Norfolk County Council

Latest Information, Advice, Useful Links and Service Updates (Updated 25 March 2021)

This is a very fast-moving situation and our focus right now is on delaying the spread of coronavirus and ensuring our services are responding well. This is clearly hugely important and requires all of our attention.

The information below is intended as a resource to keep you up to date with the latest information and advice.

Covid-19 Trusted sources of information

- The most recent **verified data on cases in the UK and Norfolk** is available from Public Health England here and the Norfolk Insights website here.
- Everyone has a key role in promoting www.nhs.uk/coronavirus and www.gov.uk/coronavirus as trusted sources of information to the public. It is really important to ensure people go to the right sources of information and keep up to date with how to look after themselves.
- **Keep up to date**: We have a dedicated webpage for coronavirus updates in Norfolk and impact on Norfolk County Council services. This is updated regularly so please do re-visit this page.
- **Service updates** - The most up to date information on council services can be found at Norfolk County Council services disruptions. The council will continue to monitor its services and, if regulations and circumstances change, it will review its current plans.

Latest national announcements

- **Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus** – On 23 March, the Prime Minister gave a statement on coronavirus, reflected on one year since the first lockdown and confirmed a permanent memorial will be built to commemorate this whole period.
- **New 'roadmap regulations' and Coronavirus Act set out** – On 22 March, the Government set out new 'roadmap regulations' which will pave the way to the easing of all restrictions from 21 June, and proposals to maintain support for the vulnerable, businesses and public services. Alongside the roadmap regulations, the Government also published a review of the Coronavirus Act ahead of a vote in Parliament, which sets out 15 measures which will be expired or suspended as they are no longer essential to the national response to coronavirus. It explains which measures of the Act will be retained and how they will help to support businesses and individuals. The regulations were laid yesterday and the Coronavirus Act will be voted on by Parliament on 25 March.
- **Government publishes review to improve babies' and children's healthy development -** The early years review – The best start for life: a vision for the 1,001 critical days – has been led by Early Years Health Adviser Andrea Leadsom MP and sets out a vision for best practice across the health system to ensure babies and children can get the best possible start.

Messages for residents

- **Please follow the latest rules as lockdown starts to lift** - We're all looking forward to the next stages of lockdown easing from 29 March – but we must remain cautious to avoid an increase in Covid cases.

  If the Government confirms that it can move to the next stage of its roadmap, the following will be permitted from Monday, 29 March:

  - Outdoor gatherings (including in private gardens) of either six people or two households will be allowed, making it easier for friends and families to meet outside.
  - Visits to outdoor sports facilities such as tennis and basketball courts and open-air swimming pools and people will be able to take part in formally organised outdoor sports

  The 'stay at home' rule will end on 29 March but many restrictions will remain in place:

- People should continue to work from home where they can and minimise the number of journeys they make where possible, avoiding travel at the busiest times and routes.
- Travel abroad will continue to be prohibited, other than for a small number of permitted reasons.
- Holidays abroad will not be allowed, given it will remain important to manage the risk of imported variants and protect the vaccination programme. The government has launched a new taskforce to review global travel which will report on 12 April.

The full press release can be found here.

- **Water safety - Please help share Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service safety messaging** - With the lifting of some restrictions, improved weather and the start of the school Easter holidays, we are anticipating an increase in people attending sites with open water.

  Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service chairs the Drowning Prevention Forum, made up of agencies from across Norfolk with a focus on water safety.

  Forum chairman Greg Preston, of Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service said: "As the first lockdown lifted in 2020, many people headed to coastal and inland water to spend time outdoors. We anticipate the same will happen again this spring. We want to make people safer by making them aware of the risks and dangers when around water, what to do if they fall into water and how to help someone who is in trouble in water.

  "In 2019, 223 people accidentally drowned in the UK. 44% of these people just happened to be near water and had no intention of even entering it."

  The advice is:

  - Ensure that you and your family can swim, are water confident, and have water safety skills
  - Make smart choices - swim at lifeguarded beaches and pools, use appropriate safety equipment and do not drink alcohol before going in the water
  - Be aware of and know how to avoid water safety hazards such as rip tides, cold-water and moving water
  - Be aware of the dangers of swimming in open waters, especially in waters without lifeguards. Water temperatures can drop sharply just below the surface and you don't know what may be underneath.

  Water safety advice can be found online at https://rnli.org/safety

Environment

- **Community tree nurseries project to boost local stock** - A new project to boost the supply of Norfolk trees will help improve local biodiversity and mitigation of climate change. Nationally, trees outside woodlands have seen accelerating losses, driven by pressures from pests and diseases, and long-term neglect and decline.

  The Boosting Community Tree Nurseries project will find ways to support existing community-led nurseries in Norfolk and establish the best ways to help new set-ups that involve the community. The project will support nurseries to produce trees that are biosecure - stock that is handled responsibly and safely, inspected for pests and diseases regularly and for which records are kept to enable traceability.

  Boosting Community Tree Nurseries is expected to receive £250,000-300,000 in funding from a Government scheme to establish more trees outside woodlands.

- **12 ways to swap2save - new campaign aims to cut single use product waste -** A campaign launching today, Monday 22 March, is set to help drive down single-use product and plastic waste by calling on people to swap2save. By making small everyday changes, like swapping a take-away drink in a plastic bottle for a reusable and refillable water bottle, people will be able to save their money and cut waste.

  The single-use items targeted by the campaign lead to 30,000 tonnes of waste annually in Norfolk, costing £3.47million to dispose of every year. Over the coming weeks the campaign will highlight some simple swaps people can make to cut waste. Ideas include swapping disposable razors for a bamboo

or stainless one with replaceable blades, switching from disposable wet wipes or cotton wool pads to a washable cotton flannel, or for a snack swapping crisps in a plastic packet for popcorn popped at home.

For more information, and great swap ideas, visit www.norfolkrecycles.com/swap2save and watch the first campaign video on YouTube.

Education and settings

- **Schools** - All schools welcomed back all pupil groups last week and overall attendance was 94.9% in primary schools, compared to 96.5% the week before and compared to 93% nationally. Attendance in secondary schools was 89.8%, compared 89% nationally. The week before saw most secondary schools phase the return of students to allow for all to be safely tested, so attendance from this week is not comparable. Four schools closed due to Covid related reasons, for at least one day each last week. All schools report that they are meeting the DfE expectations for any remote learning still required, in full
- **Post 16's** - A further reduction in the numbers of young people who are NEET with an additional 8 young people progressing into opportunities - now 784 young people still NEET (4.55%). Advisers continue to promote provision and refer young people to new opportunities including to rising number of apprenticeships and employability provision.
- **Early Years** - 674 settings currently open with 13,063 children attending. 4,447 children of critical workers. 637 children are vulnerable and of those 211 have a social worker and 105 have an EHCP. Due to DfE now sending out home testing kits to all nurseries and allowing childminders to access home tests as well, we are now pausing the workplace testing for settings.

Social care

- **Building work under way for Independent Living Scheme** - Throughout the current lockdown work has continued to build 58 new homes in Acle, designed for Independent Living for older residents.

  Norfolk County Council in partnership with Saffron Housing Trust and NorseCare, is creating a new Independent Living scheme in the town, consisting of 58 new affordable homes (41 affordable rent and 17 Shared Ownership) that will allow residents aged over 55 with care needs to live independently, creating not only much needed housing but also enhancing the appearance of the local area.

  Initial work started in January, following the demolition of the Councils redundant Herondale building in Acle.The scheme, which consists of one and two-bedroom self-contained flats, will allow elderly residents to maintain independence for longer. The plans will see facilities built on site to help residents remain active in the community, including communal spaces such as a lounge, activity room, retail/café space and a hair salon as well as outside areas. On-site care and support will also be available 24/7 giving residents and their families peace of mind that support is close to hand if needed.

  Visit our independent living pages for more information.

Business and economy

- **Broadband boost announced for Norfolk** - Norfolk County Council has welcomed the news of a major expansion of the fastest type of broadband, which could benefit up to a third of properties. The Government has announced Norfolk will be involved in a new round of Gigabit broadband procurement. View more information on the Government's announcement.

  Known as Gigabit / Full Fibre / Ultrafast / Fibre to the Premise, it has a speed of 100-1000 mega-bits per second – compared to 24 or 30mbps for superfast broadband

  View further details of Better Broadband for Norfolk.

General updates

- **Construction of £1.9m Norwich south recycling centre starts next week** - Work starts next week, Monday 22 March, on the brand new £1.9m Norwich South recycling centre. The larger modern recycling centre is set to replace the current site at Ketteringham later this year.

Consultation feedback has helped shape the plans for the Norwich South site. There will be low-level bins meaning people will not have to climb steps to recycle their waste, and there will be plenty of parking for cars, bicycles and vehicles with trailers, plus a one-way traffic system to smooth traffic flow and reduce queues.

Bargain hunters will also benefit from a new large reuse shop, which will be 8 times the size of the current one at Ketteringham.

The new Norwich South recycling centre will complement the new £2.75m Norwich North recycling centre, which is already under construction and on track to open this autumn.