



Latest Information, Advice, Useful Links and Service Updates (Updated 25 November 2020)

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.

Latest national announcements

- **Prime minister's statement on the coronavirus winter plan** – Yesterday, the Prime Minister made an [Oral Statement](#) on the Government's coronavirus [Winter Plan](#) and set out the Government's approach to ending the national restrictions on 2 December. The Government also set out the local restriction tier system that will be in place from 2 December, including [what you can and cannot do in each tier](#). The Government has also published [posters](#) to communicate locally about the various tiers of restrictions in England from 2 December.

The Government is expected to announce which areas of England are going into which tiers on Thursday (26 November), after ministers have received the latest COVID case data from government scientists.
- **Christmas arrangements** - The UK Government and the Devolved Administrations have agreed [on joint arrangements](#) for an easing of social restrictions that will allow friends and loved ones to reunite over the Christmas period.

All four parts of the UK have signed off an aligned approach allowing up to three households to form a 'Christmas bubble' from December 23 to 27. When a bubble is formed it is fixed, and must not be changed or extended further at any point.

Individuals will also be able to travel between tiers and across the whole of the UK without restriction within the five-day period, for the purposes of meeting with their bubble.

Christmas bubbles will be able to gather in private homes, attend places of worship together and meet in outdoor public places. Beyond this, people should continue to follow all other local restrictions in the area.

The Government has issued guidance on [making a Christmas bubble with friends and family](#), and the full press release is available [here](#).
- **Free flu vaccinations rolled out to over 50s from December** - The Government [announced](#) on Friday that people aged 50 to 64 will get free flu vaccine from 1 December as part of expanded flu vaccination programme this winter.
- **England introduces new testing strategy for international arrivals** - The Government has [announced](#) that from 15 December, passengers arriving into England from countries not featured on the Government's travel corridor list will have the option to take a test after five days of self-isolation to reduce the 14-day self-isolation period. A negative coronavirus result will release passengers from the need to isolate further.

Key messages for the public

- **It's essential, Norfolk must follow Covid restrictions to halt rise in cases** - As rates of coronavirus in Norfolk continue to rise, people are being urged to stick to the essentials and follow the national guidelines.

The current restrictions (to 2nd December) mean that people should only leave home if it is essential:

- To shop for essentials
- To do essential work, because you cannot work from home
- To only carry out essential journeys
- For essential education
- For essential exercise

It is also essential that people isolate immediately if they have symptoms, test positive or have had close contact with someone who has coronavirus and it is essential to work with NHS Test and Trace and local contact tracing teams, to help keep communities safe.

You may be able to claim £500 if you have been told by NHS Test and Trace to self-isolate and you cannot do your work at home. You can only claim the payment for up to 14 days after the end of your self-isolation period. So do not wait. The scheme will run until 31 January 2021. Further information is available [here](#).

We ask our Members and partners to reinforce these messages within their local community and help keep Norfolk safe.

Communities

- **Norfolk launches winter support package to help feed those in need this Christmas** - Norfolk County Council is developing a package of support to help give families peace of mind in the run up to Christmas and over the winter months by helping those who need it to have food on the table and other essentials, so every child will be warm and well-fed this winter.

A key part of this support package is about food and the council is working with food voucher company Edenred to provide support for all those eligible for free school meals, children in the early years who receive pupil premium and all of the council's care leavers during the Christmas holidays.

The voucher scheme will form part of a wider package of support for families experiencing hardship this winter, details of which will be announced shortly.

The council and Norfolk schools are encouraging more families to register and apply for free school meals, so that they begin to receive support in time for the school holidays. To find out if you are eligible and to register for free school meals visit our [School meals and milk page](#).

As part of the wider package of support for families this winter, the council will be further extending the Norfolk Assistance Scheme, which already provides support for food, fuel, clothes and other essential household items to Norfolk's residents experiencing hardship. The easiest way to get in touch is to visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/NAS. Those who cannot access the internet, can call 01603 223392 (option 5). If the line is busy, they can leave a message and the team will call back.

Funding for winter support schemes has come from a range of sources:

- A £1m grant from Defra. £200k of this has been allocated to Norfolk Community Foundation and the remainder has been used to supplement the Norfolk Assistance Scheme (NAS)
- £500k of additional government Covid grant
- £2.7m of Covid Winter Grant, which will be used to fund the Edenred scheme and extend the reach of NAS
- £1.15m of the council's core budgets – including funding for NAS

Information on how to access current support is available at www.norfolk.gov.uk/coronavirus or by calling 0344 800 8020.

- **LGA virtual events on improving digital citizenship** - Improving digital citizenship is becoming increasingly important as our daily interactions continue to take place online and new technologies of information are constantly used to facilitate communication with citizens, officers and councillors. Online abuse and intimidation of local councillors and supporting officers working with them is a major challenge to local democracy and to the diversity of our local representatives.

The first webinar panel session will introduce the aims and objectives of the LGA digital citizenship project and give councillors and officers the opportunity to feed into the project at its inception. It will be followed by two interactive workshops, one for officers, and an evening session for both councillors and officers where attendees will have opportunities to share their own experiences and possible solutions.

All sessions will be hosted by Dr Sofia Collignon, Lecturer in Politics, International Relations and Philosophy at the Royal Holloway University of London.

The events will be hosted on the Zoom platform. To book your place, please register via the links below:

- [Civility in public life: improving digital citizenship - an introduction to the project](#), Friday 4 December 2020, 10.00am-11.00am
- [Civility in public life: digital citizenship workshop for officers](#), Thursday 17 December 2020, 10.30am-11.30am
- [Civility in public life: digital citizenship workshop for officers and councillors](#), Monday 21 December 2020, 6.00pm-7.00pm

Education, schools and settings

- **Back to School** - The data of 19 November indicates that 99% of schools are fully open with attendance rate at 87%. There are currently 176 education settings where a positive case has been reported, which equates to 143 situations, 20 outbreaks and 13 clusters. We are in the process of adding additional resource to the Outbreak Management Centre to support education settings 7 days a week.

NB. Within a non-residential school setting:

- A 'situation' is classified as a single case of COVID-19 within a specific non-residential setting.
- A 'cluster' is two or more test-confirmed cases of COVID-19 among individuals associated with a specific non-residential setting with illness onset dates within a 14-day period.
- An 'outbreak' is two or more test-confirmed cases of COVID-19 among individuals associated with a specific non-residential setting with illness onset dates within 14 days, **and** one of:
 - identified direct exposure between at least 2 of the test-confirmed cases in that setting (for example under one metre face to face, or spending more than 15 minutes within 2 metres) during the infectious period of one of the cases
 - when there is no sustained local community transmission - absence of an alternative source of infection outside the setting for the initially identified cases
- **Post 16's** - Participation in learning figures have risen to 92.3% for Y12 and 83.8% for Y13 - 88% combined. The percentage of young people, not in employment, education or training (NEET) is 3.2% - (555 young people) and continues to rise as we find out the actual destinations of the remaining unknowns. Combined Y12 and Y13 Unknowns are running at 6.6%, this is still significantly higher than at this time last year with 1,144 young people still to track. Post 16 providers are now requesting NEET contact lists to proactively engage and recruit young people although there are fewer providers than usual offering opportunities than at this time in previous years. 520 applications for September 2021 post 16 programmes for young people with complex and high needs have now been fully processed.
- **Early Years** - This week numbers remain stable again with 656 settings open with 13,305 children attending. Of those 3969 are children of critical workers and 573 are vulnerable. Of those 232 have a social worker, 110 have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Again, there are no sufficiency issues to report.

Business and economy

- **Norfolk County Council supports Governments Kickstart programme to tackle youth unemployment** - Norfolk County Council has secured Gateway organisation status in the government's national programme to tackle youth unemployment. Kickstart is a £2 billion government subsidised programme aimed at 16-24-year olds who are receiving Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment. The government will cover 100% of the National Minimum Wage for 16-24-year olds, up to a maximum 25 hours per week. It will also cover National Insurance and pension contributions for every young person given a quality placement.

Funding up to the value of £1,500 is also available to support essentials for the placement such as a uniform and wrap-around support and training tailored to each individual to ensure their experience is as helpful as possible to their long-term employment prospects.

Employers who can offer more than 30 placements can apply directly to the government for funding. However, **as a Gateway organisation, Norfolk County Council can apply for funding on behalf of businesses and organisations who can offer fewer than 30 placements.** Businesses of all sizes are encouraged to apply whether they can offer one placement or twenty.

The Kickstart programme is open for new placements until 31 December 2021. Organisations interested in providing work placements through the scheme should contact kickstart@norfolk.gov.uk for more information.

We ask our Members and partners to actively promote this message and the Kickstart programme with businesses within their wards or operational areas.

- **Plan for Jobs - Skills incentives for employers** - As part of the Chancellor's Plan for Jobs there are a range skills programmes (some of which offer financial incentives) that are available for employers who are considering hiring employees or offering work experience. One of the following programmes might be right for businesses, if they are looking to:
 - Develop the talent pool in a business or develop a motivated, skilled and qualified workforce
 - Build a pipeline of talent for junior positions
 - Test out if someone is right for permanent job or apprenticeship
 - Carry out a skill needs analysis in a business to understand gaps and find solutions
 - Find a flexible programme that can be tailored to meet recruitment needs
 - Find more flexible ways to offer a work placement

These incentives can help business owners to invest in their business, help people upskill and improve their chances of securing a good job in a highly competitive labour market. To learn more about the variety of offers available and how to apply please visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

- **Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles** - New guidance has been issued on the actions that drivers, operators and owners of taxis or private hire vehicles (PHVs) can take to protect against Coronavirus – including information on how drivers can carry out risk assessment, picking up passengers, preparing vehicles for the next passenger. For more information can be found [here](#).
- **Income Tax and National Insurance contributions exemption for Coronavirus antigen tests provided by employers** - The government is committed to supporting businesses and individuals through the Coronavirus pandemic, and this measure aims to make sure the use of relevant antigen testing procedures by employers are not subject to a tax charge. Find out more [here](#).

General updates

- **Service updates** - The most up to date information on the impact of the current lockdown 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. The Council's website features the latest, updated information and guidance, to be found [here](#).

- **Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service update** - This week we have been supporting national messaging for Electrical Fire Safety Week around buying electrical items safely online. Each year NCC's Trading Standards team gets many complaints about goods bought cheaply via online marketplaces, which turn out to be fake and/or poor quality. This can increase the risk of fires in the home and is often such products as 'smart technology', phone charging leads and vaping equipment. Norfolk residents should only buy from reputable sellers, avoid goods posted from abroad or businesses giving a PO Box address only, and consider if something seems too good to be true, it may well be.

Last year more than half of Norfolk house fires had an electrical cause. We have made some videos, which we will be sharing next week across our social media platforms, highlighting some common problems such as overloading extension leads and sockets, which can cause a fire. The videos show how fires can start and take hold quickly. You can find more about electrical fire safety here: [Electrical fire safety - Norfolk County Council](#)