

# **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**17 FEBRUARY 2021**

## **STATEMENT OF COUNCILOR CAROLINE DICKINSON**

### **COVID testing**

North Yorkshire has ample availability of PCR testing for symptomatic individuals. We have set up five semi-permanent Local Test Sites in Harrogate, Scarborough, Selby, Skipton and Northallerton, which operate 8-8 seven days per week. We also have a continual programme of Mobile Testing Units (24 per week at time of writing) that travel to other venues across the county to ensure an equitable spread of testing facilities.

We are also pursuing lateral flow testing at a local level. Currently we are able to use lateral flow tests to respond to outbreaks in single settings and in communities as part of our outbreak management response. We will also be supporting the use of lateral flow tests that can be rolled out to critical services through an employer-led model, similar to those currently seen in care homes and schools.

### **Vaccination**

The roll out of COVID vaccination is progressing well in North Yorkshire. The programme is being co-ordinated through the NHS, although NYCC and the Local Resilience Forum have been providing logistical support for example around venues, transportation, volunteers and waste disposal. Currently vaccination is targeted towards the top 4 cohorts identified by the Joint Committee on Vaccines and Immunisations (JCVI), with particular progress made to date on over 80 year olds, care home residents and staff, and health and social care workers. Both Pfizer and Astra Zeneca vaccines are used in North Yorkshire, with testing delivered through a combination of hospital hubs, mass vaccination sites, and primary care network-led vaccination.

### **Covid – Care Homes**

Daily contact is made with 237 care settings to identify support needs and monitor cases and outbreaks. 155 domiciliary care providers are monitored. Information is fed into a daily multi agency silver call where issues are discussed and support is allocated according to need. Where concerns are identified, additional interventions are provided from a combination of agencies including NYCC, CQC, PHE and the Infection Prevention and Control Team at HDFT. Guidance has been produced on a range of issues including visiting, PPE and going out into the community. Weekly webinars are held with providers to share good practice, identify issues and provide updates on guidance.

### **Outbreak management in educational settings**

Throughout the pandemic, we have supported educational settings with outbreak management and infection prevention and control. In addition to producing guidance for all settings (early years, primary, secondary and special schools and colleges), we are in regular contact with them through webinars and engagement sessions as well as through a dedicated email inbox where they can send queries and seek Public Health advice. In the last month, we have focused on supporting primary, secondary and special schools with the implementation of Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) in accordance with the national clinical guidance. We are helping schools understand the guidance and ensure that they are able to conduct testing safely and appropriately whilst maintaining the infection prevention and control measures they have already put in place.

We are monitoring approximately 1,100 educational settings across the county. Overall, we have seen a number of positive cases in educational settings throughout the pandemic, which is in line with the national picture. However, we believe that the protective measures schools have put in place, in combination with their swift actions to trace and isolate close contacts of confirmed cases, and our support, have meant as little disruption of students across the county as possible.

### **Update on Hospitality, Leisure, Tourism and Events**

Due to national lockdown, this sector is largely closed, with exceptions such as takeaways, elite sports and events such as weddings and funerals that all have to follow strict national guidance. Prior to lockdown our local actions cards, that provide guidance and support to this sector on how to prevent and manage Covid -19 outbreaks, have been updated. In particular, a new action card to support take-outs/takeaways was developed and circulated. Environmental Health Officers and Trading Standards colleagues have also visited key high risk premises to ensure Covid secure measures were in place as well as encouraging the tourist sector to sign up the “We’re Good To Go” industry standard and consumer mark which is managed by Visit Britain. This work will continue as we come out of lockdown. In terms of ‘events’ these continue to be closely monitored with oversight by local Safety Advisory Groups and NY Police. As noted previously, Public Health has developed guidance for event organisers who are expected to adhere to 10 Public Health Principles in order to assure a Covid secure event.

### **Covid outbreak management – high risk communal accommodation settings**

We provide prevention and outbreak control support to a range of settings – including Children’s Homes and respite residential settings; Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO’s); supported living accommodation; refuges; homeless hostels etc. These settings were identified by Government as high risk by virtue of communal spaces and facilities and the vulnerabilities associated with people living and/ or working in them. We’ve provided bespoke advice to all settings noted, supported by PHE where needed and often involving complex responses to facilitate local testing, translated materials to cater for populations where English is an additional language, support for isolation including in conjunction with Horizons to maintain substance misuse treatment, and the NYCC CRC, and enforcement activities. We led the development of a regional protocol to support outbreak management in HMO’s. We facilitated a bespoke Infection and Prevention Control workshop for the NYCC Children’s Resource Centres. We are also facilitating the development of a Joint Working Protocol for Rough Sleepers in Harrogate and Scarborough following outbreak management involvement earlier in the pandemic, which has led to improved local arrangements between services.

### **Update on High Risk ‘Enclosed’ Workplaces**

Activity in this sector remains very busy with the team currently managing over 70 incidents. These vary in scale and risk – with some single cases, and others managing larger clusters/outbreaks. The team work closely with Public Health England, Health and Safety Executive, Environmental Health and NYCC testing team colleagues to assess, manage and prevent outbreaks in these settings. All workplaces contacted receive a prevention pack, which contains information on how to manage and report any further cases, communications packs comprising of poster and promotional materials and support information for the workplace to provide to any employees self-isolating. Common ‘pinch points’ for transmission of the virus in these settings include; car sharing, ventilation, communications to employees where English is not first language, and social distancing practice of employees in and out of the workplace. However, in a number of instances workplace cases can be tracked back to community transmission rather than workplace transmission and in

the main, these workplaces have strong covid secure measures in place and are keen to work with and get further support from Public Health.

**Living Well Smokefree – North Yorkshire Stop Smoking**

Living Well Smokefree has continued to provide a high quality service throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, aligning to national guidance the service quickly adapted to a remote delivery model. People are offered weekly one to one appointments via telephone or video conferencing with a specialist smoking cessation advisor who provide behaviour change support and facilitates access to stop smoking medications. The remote offer has been positively received and has increased engagement by 10% with the number of missed appointments reducing significantly.

The quit conversion rate for the service currently stands at 66%, which is well above the national average of 50%. We see that as a real triumph, especially in the current climate.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR CAROLINE DICKINSON