

Update from County Councillor Tom FitzPatrick

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.

Covid-19 Advice

Restrictions: The Prime Minister [confirmed on 12 July that all legal restrictions on Covid-19 would end](#), as England moves into step 4 of the roadmap. The latest data shows that the Government's 4 tests for easing Covid-19 restrictions have been met. The four tests are as follows:

- The vaccine deployment programme continues successfully
- Evidence shows vaccines are sufficiently effective in reducing hospitalisations and deaths in those vaccinated.
- Infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisations which would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS.
- Our assessment of the risks is not fundamentally changed by new Variants of Concern.

NCC's Advice:

The council has launched its new campaign IChoose, which encourages people to follow measures designed to keep us safe.

The council's advice is:

- Continue familiar prevention behaviours such as hand washing and wearing a face covering in public indoor spaces
- Continue to meet outdoors where possible and ensure indoor places are well ventilated
- Carry out symptom-free testing two times per week, including for secondary school aged children. Free test kits are available from libraries and pharmacies

Latest National Announcements

Post-16 Education

Government reforms are [expected to make it easier for young people and adults](#) to identify the right courses for them following their GCSEs.

Young people and adults will have clearer qualification and training routes, as part of a shake-up of the post-16 system to remove low-quality qualifications which lack job prospects.

The new system will create two clearly defined paths for people who have completed GCSEs or similar courses: academic, meaning qualifications that primarily lead to further study, and technical, those qualifications that primarily lead to skilled employment. This will mean everyone can see more easily how their studies support their future training or job aspirations.

Holiday Activities for Children

Big Norfolk Holiday Fun:

Bookings are now [open for Big Norfolk Holiday Fun](#) which provides hundreds of free activities for children and young people.

After a successful Easter programme the Big Norfolk Holiday Fun is back for summer, for children eligible for means-tested free school meals. There will be a wide range of free activities for 5-16 year olds taking place during the holidays, with events across the county available to book online..

Education and Schools

Schools:

Two schools were closed for two and three days each last week, due to Covid-19 related staffing issues

Attendance of pupils in Norfolk remains in-line with the national averages:

- Overall last week, attendance was 91% in primary schools, compared to 93% the week before, and compared to 85% nationally
- Attendance in secondary schools was 84%, compared to 86% the week before and 74% nationally. These figures have been adjusted for Y11-13 not expected to attend
- Attendance in state-funded special schools was 85%, compared to 86% the week before and 76% nationally. These figures have been adjusted for Y11-13 not expected to attend

Post 16's:

81% of young people at risk of NEET have been contacted. All Year 12 young people who have not had an offer of education are in the process of being contacted. We are providing IAG to the 15 young people at risk of NEET due to closure of Develop.

September Guarantee offers have increased to 84.5% year 11 and 60% Year 12 in the past week

The SEN Employment Pathway workshop facilitated by the DfE was held on 8th July with attendance from colleagues in special schools, colleges, health, DWP, Children and Adult Services and Economic & Skills teams. This event will be followed by a second workshop in September and the development of an action plan to improve progressions into employment for young people with SEND

Early Years:

The number of settings open this week is 677 with the number of children attending also increasing from 15,047 to 15,288. Of those 4,788 are children of critical workers, and 807 are vulnerable.

Broadband and Digital

I continue to be the County lead councillor regarding improved Broadband and mobile phones. We are now at 95% coverage for Superfast Broadband and work with the mobile operators to push for better coverage and suggest areas which would benefit from alternative solutions. Full details and how to check what is available in any area is on the county website at

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/campaigns/digital-connectivity>

Our Digital Inclusion Strategy is aimed at Giving Norfolk residents the ability to take full advantage of the opportunities and benefits of accessing online services and harnessing internet technology

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