



Norfolk County Council

Latest Information, Advice, Useful Links and Service Updates

Updated 12 August 2021

This weekly briefing 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 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

Local Nature Recovery Strategies:

The Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs [has opened a consultation on Local Nature Recovery Strategies](#).

The Environment Bill will make it a legal requirement for the strategies to be created across England. Local Authorities will be tasked with producing and executing the strategies.

Rural Broadband:

As part of the Government's [recent £5 billion announcement](#) to deliver high speed broadband to rural and hard-to-reach areas, [four million pounds have been made available to innovators](#) to trial quicker and more cost-effective ways of delivery.

A current suggestion is to feed fibreoptic broadband cables through existing water pipes to help reach difficult areas.

Covid-19

Delta Variant:

Professor Sir Andrew Pollard has [warned against structuring the vaccine rollout to achieve herd immunity](#). He has stated that due to the infectivity of the delta variant of the virus, it will still continue to infect some fully vaccinated individuals.

In his comments to the All-Party Group on Coronavirus, he expressed concern that this means the virus will inevitably reach people who are unvaccinated.

Infections in Schools:

A study led jointly by Public Health England (PHE) and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) found that the [prevalence of the virus was lower](#) in schools in June 2021 than in Autumn term last year.

In a separate data release from Round 4 (March 2021) of antibodies in primary and secondary school pupils, antibody levels following natural infection were found to be lower in schools located in local authorities where community infection rates have been relatively low throughout the pandemic than areas where infection rates have been higher. These findings support the suggestion that infection rates in school reflect those of the community.

Overall, the data suggests that adult vaccination (including in staff), and other 'school-gate' measures such as the rapid asymptomatic testing programme, bubbles, and social distancing, have all contributed to reducing the risk of COVID-19 infection in schools.

Business and Economy

Business Recovery:

The New Anglian LEP is launching *Norfolk and Suffolk's Economic Recovery Renewal Plan* which will set out the actions and commitments required to grow a more economically and environmentally resilient future for the region. The LEP is calling for local businesses to get involved with the plans.

The LEP will be [holding business engagement workshops in September](#) where more information will be given and businesses will be able to offer their ideas. The engagement packs can be downloaded from the LEP's website linked above.

The LEP will also be [hosting a series of virtual events](#) designed to help businesses on the journey to becoming net-zero carbon. There are also free resources to help businesses start making changes.

Marine firm near Norwich trebles its staff:

A marine environmental survey business based in Hoveton, near Norwich which was awarded £240,000 in 2018 [has since trebled its staff](#) and plans to let some of its space to start-up businesses.

When the company began more than 15 years ago, it had just eight employees but now has state of the art facilities across four buildings. These include an eDNA laboratory, analysis, data processing and reporting facilities, and space for start-up companies to develop with synergistic support.

Education and Schools

Ministerial Visit:

Children and Families Minister Vicky Ford visited Norfolk earlier this week to hear about how the county is supporting some of its most vulnerable children.

Vicky Ford MP was hosted by Norfolk County Council on Monday, where she heard about the work the council is doing to support its children and young people.

The Minister visited St William's Primary School, in Norwich, to see children taking part in a range of holiday club activities, including Forest Schools, crafts and sports. Some of the places on the activities are funded as part of the Big Norfolk Holiday Fun Scheme, known nationally as the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme. Minister Ford also visited a holiday scheme at Little Plumstead Village Hall.

Transport and Environment

New 50 mph speed limits on A149:

A new 50mph speed limit is set to come into force on two stretches of the A149 in West Norfolk this autumn.

Following a consultation last year the speed limit will be cut from 60mph to 50mph on the main road between Babingley and the Dersingham roundabout, and between Snettisham and Heacham.

These two sections of the busy road have a poor injury accident record: The southern section between Babingley and the roundabout with the B1440 has had 8 personal injury accidents over the past 5 years, one was classed as serious. The northern section between Paper Hall Farm and Heacham has seen 10 personal injury accidents over the past 5 years with 2 serious and 1 fatality.

The new 50mph signage is expected to be installed later this autumn which is when the new limit will come into effect.