas can reopen
- Theatres, concert halls, conference centres and sports stadiums can all reopen
- Steam rooms and saunas may reopen
- Hotels, hostels and B&Bs can reopen
- Adult indoor group exercise classes can restart
- Face coverings no longer recommended in secondary schools for pupils
- All remaining university students eligible to return to in-person teaching
- People will be able to travel abroad to green list countries without having to quarantine when they return.

For full information on all the latest changes, please visit [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

Can I hug my friends and family?

Yes, but people are being asked to be cautious, especially if the person you want to hug hasn't been vaccinated yet. The prime minister has said people should make their own choices when it comes to having close contact with friends and family, and has urged people to consider how vulnerable someone is when deciding whether to give them a hug.

Cautionary advice from the government

We currently remain on track for step 4 on 21 June, but cannot throw caution to the wind. There is no evidence yet that new strains are vaccine-resistant, but we must remain vigilant.

Remember:

- Continue to think about the vulnerability of loved ones.
- Outdoors is always safer than indoors.
- Keep getting tested regularly, even without symptoms.
- Continue to follow social distancing when not with friends and families, including work places, pubs, restaurants etc.
- Hands. Face. Space. Fresh Air.

Let's keep going. Everyone can play their part... together, we can beat this.

Working together towards recovery

Testing

Everyone can now get coronavirus tests:

- if you have symptoms you must self-isolate and book a test for people with symptoms
- if you do not have symptoms you are encouraged to get tests to carry out at home twice a week

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.

These permanent sites are open **every day** for testing between 8am and 1:30pm:

- **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

These permanent sites are open 8am to 8pm **every day**, currently for administering tests only.

- **Malton** - Wentworth Street Car Park, Wentworth Street, Malton, YO17 7JR
- **Catterick** - Ypres Lines, Richmond Road, Catterick Garrison, DL9 3JF
- **Selby** – Portholme Crescent Car Park, Selby, YO8 4YR

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

- **Thursday 13 May - Leyburn** - Harmby Road, Car Park, Leyburn, DL8 5EE
- **Thursday 13 May - Easingwold** - Easingwold Town AFC, Stillington Road, Easingwold, York, YO61 3DZ
- **Thursday 13 May - Sherburn in Elmet** - Pasture Way Car park, Sherburn in Elmet, LS25 6LY
- **Friday 14 May - Sherburn in Elmet** - Pasture Way Car park, Sherburn in Elmet, LS25 6LY
- **Friday 14 May - Stokesley** - Stokesley Sports Club, Broughton Road, Stokesley, Middlesbrough, TS9 5JG
- **Friday 14 May - Richmond** - Round Howe Car Park, Reeth Road, Richmond, DL10 4TL
- **Saturday 15 May - Selby** - South Entrance, Drax Power Station, New Road, Selby, YO8 8PH
- **Saturday 15 May - Thornton Le Dale** - North York Moors National Park Authority car park, No.5. Chestnut Avenue, Thornton Le Dale, Pickering, YO18 7RR
- **Saturday 15 May - Filey** - Filey Country park, Church Cliff Drive, Filey, YO14 9ET
- **Sunday 16 May - Richmond** - Round Howe Car Park, Reeth Road, Richmond, DL10 4TL
- **Sunday 16 May - Thirsk** - Millgate Car Park, Marage Road, Thirsk, YO7 1PE

Tests for people who do not have symptoms

If you do not have symptoms, you can get tests to use at home in several ways:

- online at www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests
- through your employer if they're registered for workplace testing
- at participating pharmacies, you can find local ones at <https://maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk/>
- collecting them from one of the sites below

Testing kits can be collected **every day** between 2:30pm 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

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

Supporting our schools and childcare

As further lockdown restrictions on businesses are set to lift and more parents return to work, Early Years providers in the county are working hard to help children settle back into childcare.

North Yorkshire's nurseries, playgroups and child minders were an important part of the county's pandemic response since entering lockdown last year and we would like to thank them for the hard work they put in. It enabled many parents in the county to take up key worker roles and provided important routine and safe care for the youngest children.

Now that ever more parents are returning to work, they have an equally important role in helping children get used to being around other faces again.

Nurseries such as Little Rainbows Nursery in Whitby are putting in place extra measures to help young children get used to being outside of the home and around other people again.

Owner Lydia Sythes, said: "When children came back we could tell they had spent a lot of time at home and many children had separation anxiety, as they had not had any interaction with anyone outside their home.

"We responded by increasing our settling-in practices, especially with our youngest of children. We took the lead on how confident the children were at being back in the nursery setting.

"We also made sure the children were cared for by the same members of staff during each session. Our children were looked after in smaller groups in a homely environment to make the children feel more comfortable instead of being in a big, overwhelming place with lots of new people."

As parents continue to return to work, nurseries, child minders and playgroups are continuing with their safety and hygiene measures, supported by the County Council's Early Years team, and distributing home testing kits for coronavirus to staff and families. They are also supporting the council's distribution of holiday food vouchers for families who may be struggling to cover the cost of food or other essentials.

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As half-term approaches, the Government has looked at the next step of the road map to recovery from the pandemic and has suggested the rules requiring face coverings to be worn in secondary schools can be relaxed over the coming weeks.

With the recent outbreak and coronavirus rates in Selby, we are looking at whether our advice to schools is to continue a little bit longer with the wearing of face coverings, until levels fall back down.

We will communicate that decision to local schools as soon as we are able.

Teamwork to support our residents

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As we emerge from the isolation of lockdown, which has taken a huge toll on people's mental health, connecting with others has never been more important.

In Skipton, the Ground Yourself in Green project aims to help people gently re-acclimatise to familiar activities while enjoying life outdoors.

Skipton Step into Action, which was appointed as a community support organisation at the start of the pandemic, has linked up with the town's Incredible Edible group as well as Knaresborough-based Yorkshire Yoga and mindfulness tutors to offer a range of options for those in need of help.

The group is making use of Skipton's Aireville Park for many of its sessions, which include yoga and mindfulness each Thursday until September. They have also gained access to Incredible Edible flowerbeds and planters, providing access for those with mobility restrictions, while a Friday allotment session has also been organised, with a plot for those attending to grow their own.

The objective is to provide a range of support, which will benefit people with a variety of needs. It means, for example, carers can leave those with dementia to walk in the park with volunteers while they take a break for a mindfulness session to help their own mental wellbeing.

Funding for the current project is in place until September and it is hoped by that point people who want to return to normal activities like shopping or attending medical appointments – but now lack the confidence to do so – will find that situation gradually returning to normal.

Ground Yourself in Green's Sarah Wilson said: "The objective is to slowly get people back out and to integrate them into society. Some may jump straight in but others may need weeks of building up. The feedback we have had has been amazing. It has been brilliant, just what we wanted, the community working together."

Carla Finnigan is among those to benefit, enjoying yoga, the allotment and taking part in mindfulness sessions.

She got involved after learning of the project through Skipton Step into Action, which had been helping with her shopping during the pandemic.

Carla said: "It is a lovely group of people and it was a great idea to put these events on. It gives people hope."

North Yorkshire residents who need help and support, 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.

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: Every Mind Matters: Mental Health Awareness Week

Mental Health Awareness Week is this week. On our website, we have a range of resources that can help support you with your wellbeing or that of your employees. Full details [here](#).

The Government has created new assets and social copy you can use to mark this week. Please find the Mental Health Awareness campaign toolkit [here](#).

- For posts directing towards the Mind Plan quiz, please use this link: bit.ly/MindPlanN.
- For posts directing towards the COVID-19 hub, please use this link: bit.ly/EveryMindN2.

EUSS: Monthly Statistics & Resources

You can now view and download the latest EU settlement scheme monthly statistics [here](#).

As a reminder, the deadline for [applications for the EU Settlement scheme](#) is 30 June 2021.

A range of EUSS information is available to support applicants, including [translated mainstream guidance](#) and [translated EUSS factsheets](#).

If your organisation is helping vulnerable EU citizens complete their [EUSS application](#), the Delegation of the European Union to the United Kingdom can offer [further legal advice, free of charge](#).

Support for those at risk of redundancy

Jobcentre Plus and the National Careers Service are holding an online advice session for people in North Yorkshire who have recently been made redundant or may be facing redundancy.

Despite the disruption caused by the coronavirus outbreak, there are still jobs out there to apply for. This event will help you to start looking for a new job in case you are made redundant.

It will include advice on:

- how to pitch your skills to employers
- career opportunities in new sectors
- tips on finding a job.

It will also provide guidance on support that may be available to you if you cannot find work.

This is a free online event available to people in North Yorkshire. It takes place on Thursday 20 May, from 11am to 12 noon. You can sign up here: [Eventbrite](#)
