

## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

22 JULY 2020

### STATEMENT OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR MICHAEL HARRISON

I would like to begin my statement by paying tribute to the whole team in Health & Adult Services for their hard work throughout this incredibly challenging time. I would like to thank each and every one of them for the professionalism, flexibility and compassion they have shown. At the same time, I want to remember those who have lost their lives, and those that are grieving.

Whilst the pandemic has touched all areas of the Council, it is clear that the impact on Health & Adult Services has been considerable as a result of our efforts to keep people safe and well. This has included:

- Organising around command centres and communities
- Temporarily redeploying 1800 colleagues across a 7 day working pattern
- Supporting the NHS on timely and safe hospital discharges
- Preventing unnecessary hospital admissions
- Implementing a rapid health needs assessment
- Providing a free social care service for those residents on the Covid pathway, funded by the NHS
- Supporting care homes with training, staffing support, personal protective equipment (PPE) and priority access to healthcare professionals as part of a care home resilience plan
- Paying a care home fee uplift and expanding a hardship fund for providers
- Distributing North Yorkshire's share of the government's £600m infection control fund to nursing homes, residential homes and home care providers, alongside helping those residents who purchase their own care with direct payments to access PPE

The comprehensive model of community support, based on the success of our Stronger Communities model, has been vital. We made the necessary arrangements to enact Care Act easements, but it is worth noting that we did not have to make use of these arrangements.

Together, we have been able to build upon strong networks and programmes for workplace and community wellbeing, employee support, physical activity and mental health support. We have made great strides in our joint working with primary care, GP and community care and other groups, and in particular we must build on the considerable progress we have made on using digital and remote ways of delivering services.

It is worth remembering that although the national lockdown is easing, we are still firmly in the midst of this pandemic, whilst also needing to plan for the future. Outbreaks will continue, and there may be the need to implement local lockdowns. Wholesale testing of staff and care home residents will be needed in the long term, and we need to be able to plan for winter pressures. We also need to be mindful that some of our own colleagues and other colleagues in the wider sector are exhausted – and we must ensure that people get a break so that they can sustain our services in the medium to long term.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR MICHAEL HARRISON