

## **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL**

**15 NOVEMBER 2023**

### **STATEMENT OF COUNCILLOR MICHAEL HARRISON**

#### **Smoking and vaping**

Following the motion at full council calling for a national ban on the sale of disposable vapes, a letter was sent from The Leader to Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities urging the Government to ban single use vapes and take action to protect our planet, keep children safe and save taxpayers money.

Subsequently the Prime Minister has announced the following in relation to smoking and vaping:

- Creating a 'smoke-free generation' by ending cigarette sales to children aged 14 by legislating to raise the age of sale one year every year from 2027 onwards
- Doubling the funding for local authority Stop Smoking Services from next year
- Increasing funding for awareness raising campaigns by £5 million this year and £15 million from next year onwards
- Increasing funding for enforcement on illicit tobacco and e-cigarettes by £30 million from next year
- A public consultation on smoking and vaping measures.

Specifically on vaping, the consultation gathers views on several options to ensure we take the most appropriate action to tackle youth vaping including restricting vape flavours, regulating point of sale displays of vapes, regulating packaging and presentation of vapes, as well as considering restricting the sale of disposable vapes.

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable ill health and death, and the major driver of differences in health between rich and poor. It is estimated to cost the Humber and North Yorkshire region £1.7 billion per year, across the 600,000 smokers in the region. It is also timely to reinforce that e-cigarettes are a product designed to help people addicted to nicotine to quit smoking for good. They are not intended for those people who have never smoked.

#### **Online Financial Assessments**

The Council has recently updated and relaunched its Online Financial Assessment (OFA) tool. This builds on work which began when the Council was a Trailblazer for the Adult Social Care charging reforms. Although those national changes have been paused, we have continued to improve our digital offer to people and the OFA enables people to calculate themselves how much they will have to pay towards the cost of any social care arranged by the Council. Initial figures show that the new system has doubled the number of people who are using the system. We have also released a new finance portal which enables a person to view their own social care records relating to assessment and financial transactions with the Council.

## **Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund – Workforce) – National £570m**

The Council allocation from the national Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund has now been received. The funding received is £3.8m and is supporting:

- The reduction of adult social care waiting times
- Support to the care market in development new ways of delivering home care utilising non-regulated services where possible, this also includes additional funding to support people in the community who are awaiting a dementia diagnosis
- Funding to support care market financial sustainability
- Workforce support for training

## **Extra Care Conference – 10 November**

A conference to mark 20 years of Extra Care will be held on 10th November in Harrogate. Many nationally recognised speakers including Lord Richard Best and members of the governments older people's taskforce will be in attendance. Members of the taskforce will be visiting some of our extra care schemes at a crucial time as they are in the process of reviewing government policy.

More than 150 people are currently registered to attend the conference including 32 other local authorities, universities and government departments which highlights the national prestige of this programme of work.

## **Autism Accreditation**

NYC's Care Provider Services had an autism accreditation celebration day in October. I am delighted to report that two clusters Harrogate / Craven and Selby / Northallerton retained their Specialist Autism Accreditation and Malton / Scarborough improved their rating to a Specialist Autism Accreditation, and the NYC Supported Employment Service was awarded Advanced Autism Accreditation.

The commitment shown to regain the Accreditation award was testament to the values of care that are at the heart of the Council. It was a significant team effort, and I was especially pleased that so many autistic people wanted to be part of the assessment visits, meeting with the National Autistic Society assessors who asked them questions about the support they received.

North Yorkshire Council now has the largest number of local authority-owned care and support services that have Accreditation status in Europe. We should be rightly proud of this, and we are committed to the value of inclusivity, both as an employer and as a provider of care to the people of North Yorkshire.

COUNCILLOR MICHAEL HARRISON