

Latest Information, Advice, Useful Links and Service Updates (Updated 14 January 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

- **Government publishes vaccines delivery plan** - On 11 January, the Government published the [UK COVID-19 vaccines delivery plan](#). The vaccines delivery plan sets out how the Government will work with the NHS, devolved administrations, local councils and the armed forces to deliver the vaccination programme. The plan is for two million vaccinations to take place per week with over 2,700 vaccine sites across the UK.

On 11 January, the Health Secretary, Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP, gave a [statement](#) on coronavirus and provided an update on the rollout of vaccinations.

The Health Secretary also [spoke on 10 January](#) about vaccines, testing and the R number and the Vaccine Deployment Minister, Rt Hon Nadhim Zahawi MP published a [statement](#) on the full vaccine deployment plan.

Chief Medical Officer [Professor Chris Whitty](#) and Chief Medical Adviser for NHS Test and Trace, [Dr Susan Hopkins](#), also made statements on national alert levels and community testing, respectively.

- **New TV advert urges public to stay at home** The Government launched a major new public campaign urging people to act like they have the virus. The [new TV ad](#), fronted by the Chief Medical Officer Professor Chris Whitty, urges people to stay at home in the face of rapidly rising rate of coronavirus infections and pressures facing the NHS. A public information campaign will run across TV, radio and on social media.

Key messages for residents

- **Don't drop your guard as COVID cases rise** - Don't give COVID more chances. Stay local and avoid unnecessary trips, to protect yourself and the NHS. That's the message from the county council's new Chances campaign, as COVID cases and hospital cases rise sharply in Norfolk. Read the full press release [here](#).

Please share these key messages with residents

COVID spreads easily. Every time someone leaves their home, this creates new opportunities to transmit the virus. Keep these opportunities to a minimum by:

- Working from home whenever possible

- Only sending children to education settings if necessary
- Using online shopping where possible - and if you have to visit shops, only go when necessary and don't take anyone who doesn't need to be there
- Stay local for exercise
- Remember to always follow the key guidance of regular handwashing (and sanitise when out), use face coverings when required and keep two metres away from members of other households.

Norfolk NHS statement - Melanie Craig, Executive Lead, Norfolk and Waveney Health and Care Partnership, said: "Like areas across the country, the virus is now having a major impact upon local services the NHS delivers and its ability to provide all the operations, diagnostic tests and out-patient appointments, as well primary care provided treatments and on-going patient support. The situation is very challenging. This wave and the new variant are affecting Norfolk and Waveney much more than the first wave.

"There has been a significant increase in the number of patients in hospital with COVID-19 over the last few weeks and this number has continued to rise.

"Over the summer and autumn, local teams have worked tirelessly to maintain services across our hospitals and we will continue to maintain as much cancer, emergency and urgent care as possible throughout this current wave of the pandemic. We will also continue to run outpatient clinics as virtual appointments as much as possible.

"We have local plans and procedures in place, including additional surge capacity, for responding to the increasing demands on the NHS.

"The best thing we can all do to protect ourselves; our families and our communities is to remember - Hands, Face, Space."

- **Current COVID statistics for Norfolk** - Position at 4.30pm, Wednesday 13 January 2021:
 - Cases at 24,142 since 1 July 2020, an increase of 633, and 7,889 of those have occurred in the last 14 days
 - We have 771 people in hospital (up 23) and 43 patients in critical care (down 4)
 - 55 further deaths have been recorded to 12 January 2021, taking the cumulative total to 755
 - 141 open outbreaks in care settings (up 1), 57 in businesses (up 4), 34 in education settings (down 1) and 56 in health and emergency settings (up 3)
 - Bed occupancy, as a combined figure across Norfolk Trusts, at 91.3% as of Tuesday 12 January 2021
- **Vaccination update** - You'll find more information about the vaccination programme on the Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group website [here](#). This page is being regularly updated to reflect the national guidance and the local queries received. A COVID-19 vaccination myth buster is available [here](#)

Social care and health

- **Social prescribing** - In 2019, Norfolk County Council funded a two-year pilot to test the idea of social prescribing in Norfolk. The one-off funding came jointly from public health and from adult social services. Jointly we then were able to fund a one-year extension to the pilot.

During that time, social prescribing has delivered some excellent work and helped circa 18,000 people across Norfolk. The NHS has recognised the value of social prescribing and nationally, £0.740m has been made available to all Primary Care Networks (PCNs) for social prescribing.

NCC funding will end in March 2021, although we are still working with all partners on the development of a strong Norfolk social prescribing offer. Particularly making sure we make good links with our funding for people who are lonely and isolated.

We are pleased that some PCNs in Norfolk have taken up the NHS funding and will be taking on the existing workforce; others have chosen to use the funding in a different way and so will not be able to take on the existing social prescribing workforce.

Alongside this, we are continuing to fund our successful social isolation and loneliness service, when the original three-year contract ends on March 21. This service is delivered by Community Action Norfolk, Voluntary Norfolk's Better Together and Lily. We will be working with them to develop the service going forward.

If you need any further information about this, then please do get in touch with Chris Scott (chris.scott@norfolk.gov.uk)

- **Brain in Hand Pilot** – With funding from Norfolk and Waveney Health and Care Partnership ([the STP](#)), we will be running a 12-month technology pilot which will help people stay independent and in control of their lives. The Brain in Hand smart phone 'app' will be trialled in Learning Disability services and in our Preparing for Adult Life service. The app has already been used elsewhere by local authorities supporting individuals with autism or Mental Health needs.
- **Carers Matter** – To improve carers access to information and support, there is a dedicated central resource on our Norfolk Community Directory - [Support for Carers | Norfolk Community Directory](#). With a full-time Carers Lead now in post, we are working closely with carer organisations to understand the support they are providing carers with during lockdown, and ensuring this information is shared with our front line staff to promote with carers.

Support includes:

- Continuing with and increasing the number of virtual cuppas that are available so that carers can meet online and chat
- Using the Health and Wellbeing fund to finance activities for these groups
- Working with NCC on data sharing to try and get the Caring Together wellbeing packs out to carers
- Working with volunteers to complete welfare checks over the phone with carers on the caseload
- A digital inclusion programme run by volunteers which identifies carers that need support accessing things virtually and gives them training on using tablets.
- **Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)** – Norfolk County Council has coproduced a document, Norfolk Positive Lives, outlining expectations for learning disability supported living and residential providers to use PBS. Recognised as a best practice framework for behaviours of concern, PBS is person centred and can provide long-term support to people with a learning disability and/or autism who have (or may be at risk of developing) behaviours that challenge. We are also working with The British Institute of Learning Disabilities to offer free Positive Behaviour Support training to interested providers.

Education, schools and settings

- **Free School Meals** - Schools are responsible for ensuring that vulnerable pupils and children of critical workers, who attend school and are eligible for Universal Infant Free School Meals and means-tested Free School Meals, continue to receive school lunches in conjunction with their local catering provider. The funding for these meals is in school budgets and all meals are required to meet the School Food Standards.

Schools also remain responsible for those pupils that are eligible for means-tested Free School Meals, and who are not attending school and are learning remotely at home. These may take the form of weekly food parcels, which may be procured from the school's usual catering provider or from other sources such as supermarkets. Food parcels must meet the School Food Standards and should contain raw ingredients to enable parents/carers to prepare nutritious meals for their children.

Schools may also provide supermarket vouchers where that is a more appropriate option or choose to provide a mixture of food parcels and vouchers depending on local need and circumstances.

Norfolk County Council have supported schools by making available the NCC account on EdenRed, to enable them to procure vouchers should they wish to. We have seen a significant uptake of vouchers to date. Norfolk County Council have also provided (funded from the Covid Winter Support Grant) vouchers for every FSM eligible child in Norfolk over the Christmas holiday period (27,000 supermarket vouchers) and will do the same for the February half term.

Where parents/carers are still facing financial hardship (e.g. with fuel bills etc), they can contact or be referred to the [Norfolk Assistance Scheme](#) where they may be given additional support, advice and guidance.

- **Devices for online learning** – Norfolk County Council continue to work with schools to understand demand for digital devices to enable online learning for children learning remotely, as well as where families experience issues of connectivity or technical problems. A new campaign has also been launched this week appealing to businesses and organisations to donate laptops and tablets to support remote education for children and young people. This is in addition to the allocations being made directly to schools by the Department for Education.
- **Parents reminded of primary school application deadline** - There is still time for parents in Norfolk to register their children for primary school in September 2021. The closing date for registering any child born between 1 September 2016 and 31 August 2017 is 15 January. Children must be offered a full-time place by the new school year.

Applications can be made online but paper applications are also accepted and can be downloaded from the Norfolk County Council website. Parents need to make an application for a reception class place, even if their child attends a nursery class at the same school. A child's attendance at a nursery attached to a school does not normally give them priority for a place at that school.

If parents apply online, decisions will be available during the day on 16 April on the school admissions website. If you complete a paper application form, a letter will be sent out on 16 April by second class post, outlining the decision.

The round for admission to Year 3 at junior schools in September 2021 also closes on 15 January. The transfer is for children in their final year at an infant school. Applications can be made online and a decision will be made by 16 April. The deadline for any appeals on these decisions is 14 May 2021. For more information or to apply for a school place, [visit our school admissions page](#).

Business and economy

- **Business Support grants** – On 5 January, the Chancellor announced a package of support for businesses affected by the lockdown. This includes:
 - An [extension to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) until 30 April 2021
 - More generous [support to the self-employed](#) and paying that support more quickly. The overall level of the grant has been increased to 80% of trading profits covering November to January
 - [Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan](#) and [Bounce Back Loan Scheme](#) application deadlines extended to the end of March 2021

If you need business support, speak to the New Anglia Growth Hub on 0300 333 6536 or email growthhub@newangliagrowthhub.co.uk