

Cllr Helen Swiers Report to FTC December 2021

Covid-19 - Update on current position in North Yorkshire:

- North Yorkshire is tracking above the England average for the rate of infection.
- Important that people wash their hands with soap and water.
- People are also encouraged to use lateral flow test devices.
- In percentage terms, across North Yorkshire and York, 89% of people have now received a first and second vaccine dose and 54% of the eligible population have received a booster.
- Schools continue to see significant and varied impact from covid.
- Schools are being visited to offer the vaccine to pupils aged 12 – 15 and 16 – 17 year olds, not previously eligible, can now book a second dose, if 12 weeks have passed since their first dose.
- There are continued workforce shortages across health and social care. NYCC is working with partners to look at alternative pathways and ways of working.
- Healthwatch is hearing how Covid has impacted on mental health, with delays in accessing services.
- NYCC is continuing to work on communications with the Voluntary Sector, to ensure voluntary sector front line workers have access to the vaccine and the latest messages on public health.

The big covid news are the concerns around the variant, Omicron. This was first identified in South Africa and is now here, in Britain. There are currently no cases in the county, although one in Lancashire; not so far away. NYCC has been drawing together “surge testing” plans. If there were to be a case of Omicron in the county a number of mobile testing unites would be brought in and people who could have been in contact asked to be tested.

Storm Arwen:

The storm certainly left its mark on the county. We had high winds (the highest here, on the coast), rain and then snow came in. The Highways teams were called out to approximately 300 fallen trees and every chain saw that could be found were put into action cleaning up roads to keep them open. The fallen power lines were the major issue out of the storm. In North Yorkshire we believe that there were around 20,000 properties which were at some stage without power. About 300 for well over a week. There have been difficulties in getting reliable data. Concern in these circumstances is clearly for older and vulnerable residents. Health and Adult Services, working with Emergency Planning and others worked tirelessly in an effort to try to contact the most vulnerable people effected by the loss of electricity. When electric is lost, as well as heat and cooking facilities, water and phones can be effected making it very difficult to contact the outside world and help.