

# North Yorkshire

## Area Assessment (Summary version)

Dated 9 December 2009



**oneplace**

for an independent overview  
of local public services

## North Yorkshire at a glance

This independent assessment by six inspectorates sets out how well local public services are tackling the major issues in North Yorkshire. It says how well they are delivering better results for local people and how likely these are to improve in future. If, and only if, our assessment shows that the following special circumstances are met in relation to a major issue, we use flags to highlight our judgements. We use a green flag to highlight where others can learn from outstanding achievements or improvements or an innovation that has very promising prospects of success. We use a red flag to highlight where we have significant concerns about results and future prospects that are not being tackled adequately. This means that local partners need to do something more or different to improve these prospects.

### Green flags - exceptional performance or innovation that others can learn from



Green flag: Helping older and vulnerable people keep their independence

### Red flags - significant concerns, action needed

No red flags have been identified for North Yorkshire

## The local area

North Yorkshire is the largest county in England, covering around 3,103 square miles. It includes the urban areas of Harrogate and Scarborough, the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors National Parks, and many small towns and villages.

595,500 people live in the County, and population density is low. Only one in every hundred is from a black and minority ethnic (BME) background, but this proportion is growing. Almost 19 per cent of the population is over 65 and this is expected to rise to nearly 24 per cent by 2018.

North Yorkshire is an attractive place to be. It's a big and diverse county. The quality of life for many is good and the area attracts visitors and people seeking a good place in which to enjoy their retirement. But communities in the area are dispersed and transport is often difficult.

North Yorkshire's public services have agreed the following challenges that they need to tackle:

Access to services and public transport

Alcohol

Children and Young People

Community cohesion

Community Safety

Economy and enterprise

Environment

Health and wellbeing

Older people

Affordable Housing

The next section tells you how North Yorkshire's public services are doing in each of their local priority areas.

## How is North Yorkshire doing?

### Access to services and public transport

Partners in North Yorkshire are working on three fronts in this priority area: promoting independence by giving better access to services; developing transport, particularly community transport; and, providing modern broadband for all areas including rural communities.

The County Council and partners are improving access for all residents in North Yorkshire through joint contact centres and other initiatives. With partners the County Council is developing libraries to provide access and services for citizens. The numbers of people visiting libraries and receiving an at home service are increasing. At the end of June 2009 almost four in five of North Yorkshire's residents lived within 5 miles of a Joint Access Centre. The County Council Customer Service Centre is now open 68 hours a week and the range of services continues to expand.

The County is a Centre of Excellence for local transport delivery and work is continuing to improve bus rail and road travel and community transport. This is giving people in rural areas better access to the services they need and want but there are still challenges which threaten the sustainability of some more remote communities.

The public sector led NYnet initiative is championing the roll out of super fast broadband connection for more areas. Changes in European regulation has given further impetus to NYnet. Commercial broadband providers are not available for some rural communities. NYnet has ambitions to fill that gap. It has already had successes in attracting new businesses - creative industries for example - to areas like Scarborough as part of a wider plan for economic development.

## Alcohol

Partners in North Yorkshire are working on reducing the harm caused by alcohol by reducing the damage done to people's health, crime related to alcohol including anti-social behaviour and the loss of working days because of alcohol.

Alcohol and drug misuse are significant problems for some areas in North Yorkshire. Binge drinking rates are highest in Richmondshire perhaps reflecting the impact of Catterick Garrison. In Harrogate alcohol related admissions to hospital are well above the national average.

The NYSP's work in promoting health and healthy lifestyles is not yet bearing fruit. It is at an early stage in the implementation of the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy and has yet to see real improvements in outcomes for local people. More work is planned with children, young people and adults to help all of them better understand risks, effects and long-term consequences of excessive alcohol consumption and drug/substance misuse.

## Children and Young People

Partners in North Yorkshire are working on a number of important areas in this priority. These include: reducing the number of teenage pregnancies; helping children and young people to do better particularly where they are lagging behind now; ensuring that vulnerable children have the chance to get good quality education; and, getting more children and young people physically active.

Ofsted have rated North Yorkshire's children's services as performing well. Most schools, children's homes, pupil referral units, nurseries and childminders are good and some are outstanding. This means that almost all children and young people get good help and support. A higher proportion of services for very young children are good or better than in most of the country and in similar areas.

Most of the county's nursery schools are good. More North Yorkshire primary and secondary schools are good and outstanding than in similar areas. All primary schools are at least adequate. Fewer of the county's secondary schools are inadequate than in the country as a whole or in similar areas.

A recent inspection of frontline services in direct contact with children and young people who need support found two areas for urgent action. Firstly, completing assessments for children in need was taking too long. Secondly, arrangements for following up allegations of child protection referrals were not applied consistently. Both weaknesses put some of North Yorkshire's most vulnerable children at risk.

Ofsted has recently inspected services for children in the care of the County Council and arrangements for keeping children safe. It showed the County Council has acted to deal with the weaknesses found in the earlier inspection.

## Community cohesion

Partners in North Yorkshire are working on increasing the proportion of the area's population that feels people from different backgrounds get on well together. Partners are also developing their knowledge of more localised problems that weaken community cohesion. Increasing volunteering is also a key ambition for the area.

Four out of five of people in North Yorkshire believe the area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. This is a high figure nationally and the best performance in Yorkshire and Humberside.

Although the county's population is not ethnically diverse changes have happened in recent years that have altered many communities. Migrant workers from Eastern Europe have become more common and have had significant impacts on some communities. Partners have worked well in helping these new arrivals - the Fire and Rescue Service's work with Polish workers in Selby is one example.

Elsewhere Gurkha service personnel and their families have been based in the infantry training centre in Catterick since the mid 1990s. There are long-standing Gypsy, Traveller and show people communities in the area. Hate crimes involving race are rare but some Gypsies and Travellers may not have a safe place to live.

Good joint working between the public and voluntary sectors is leading to more volunteers coming forward including those from black and minority ethnic, unemployed and disabled communities. North Yorkshire Police and the two National Parks make extensive use of volunteers in their work.

## Community Safety

Partners are working on several issues as part of achieving this priority. They want to reduce re-offending rates, tackle domestic abuse, provide greater assurance to those living in fear of crime and reduce the numbers of people who die or get injured on the county's roads.

North Yorkshire is an overwhelmingly safe place to live, visit and work. Crime is low overall and fell by 3.2 per cent in 2008/09. Put another way there were 1500 fewer victims of crime. Partnership working to tackle crime and disorder is working well in district council areas.

The Inspectorate of Probation has identified that reoffending by young people in North Yorkshire is worse than in similar areas. By most measures the Youth Justice Service works well. The percentage of young people engaging with education and work opportunities is low and needs significant attention.

Impressive partnership work on domestic violence is improving the lives of families. The Making Safe initiative piloted in Ryedale and Scarborough is now being rolled out across all North Yorkshire. The initiative takes the abuser rather than the abused out of the home and takes on their behaviour. It continues to be successful at stopping offending.

Too many people die or are injured on the County's roads. 536 people died or were seriously injured on North Yorkshire's roads in 2008 down from 716 in 2007. Half of these were visitors from outside the area. Some attracted by the technical challenge of driving on some of the more scenic rural routes.

Many of these visitors drive with a disregard for their and other road users' safety despite their lack of familiarity with local roads. The North Yorkshire 95 Alive road safety partnership has done innovative work with at risk groups such as children, young drivers (including service personnel) and 'Born-Again Bikers'.

## Economy and enterprise

Partners are working on a number of tasks in this priority area. They aim to stimulate the economy and encourage enterprise. Partners also want to develop the areas' cultural and environmental attractions. Through investing in broadband and other technology partners are also trying to attract new businesses into the area.

The recession is hitting some parts of North Yorkshire hard. Unemployment is starting to increase and there is anecdotal evidence that businesses in some sectors have experienced a downturn in business. The North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership has recognized the recession's likely impact. It knows that 18 to 24 year-olds are being hit hardest with job losses in some rural areas.

Small businesses and the public sector dominate North Yorkshire's economy. Although the area is mainly rural only a small proportion of the population works in agriculture. More people are employed in manufacturing and shop work but the biggest employer is the public sector. This proportion is expected to increase as jobs are lost in the private sector. But decreases in public spending will have significant impacts in North Yorkshire.

Partners have clear plans to tackle some effects of the downturn. They aim to stimulate the economy and encourage enterprise. They also want to increase the number of visitors by developing the areas' cultural and environmental attractions. Through investing in broadband and other technology they are attracting new businesses into the area. Recognising the recession's likely impact on family support, debt advice and benefits they have set up North Yorkshire Credit Union to help local people financially.

But there is optimism too the downturn will create some opportunities. The weak pound is increasing the number of visitors to North Yorkshire from home and abroad despite the British weather.

## Environment

Partners are working on a number of ambitions within this priority area. They are tackling global warming by reducing their own greenhouse gas emissions. Partners are also working to reduce waste and increase recycling. Bio-diversity is being promoted too. Flooding is a very real danger for some of North Yorkshire's communities and the focus of a lot of effort.

Key indicators about the environment show good performance and are improving but a few areas still perform poorly. For example, North Yorkshire people produce more household waste than in similar areas. The County Council has well-developed plans in place to address this.

Partners are taking action to reduce their areas' carbon footprint. But the nature of many properties often makes it impossible to use cavity insulation. The high price of bottled gas and heating oil means that fuel poverty is a significant issue for many in the area. There are some notable examples of microgeneration of power using water and wind that can be used without significant impacts on the local environment.

Flooding has had a major impact on the county in recent years. The new £18 million flood defence scheme in Selby has reduced the flood risk to 2,500 properties leading to greater business confidence and reduced insurance premiums for both business and homeowners. The Council is liaising with the Environment Agency over its proposals to 'retreat' from some areas of flood defences which would cause more frequent and serious flooding on agricultural land.

## Health and wellbeing

Partners in North Yorkshire are working on health related problems. These include: childhood obesity; getting people more active; reducing smoking in pregnancy; focusing on the greatest health inequalities; and, help vulnerable people get the health support they need.

North Yorkshire is a relatively healthy County and life expectancy is high. But there are some communities where this general picture is not so good.

The gap between Scarborough and the rest of the County is still significant though getting smaller. A man living in some parts of Scarborough is more likely to have worse health and die younger than is the case in other parts of the county. Rates of heart disease and strokes are also higher in Scarborough than is the case nationally.

A number of other problems are more widespread. Cancer is the most common cause of early death. Binge drinking is also increasing and has resulted in more in alcohol-related hospital admissions in Harrogate and Scarborough. The proportion of North Yorkshire women who smoke during pregnancy is a cause for concern. Given the rapidly ageing population demands for services for conditions such as Alzheimer's is certain to increase.

But there is good news too. More people take part in regular sport or exercise than in other parts of the country (except in Scarborough). Schools are encouraging children to be healthy and three quarters of them have achieved the National Healthy School Status which is above the national average. Obesity rates for Year 6 pupils are lower. Ryedale and Scarborough buck that trend though and have higher rates.

## Older people

Partners in North Yorkshire are working on several areas that are important to achieving this priority. They aim to promote healthy ageing and older people's involvement in the life of their communities. Partners are promoting older people's independence and dignity. They are also working to ensure fair access to services for all that need them while allowing them to have more control over their own lives.

North Yorkshire is a good place to grow old. North Yorkshire people rate the area highly for older people getting the help and support they need to live at home for as long as they want to. Local people also rated public services highly in North Yorkshire for treating them with respect and consideration. The area's innovation and success in helping people live independently for longer is recognised in our green flag.

The County Council and its partners have made excellent progress in helping people to uphold their independence. Partners are improving both access and the quality of services for vulnerable people with more people getting the care they need earlier. The most recent assessment of the Council's performance in all areas was 'excellent'.

Organisations are working well together to plan for the needs of North Yorkshire's growing population of older people including provision of extracare housing and more local provision of services in rural areas.

## Affordable Housing

Partners in North Yorkshire are working on affordable housing for all its people that need it including people who are vulnerable. They are also acting together to prevent and reduce homelessness.

Partners have agreed a four year target of delivering 2,220 affordable homes. But this is unlikely to be achieved for reasons mostly outside the control of organisations in the area not least the downturn in the housing market because of the recession. The impact of the downturn is shown by the number of affordable homes built over the last two years. In 2007/08 the figure was 429. In 2008/09 it was 385. Most of these have been built because of public money not as part of larger private developments.

Developers have pulled out of projects for understandable reasons. Demand and supply of private housing shrunk rapidly when mortgage and business finance got harder to get. Projects have stalled that provided affordable homes alongside private houses sold at full market value. So councils have agreed that all the districts should have new strategies in place by April 2011 to ensure that projects can start without delay when the economic climate improves.

CAA looks at how well local public services, working together, are meeting the needs of the people they serve. It's a joint assessment made by a group of independent watchdogs about the performance of local public services, and how likely they are to meet local priorities. From 9 December you will find the results of Comprehensive Area Assessment on the Oneplace website - <http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk/>

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