

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

16 May 2018

**STATEMENT OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH, PREVENTION & SUPPORTED HOUSING
PORTFOLIO HOLDER COUNTY COUNCILLOR CAROLINE DICKINSON**

Public Health Peer Review

The Council had a peer review of public health functions and the public health team on 7th and 8th March 2018. The peer visit was led by the Director of Health from Sheffield and included representatives from North East Lincolnshire and the Public Health England Centre for Yorkshire and the Humber.

Sector led improvement is based on a culture of collaborative working, sharing good practice, and constructive challenge and learning. It is not an inspection. It aims to build on existing capacity to identify strengths and challenges, share experience and knowledge, and consider “what good looks like”. It offers the opportunity to reflect on how well “embedded” is local public health, and what can be done to strengthen it.

DELPH (Developing Excellence in Local Public Health) is the programme of sector led improvement (SLI) that was developed by the Yorkshire and Humber Directors of Public Health in 2014, with the support of the Local Government Association, Public Health England and the Faculty of Public Health. It is underpinned by a self-assessment toolkit and a programme of peer visits.

The reviewers reported, “We were extremely impressed by the depth of positivity and breadth of coverage your team manages to achieve. The self-assessment was impressive and humbling to read; it clearly demonstrates the breadth and reach of the team and the interfaces with the agenda of many different organisations, well beyond NYCC.”

The feedback noted the strong foundations built up over the past 5 years and challenged the Council to be “more assertive in shaping and developing new ideas at the very earliest stage”. They noted that “People expressed a desire that the team focus their work further upstream and try to enable the right things to happen in terms of setting the overall mission, rather than responding to the work of others.”

In particular they called for strengthening of the locality working approach with District Councils as illustrated by the Selby Health Matters initiative that I reported on in my statement last November. It is my intention to work with the District Council representatives on the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Director of Public Health and the Corporate Director of Health and Adult Services to develop a forum where we can work more effectively across all our districts to identify and influence key policies that are important to public health outcomes for our residents.

The peer review comes at an opportune time as we look back on five years of public health in the Council since April 2013. I wish to register congratulations to the public health team and other teams across the Council who have been at the forefront of this work as we mark the fifth anniversary of the return of public health to local government.

North Yorkshire Horizons Hub in Scarborough

On 22nd March 2018, I joined staff, service users and volunteers at the Scarborough hub of North Yorkshire Horizons to open a newly refurbished floor in the building. The refurbishment done over the past two years has improved and converted the space on the basement floor to include a larger and revamped needle exchange area, dedicated space for service users including a lounge space and fully refitted kitchen, and increased capacity of counselling rooms for one to one appointments. This work will enhance the high quality service we have come to expect from North Yorkshire Horizons.

Investment in recovery focused treatment services remains a priority for the Council especially given the national increase in the number of drug related deaths which is a concern in coastal areas such as Scarborough. Treatment services like NY Horizons help people to manage their addiction and improve their family relationships, life skills, physical and mental health. The recovery focus of NY Horizons seeks to address the issues that service users identify as barriers to remaining free from substance misuse. It also aims to help service users build their personal resilience. This means making stronger links with education, training, housing and employment as core aspects of the recovery journey.

We have placed particular focus on alcohol misuse in North Yorkshire and as part of our Joint Alcohol Strategy we gave priority to improving the identification and treatment of people with dependant drinking. Public Health England notes that between 2013-14 and 2016-17 the number of alcohol presentations to treatment services has fallen by 19%, nationally. Over the same period, the numbers in North Yorkshire have increased by 51%. This is further evidence of the commitment we make to support our residents to overcome addiction to alcohol and other substance misuse.

Call and Check Initiative

Finally in my previous statement I referred to the Call and Check project. This is a partnership prevention pilot between the Royal Mail, the local authority and the Home Office aimed at reducing loneliness and social isolation. I am pleased to announce that NYCC has been chosen as one of three pilot sites. The six month pilot will commence in July with a cohort of 100 people in Whitby. I will include further updates in future reports.

CAROLINE DICKINSON