

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

18 MAY 2022

THIS STATEMENT COVERS THE PERIOD FROM THE MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL ON 16 FEBRUARY 2022 TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS ON 5 MAY 2022

STATEMENT OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR ANDREW LEE

COVID-19 update

On 1st April England moved to a new position regarding COVID-19, as part of the national approach to living safely with the virus, as life returns to greater normality.

Free symptomatic and asymptomatic testing has now ended for most of the population, with a move to managing COVID-19 in line with other respiratory viruses.

Individuals with symptoms of a respiratory infection are now advised to stay at home and avoid other people wherever possible, although children with only mild symptoms should continue to attend school.

The key prevention measures remain the same, including vaccination, ventilation of indoor spaces, good hand and respiratory hygiene and continuing to wear a face covering in indoor or crowded spaces.

In terms of data, the ONS infection survey suggests that for the week ending 16th April around 1 in 17 people across England had a current COVID-19 infection. There remain high numbers of COVID-19 positive patients in hospitals across the County (nearly 400 people as of early May) and the impact on NHS and social care services continues to be significant.

Vaccination is still a key preventative measure against severe COVID-19 infection. The Spring Booster programme is underway for those aged 75 and above, people living in care homes and those aged 12 years and over with a weakened immune system. All 5-11 year olds are also now eligible for two doses of COVID-19 vaccine through the NHS.

The changed national approach to COVID has led to a similar change in our local approach. The COVID-19 Hub was stepped down at the end of March, with the remaining response run through the health protection function of the Public Health team. The focus has now switched from acute outbreak management to long term support, including providing evidence and guidance on 'living with COVID-19', key measures such as improving indoor air quality, highlighting the significant impacts of chronic COVID-19 and the wider health impacts of the pandemic, identifying lessons learnt and preparing for future escalations in local and national responses to COVID-19 and other health protection issues.

Sexual Health Service

From the 1st April 2022, North Yorkshire County Council and York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, have entered into a partnership agreement under Section 75 of the National Health Service Act, to ensure a more efficient and targeted approach to sexual health services. The YorSexualHealth service will further develop the online offer as well face to face community clinics across the County.

Visit of Professor Sir Chris Whitty to Scarborough

North Yorkshire County Council and partners have recently hosted a visit of the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for England Professor Sir Chris Whitty. This visit was in the light of the CMO's annual report in 2021 into health in coastal communities and also the challenges of providing health care. The CMO's visit provided an opportunity to share some of the initiatives and services in Scarborough as well as the work done by colleagues in the NHS and the community and voluntary sector.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR ANDREW LEE