

Coronavirus Latest Information, Advice and Useful Links (Updated 22 July 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 **Norfolk Resilience Forum** is driving our local response through multi-agency strategic and tactical delivery groups.

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

Trusted sources of information

- The most recent **verified data on cases in the UK and Norfolk** is available from Public Health England [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.
- PHE is addressing **common questions** on its [Public Health Matters blog](#).
- **Keep up to date:** We have [a dedicated webpage for coronavirus updates](#) in Norfolk, and impacts on Norfolk County Council services. This is updated regularly so please do re-visit this page.

Latest national announcements

- The latest information on the **government response** can be found [here](#).
- **Plan to rebuild** - On 11 May the Government published "[Our plan to rebuild: the UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy](#)". On 17 July an additional chapter has been published to the recovery strategy that sets out the next stages of the government's plan. The additional chapter covers the following:
 - Suppressing the virus. The section includes information on the progress made at suppressing the virus, NHS capacity and attendance, identifying outbreaks, local lockdowns, data sharing with councils, the CONTAIN framework, and draft regulations that will be published next week which will provide Ministers with the power to control an outbreak if local action is insufficient.
 - Opening up society and the economy. The section looks at the impact of coronavirus on people's jobs, livelihoods and wellbeing, the distribution of the impacts within society and the actions taken to mitigate these impacts, and the steps the government has taken to start reviving UK society and economy, while continuing to suppress the virus.
 - Continuing the Plan to Rebuild. The section covers testing, testing capacity, the NHS Test and Trace service, vaccines and travel corridors. The government is implementing a targeted communications strategy to improve awareness of the NHS Test and Trace service among priority audiences. Backward contact tracing will also be introduced as well as an app to for digital contact tracing, if trials support it. The government will further increase the local health protection teams to provide councils with additional expertise in environmental health, epidemiology and health and safety. Increased data and insight will be provided through Public Health England and the Joint Biosecurity Centre to aid local decision makers to identify outbreaks early and rapidly put in place preventative steps.
 - Preparing for winter. The section outlines some of the challenges the coming winter will present. The Government is undertaking preparations to make sure that the UK is as ready as possible for the risk of a resurgence in the virus between November and March. As part of these preparations, the Government has provided an additional £3bn to the NHS. This includes additional funding to the NHS to allow them to continue to use additional hospital capacity from the independent sector, and to maintain the Nightingale hospitals, in their current state, until the end of March. The government will also fund a new enhanced discharge policy to ensure that patients can be quickly and safely discharged from NHS hospitals, freeing up beds for other patients. In addition, the government is auditing critical winter stockpiles of equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure necessary stock.
 - Lifting restrictions step by step. The section looks at social distancing guidance, easement measures and the planned timeline for returning to normality. The timeline is contingent on a number of factors.
- The [Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus](#) on Friday 17 July set out new measures for local and central government:

- From 18 July, councils will have new powers in their areas. They will be able to close specific premises, shut public outdoor spaces, and cancel events. These powers will enable councils to act more quickly in response to outbreaks, where speed is paramount.
- This week, the government will publish draft regulations which clearly set out how central government can intervene more effectively at a local level. Where justified by the evidence, ministers will be able to close whole sectors or types of premises in an area, introduce local “stay at home” orders, prevent people entering or leaving defined areas, reduce the maximum size of gatherings beyond national rules, or restrict transport systems serving local areas.
- **Allocations of £500 million additional funding for councils confirmed** - The Local Government Secretary has confirmed how the [£500 million of additional support to help with coronavirus-related spending pressures](#) will be allocated to individual councils. The extra £500 million has been allocated to councils based on population and levels of deprivation, and how the costs of delivery of services varies across the country. The [funding has been distributed between district and county councils](#) to reflect the pressures they have reported.
- **Next Steps Accommodation Programme** - The [Housing Secretary launched the Next Steps Accommodation Programme](#) on 18 July. Councils and their local partners can apply for funds from the government’s Next Steps Accommodation Programme to cover property costs and support new tenancies for around 15,000 vulnerable people who were provided with emergency accommodation during the pandemic. A total of £105 million is now available to ensure interim accommodation and support continues for those who need it and can be used to help people move into the private rented sector, extend or secure alternative interim accommodation or where possible help people to reconnect with friends or family. In addition, first wave funding, totalling £161 million, is also available to provide 3,300 additional supported homes this year for those currently housed in emergency accommodation. This is part of a total of £433 million to provide 6,000 long term, safe homes for those in need.
- **Community Match Challenge and Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership** - £90 million of the government’s £750 million VCSE sector support package is being made available to [launch the Community Match Challenge and to support the Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership](#). The Community Match Challenge, which has been allocated £85 million, invites philanthropists, foundations and grant making organisations to put forward new funding with an offer to match funds raised on a pound for pound basis. This funding is intended for those who are most vulnerable and have been hardest hit by the coronavirus outbreak. The government expects awards to be made principally to charitable grant makers providing aid to small and medium sized charities. Applications must be submitted by **Sunday 2 August**.

Public information – Key messages for residents

- The Norfolk County Council communications team has been working on communicating key messages in a range of ways to ensure residents, businesses, and organisations in Norfolk are aware of how best to prevent infection, get tested, and the importance of engaging with NHS Test and Trace.
This has included:
 - Placement of public information adverts in more than 100 forthcoming editions of parish and community newsletters across the county as well as more than 50 local weekly newspapers and publications.
 - Outdoor poster campaign at sites around the county
 - Messages on Facebook and Twitter about new rules on face coverings
 - Wide-ranging engagement work with businesses to create toolkits containing advice, useful posters and flyers, other assets to help prevent infection and give clear guidance on how to report outbreaks. The first packs are planned within the next week and will be free and available for all to use.
- **What is changing and what can I do that I couldn’t do before?** - The UK Government is continuing to ease restrictions.
In recent weeks, a wide range of sectors and activities have been able to restart, in line with COVID-19 Secure guidelines, and restrictions on social contact have been eased - enabling people to meet in groups of two households in any location (or, as previous, in a group of any six people outdoors).
The Prime Minister updated on progress on 17 July, setting out the next stages of our roadmap. This includes the following steps.

From 24 July:

- in order to help contain the spread of the virus as we open up more premises, face coverings will be required in shops and supermarkets - in addition to public transport where they are already required. People are also strongly encouraged to wear face coverings in other enclosed public spaces where there are people they do not normally meet

From 25 July, subject to rates of transmission closer to the time:

- sports facilities and venues, including such as indoor gyms, fitness and dance studios, indoor swimming pools and indoor water parks, can open

From 1 August, subject to rates of transmission closer to the time:

- employers will have more discretion, in consultation with their employees, on how to ensure people can work safely - working from home is one way to do this, but workplaces can also be made safe by following [COVID-19 Secure guidelines](#)
- the clinically extremely vulnerable will no longer need to follow advice on shielding, though should still take particular care to follow the social distancing guidelines when meeting people
- bowling alleys, skating rinks and casinos can open
- conference and exhibition centres will be able to reopen in order to enable pilots for business events to take place - they should not yet be open fully to host events more widely
- indoor performances to a live audience can begin to take place, in line with COVID-19 Secure guidelines and subject to the success of pilots that are taking place as soon as possible. Read the full story [here](#).
- further pilots of larger events can take place in venues, including in sports stadia and business conferences
- small wedding receptions - sit-down meals for no more than 30 people - can take place, subject to COVID-19 Secure guidance
- all remaining close contact services - such as facial treatment and make up application - can restart, in line with COVID-secure guidelines

From 1 September:

- schools, nurseries and colleges will open for all children and young people on a full-time basis
- universities are working to reopen as fully as possible

From 1 October, if prevalence remains around or below current levels:

- audiences will be brought back in stadiums, and conferences and other business events will be allowed to recommence in a COVID-19 Secure way. Read the full story [here](#).

The [Cabinet Office's FAQ document](#) on what you can and can't do has been updated in line with the latest advice.

The [guidance on social distancing](#) has been updated in line with the latest announcements.

The [guidance for the public on meeting people from outside their household](#) has been updated with the latest advice on gathering in larger groups and travelling to meet people.

- **Local council meetings** – The [National Association of Local Councils](#) (NALC) are **strongly advising** local councils to continue to meet remotely in line with government advice, which states that where meetings can take place digitally, without the need for face-to-face contact, they should do so. As Local councils have the powers to hold public meetings remotely by using video or telephone conferencing technology until May 2021 most councils will have no need to meet in person. Furthermore, local councils have the duty to allow the public to observe council meetings without placing restrictions on the number attending, which many council meeting venues will not be able to accommodate in a safe way at this time.

However, where a local council does have an identified need to hold a physical meeting, as they are unable to conduct council business any other way, they can now consider doing so. **These meetings must be managed within the [social distancing](#) and [safer workplaces](#) guidance produced by the government**, which includes the requirement to conduct a COVID-19 risk assessment to determine if it is feasible and safe to hold a physical meeting. It is important that this risk assessment is carried out, and any identified actions to reduce risk to

attendees are implemented before any face-to-face meetings resume. Councils must keep documentation of this risk assessment and the reasons why the council has taken the decision to return to face-to-face meetings.

NALC have produced a [checklist](#) to help ensure this decision is made in accordance with relevant regulations and requirements.

Community support

- **Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies** - Norfolk County Council has been awarded £1.015m from central government to support people in our county experiencing food hardship. Half the fund will be deployed through the Local Assistance Scheme, which can take referrals from NCC's front door, social care, district councils or a number of partners. NCC is in discussions with partners as to how the remaining funds can best support ongoing community efforts.

Social care and health

- **Coronavirus cases data** - The national data on the number of positive cases is now broken down further to local areas. This data will be published weekly. <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>

Education, schools and settings

- **Wider opening of schools, colleges, and setting** - As we move towards the end of the summer term the number of children attending schools and colleges remains relatively stable, with over 30,000 attending each week. Week commencing 6th July so a very slight overall increase in numbers with the attendance data at, 50% Year R, 44% Year 1, 57% Year 6, 44% Year 10, and 34% Year 12. In the run up to the summer holiday break we continue to provide additional advice and guidance, and support for schools to prepare for all children coming back into school in September. This includes updated H&S advice and guidance with an updated risk assessment template, and a directory of the support offer from the Education team to help schools and settings navigate what is available for them. This will be sent out at the start of week commencing 20th July.
- **Early Years** - We continue to see a gradual increase in the number of settings being open, with almost 600 being open in week commencing 13th July. The numbers of children attending has also risen to approx. 7000 within the same week. Over 300 providers have confirmed they will remain open over the summer holiday, and we are confident this will allow us to meet our childcare sufficient duty over the summer. Where we have received childcare request calls our Family Information Service have been able to find alternative provision on each occasion.
- **Vulnerable Children** - We continue to support schools with re-engaging vulnerable children back into school. Within week commencing 6th July the numbers of children with a child in need plan, and with a child protection plan, increased again to 50 and 58% respectively. We have also seen further increases in attendance of all children schools are concerned about, with over 70% of those identified by schools as having wider vulnerabilities attending.
- **Continuity of Learning** - 2500 hard copies of the 'Summer 2020 Family Pack' have now been distributed to the identified 118 schools with a high number of disadvantaged children. This is an educational resource to supplement the work that schools are doing to prepare and support children back into school in Sept. The pack includes outdoor pursuits and activities for rainy days, with all containing ideas to get children making, talking and discovering new things. Activity ideas cover a range of subjects themes and age ranges.
- **Digital Devices for disadvantaged children** - The Government scheme is in place to provide digital devices and internet access to a specific cohort of disadvantaged children and young people. As a local authority we are responsible for the ordering and distribution of devices for care leavers, children with a social worker and the disadvantaged Year 10's in the one maintained secondary school we are the accountable body for. As of 17th July, we have distributed approx. 1000 devices to children and young people with a social worker via their learning institution, with further being distributed next week. We continue to follow up with the small amount of schools and settings who have yet to confirm the details of their eligible children/young persons who require a device. Further distribution will occur over the summer, largely via social work teams, to additional cohorts of eligible children and young people who have been identified as requiring a device. Examples include those children who have recently been allocated a social worker and now meet the Government eligibility criteria.
- **Test and Trace** - Education settings are one of the 5 cells in the NCC Test and Trace Pilot Programme within Norfolk. We have still had no outbreaks within education settings, although we are receiving lots of calls to the Norfolk Education Incident Room for advice and guidance. We have now joined the national schools best

practice group for schools. This group is attended by other LA's, the DfE, and Ofsted, and allows for sharing of best practices and a consistent approach across authorities.

Business and economy

- **Business and venue re-opening** - The [guidance on the closure of certain businesses and venues](#) has been updated to reflect the further easing of restrictions to allow more businesses and venues to reopen from 25 July and 1 August (as outlined in the public information section).
- **Planning update on cultural venues and holiday parks** - The government has published a [written ministerial statement](#) to support the culture and tourism sectors by both preventing the loss of theatres, concert halls and live music performance venues, and encouraging local planning authorities to exercise their discretion in relation to planning conditions for caravan and holiday parks. Find out more [here](#).
- **Government scheme to help universities and colleges in financial difficulties** - Universities in England facing severe financial difficulties as a result of the coronavirus will now be able to apply for further Government support. The scheme will review providers' circumstances and assess the case for restructuring support, including last resort financial support, through repayable loans. Find out more [here](#).
- **Eat Out to Help Out Scheme webinars** - HMRC are running free webinars over the next two weeks on the Eat Out to Help Out Scheme. The webinar provides an overview of the scheme, including how the scheme works, eligible establishments, registering and making a claim and what happens after a claim has been made. Information on registering is available [here](#).

General updates

- **Norfolk Libraries** - Libraries in Norfolk have been open for 2 weeks, with North Walsham Library joining the [original 12 libraries](#) on the 13th July and the first floor of the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library opening on 20th July. Round about 16,000 books have been borrowed each week from these locations and more than 150 customers have taken advantage of the new select and collect offer.

The overwhelming message we are getting from all the libraries that have reopened is how pleased customers are to have the library service and the local team back. We are planning the next phase of re-opening for the week beginning Monday 3rd August. This will be for 7 additional libraries – Hellesdon, Sheringham, Caister, Watton, Poringland, Gaywood and Earlham. Public announcements will be made soon. Once these libraries are opened more venues, including the resumption of mobile library services, will be announced. The planning for the opening of libraries involves consideration of safe systems of work, the introduction of one-way systems and other measures to ensure social distancing, risk assessments and staff training. It's a time intensive process, but important to ensure staff and customer safety. The most up to date information about libraries and coronavirus can be found [here](#).

- **Councils respond to local feedback on temporary city centre highway changes** - Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council are to make changes to modify temporary emergency measures on two city centre streets, brought in to enable social distancing. The modifications to measures on St Benedicts Street and Exchange Street are being made in response to feedback from local residents and businesses, and with the aim of balancing the needs of all who use the area. The changes are set to be made from early next week and comprise:
 - Lifting of loading time restrictions in St Benedict's Street
 - Installing additional signage in both areas, particularly to give people more advanced warning of the measures in order to increase understanding of and compliance with the traffic restrictions
 - Removal of some of the temporary barriers on St Benedict's Street and Exchange Street to provide additional areas for loading and unloading.

In late June a public consultation was held on proposals for emergency COVID-19 Active Travel Fund measures in St Benedicts Street and Exchange Street. [An overwhelming majority of responses from the wider public supported the schemes](#) and they were swiftly implemented. The City Council will continue to liaise with businesses who are interested in having outdoor tables and chairs licensed