

# **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**5 MAY 2021**

## **STATEMENT OF COUNCILOR CAROLINE DICKINSON**

### **Covid-19**

#### **Testing**

North Yorkshire has continued to work hard to provide accessible COVID testing. We have set up additional local test sites in Malton and Catterick Garrison to deliver both PCR and lateral flow testing. We also continue to have a regular programme of mobile testing units that provide PCR testing across the County.

Lateral flow tests are widely available across North Yorkshire for anyone to use on a regular basis. Kits are available for collection at our local test sites and through local pharmacies, as well as through education settings and many workplaces. We have also been the first council in the country to pilot a mobile distribution unit for lateral flow tests, travelling to our more rural areas, in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Care. For people unable to access this route, tests can also be ordered online or by calling 119 for home delivery.

#### **Surge Testing Update**

In recent months, NYCC has seen surge testing for variants of concern (VOC) deployed in a number of Local Authorities. This has included Local Authorities that border North Yorkshire, Middlesbrough, Leeds and Stockton. Fortunately, to date NYCC has not had to deploy surge testing; however, the risk of a VOC appearing in North Yorkshire is a constant and real threat. At the time of writing surge testing has again been deployed across three London Boroughs as a result of the discovery of the South African variant.

Members can be reassured that NYCC and its partners have planned for such an event and have already been on standby on a number of occasions due to the surge testing in bordering Local Authorities detailed above. NYCC has a surge testing response plan. In March, NYCC held a virtual exercise involving key strategic personnel on how the Authority would respond to delivering surge testing in an urban area and a sparse rural area.

#### **Outbreak Management**

Cases have significantly reduced since the peak in January and we are making good progress in line with the national road map. However, we must urge caution to ensure cases do not rise again and still adhere to regularly washing hands, wearing face coverings, maintaining social distance and allowing fresh air to circulate. This does make a difference.

#### **Vaccination**

The directorate continues to support the vaccination programme for front line care workers and continues to work with providers to encourage team members who have not yet taken up the offer of a vaccine. The directorate is currently collating the County Council's response to the government consultation regarding compulsory vaccinations for staff working in care homes for older people.

## **Drug Treatment: Universal Grant - Drug Treatment, Crime and Harm Reduction**

North Yorkshire County Council received an invitation on 11 March 2021 to submit an application for a Section 31 Local Authority Grant to expand and strengthen drug treatment crime and harm reduction activity in 2021/22. We received confirmation on 9 April that we have been successful. The value of the non-recurrent revenue only Grant is £315,000, and must be spent within 2021/22.

The Public Health Team held planning meetings with a range of partners including the adult specialist community drug and alcohol service (North Yorkshire Horizons), North Yorkshire Police, National Probation Service, Community Rehabilitation Company, Housing Teams in Scarborough and Harrogate and the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

## **Drug Treatment: Inpatient Detoxification Grant - Medically managed inpatient detoxification**

North Yorkshire County Council received an invitation on 11 March 2021 to submit an application to Public Health England for a Section 31 Local Authority Grant to expand and strengthen inpatient detoxification provision in 2021/22. Applications could only be submitted from a Consortium of two or more Local Authorities.

The North Yorkshire County Council Public Health and Procurement teams led planning meetings with Leeds City Council, Calderdale Council and Barnsley Council; as well as Humankind who provide the commissioned drug and alcohol service across all aforementioned Local Authorities. The Yorkshire and Humber Regional Public Health England Team also supported these meetings.

The combined value of the Consortium Grant is £354,000, and must be spent within 2021/22. The North Yorkshire allocation is £62,000.

## **Suicide Prevention and homelessness**

There has been funding for grass roots community projects issued across Harrogate and Craven with a total of 7 organisations benefiting from the round one funding. We also have a funding opportunity for organisations to work alongside MIRT to enhance the Postvention support offer for those bereaved by suicide and this will include specialist counselling support.

A HeadFirst MH and suicide prevention training site was launched in 2020 and as a result 229 people have accessed virtual MHFA and Suicide prevention training and a further 102 have accessed a self-harm resource.

We are working with HC&V ICS and chairing the work on self-harm an organisation in Harrogate 'Just B' Harrogate Hospice has been funded to coproduce the design of a non-clinical support service for individuals who self-harm and their carers. This work will inform a partnership between NYCC, SBC, Beyond Housing, TEWV, NYP and other agencies to provide dedicated units and intensive and community support to people who are currently homeless or likely to be made homeless due to a range of social and long term health needs. The project will be called REACH – Reducing Exclusion for Adults with Complex Housing needs. Currently staff recruitment is underway and housing support units are being identified. We have an anticipated start date of May/June 2021 and this will be funded for 3 years. Post 3 years the hope is to develop a purpose built facility to support people who are homeless and have complex needs.

### **Update on Wake Up North Yorkshire - final stage and planned evaluation**

Phase 3 of the Wake Up North Yorkshire campaign launched on March 15th. It continues to encourage people to build healthy relationships with alcohol. The campaign will until the end of April and includes new videos of our local North Yorkshire residents who share their stories of building safer drinking habits. The campaign features paid social media, including Facebook and Instagram, together with radio ad slots on Greatest Hits radio – partners, organisation and individuals also invited to share posts and campaign videos on social media using the hashtag #WakeUpNorthYorks.

The strong, simple brand 'Wake Up North Yorkshire' acts as both a call to action, encouraging people to 'wake up' and reflect on their drinking habits, and a positive message that you can start the day feeling better if you drink less the night before.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR CAROLINE DICKINSON