

County Councillors report April 22

New sexual health services begin for North Yorkshire

A more efficient and targeted approach to sexual health services begins tomorrow (Friday April 1) across North Yorkshire.

The arrangement – which enhances the county’s existing, high-quality YorSexualHealth service – will include more developed online help for people to improve access to services as well as a more bespoke and targeted approach for people with the greatest need.

The service involves a new partnership agreement between North Yorkshire County Council and the York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust under Section 75 of the National Health Service Act for a period of up to ten years.

The aim is to build on a sexual health service that is already highly ranked nationally by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy for its high-quality, free, confidential and friendly sexual health provision across the county, accessed via face-to-face clinics, online and telephone.

The development of the service is based on public consultation in which respondents called for greater online access to help as well as more targeted support.

The new arrangement from tomorrow will include:

- Further development of the existing online offer, with more services available remotely dependant on risk including:
- An online system where people can book appointments, get test results and find out what treatment they need;
- Continuation of a telephone triage system manned by highly skilled clinical staff – which will ensure that people get to the right part of the service (a mobile number will still be available to young people, which they can use to access the service);
- More information and advice on the website, including self-referral for counselling and ordering of STI tests.
- Continuation of face-to-face community clinics in some locations, five days a week, with the main hubs in Harrogate, Northallerton, Scarborough and Selby remaining as they are.
- A full contraception service, where appropriate those aged over 19 directed to their GP for longer-term continuation.
- An improved training offer for frontline sexual health professionals.

- Integration between counselling and HIV support services to provide a more co-ordinated service for people living with HIV and their carers.
- Professionals with different roles will work more closely to improve access for those in high-risk groups, such as drug and alcohol users and sex workers.

Covid - Second anniversary of the pandemic

Hard to believe but 23rd March, was the second anniversary of the pandemic, 2 years since we went into the first lockdown.

It has been a long road and it is important to remember those who have lost their lives in the county and people who are still suffering with the effects of long Covid. The current situation with the virus is interesting and slightly worrying in that the numbers of infections has increased quite rapidly over the last few weeks. The North Yorkshire average now stands at over 800 which is probably an under-reporting of the real situation given the reduced testing at the moment. National survey data tells us that 5% of the England population and 5% of the North Yorkshire population currently have covid. There has been some signs in some of the data that the rate of increase is slowing, but we need a longer period of time to get a real sense of whether this is the case or not. The overall position for the different districts in North Yorkshire is set out below;

Area	23-Mar
Craven	812.0
Hambleton	766.4
Harrogate	905.3
Richmondshire	627.2
Ryedale	794.5
Scarborough	758.6
Selby	806.7
North Yorkshire	801.7
England	845.1

(*figures correct at 24/03/22)

There are currently over 400 people (406) in hospital with covid, with 13 of these in intensive care. In this data there will be a mix of people who have gone into hospital very poorly with covid, but also people who have gone into hospital with other issues and have incidentally been identified as having covid when tested in hospital. The numbers in intensive care remain at a low level subject to small increases over the last weeks. The week ending 11th March shows that there were 8 deaths in North Yorkshire where covid was mentioned as a factor in the death. It is relevant to give some perspective to the overall situation around deaths where the current overall number of deaths since the start of this year is lower than the long term average. Probably due to the relatively low incidence of infections from flu.

For many people catching covid at the moment seems to be similar to a very bad cold or a bout of flu, so very unpleasant but something that people are largely recovering from in a week or so. It is still very worthwhile avoiding and therefore all of the usual precautions are still recommended.