

## NCC UPDATE

11-03-2024

### **Apprenticeships**

The Apprenticeships Norfolk scheme has recently hit the £1m milestone of levy transfers a year ahead of schedule. Through the scheme, 90 businesses in the county have started 180 apprenticeships, from Level 2 through to Level 7, using unspent funds in Norfolk that would otherwise be returned to HM Treasury.

The apprenticeship levy is payable by organisations whose annual wage bill is more than £3m and equates to 0.5% of the bill. But if the business has undertaken all the apprenticeships that it has capacity to deliver, it can donate up to 25% of its annual apprenticeship levy to another organisation. Levy transfers are used for new apprentice starts, new recruits and existing employees.

Donating levy funding encourages corporate social responsibility and reduces wastage of any unspent apprenticeship levy - keeping funding in Norfolk and helping people to develop their careers or try something new.

Members can signpost any businesses wanting to find out more about the scheme to the [Apprenticeships Norfolk website](#). Businesses can enquire about receiving a levy transfer, or donating their unspent levy, by completing an expression of interest form or calling 0344 800 8024.

### **Director of Public Health Annual Report - Smoking and Vaping**

The Director of Public Health for Norfolk has released his independent annual report.

The report details findings on the County's smoking and vaping habits along with the steps Norfolk County Council and partners are taking to achieve a smoke free generation by 2030.

Reducing rates of smoking, effective tobacco control and controlling long term vaping use and take up are some of the council's key public health priorities and as a result, were selected as the focus for this year's report.

Currently, around 13% of adults (99,300 people) in Norfolk smoke. Great Yarmouth has the highest adult smoking rate (around 18%, approximately 14,200 smokers) and Broadland has the lowest (around 8%, approximately 8,900 smokers). The report also shows that an estimated 44,900 children in Norfolk live in households with adults who smoke.

Smoking remains one of the biggest contributors to preventable ill health and health inequalities. It kills an estimated 1,240 people in Norfolk every year and accounts for nearly 6,000 years of life lost annually.

The costs associated with smoking in Norfolk are estimated at £872 million annually, including health and social care costs, lost productivity, and house fires.

Case studies from Norfolk highlight ways the council is working together with partners and through our [Smokefree Norfolk](#) and [Ready to Change services](#) to help people quit.

The full report is available [here](#).

## **Food Savvy supporting Food Waste Action Week 18-24 March 2024**

Norfolk County Council's Food Savvy team will be supporting national Food Waste Action Week, to raise awareness of food waste issues and give practical tips to help householders cut down on the amount they throw away.

Food Savvy, is a joint project between Norfolk County Council and the Suffolk Waste Partnership to help householders across Norfolk and Suffolk to make the most of their food, reduce food waste and save money. Norfolk are taking a joint approach with Suffolk to create a bigger impact to tackle food waste and to ensure that residents in both counties are receiving valuable support on this important issue.

More information can be found on their food savvy website [here](#).

Members are welcome to attend the Mardle restaurant at County Hall on Thursday 21 March between 11.30am – 1.30pm where the Food Savvy team will be available with lots of information, top tips and recipe cards to support the reduction of food waste, plus there will be some tasty recipes to try too.

## **Norfolk Museums - free entry during National Lottery open week**

To say thank you for the £30 million raised for Good Causes every week by players, National Lottery funded venues are offering free entry, discounts and special offers throughout [National Lottery Open Week](#). This offer includes Norfolk Museums.

Just bring along a scratch card or lottery ticket for free admission to Norfolk Museums for up to six people on the dates below:

- [Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery](#) - Sat 9 to Sun 17 March
- [Strangers' Hall](#) - Weds 13 and Sun 17 March
- [Lynn Museum](#) - Sat 9 and Sat 16 March
- [Ancient House](#) - Tours on 12 March (booking essential) plus admission Fri 15 and Sat 16 March
- [Museum of Norwich](#), [Time and Tide](#) and [Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse](#) - Sat 16 and Sun 17 March

## **Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board - progress update**

Health leaders have praised the hard work and commitment of staff as NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board progresses out of national support.

They also said that the progress reflects the strong partnerships being developed within the NHS and with many other partners including colleagues in local government; voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations; and residential and domiciliary social care.

NHS England recently confirmed that the NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board is no longer in NHS oversight framework segment 4 and has been removed from the Recovery Support Programme (RSP), formerly known as “special measures. (The RSP provides a collaborative, system-focused approach for supporting providers and systems with the toughest challenges).

Key improvements across the NHS in Norfolk and Waveney include:

- Key quality improvements and progress at two of the system’s providers. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital Kings Lynn NHS Trust exited special measures in April 2022 and last February the Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust moved from a CQC rating of Inadequate to Requires Improvement.
- Sustained improvement in performance in urgent and emergency care services, to include the establishment of virtual wards at all three acute trusts.
- Improvements in discharge planning and patient flow, helping to reduce the length of time people stay in hospital, decreasing their need to be readmitted and improving their overall experience.
- Significant and sustained improvement in ambulance response times and handovers, enabling ambulances to quickly get back on the road so they can get to the next person who needs help.
- A system wide reduction in the longest waits for people who require a mental health bed, with further ongoing improvements planned.
- Greater efficiencies and progress against financial plans through closer collaborative working with partners.

Further information available [here](#).

## **Government updates**

### **Household Support Fund extension**

A six-month extension to the Household Support Fund, which helps the most vulnerable people struggling with the cost of living, was announced in the budget. Council leaders from across the political spectrum had previously written to the Chancellor, in a letter coordinated by the LGA, calling for a continuation of the fund.

### **The Community Ownership Fund: Round 4 - Expressions of Interest invited**

The Community Ownership Fund will shortly be publishing an updated prospectus and guidance for Round 4, the final round of the fund. This fund helps community groups buy or renovate assets that would otherwise be lost to the community.

The government has provided a new Expression of Interest form. They ask that all prospective applicants, including those that have previously submitted a successful EOI form, submit a new EOI on the updated system if they have an interest in applying. Only applicants who submitted an EOI in the new system will be informed when a bidding window is about to open and will receive the link needed to apply to the fund.

The new EOI has been simplified to give applicants a result within minutes, so they will be able to see whether their project could be suitable for COF much quicker than before.

Further information and a link to the Expression of Interest form available [here](#).

### **Extension of Jubilee Village Hall funding**

The government is providing additional funds for the Platinum Jubilee Village Halls Fund. The original £3m capital fund to improve and modernise village hall facilities ahead of the Platinum Jubilee was announced in 2022. An additional £5m has now been allocated.

### **Funding for Towns Scheme – Thetford and Kings Lynn added**

The Chancellor revealed in the budget that 14 more towns across England would be added to the [Long-term Plan for Towns Scheme](#). These include Thetford and Kings Lynn. Great Yarmouth was included in the list in October 2023.

They will each be required to create a 10-year delivery plan, setting out their vision for investment and regeneration, which will be developed in consultation with local people, and could benefit from up to £20m in funding. Town boards made up of community leaders, employers, local councillors and MPs, will be responsible for overseeing and delivering this.

### **Public Services Productivity**

HM Treasury have published a document outlining their Public Services Productivity Plan: [Seizing the Opportunity: Delivering Efficiency for the Public - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

This says that Improving public sector productivity will help the government to ensure the long-term sustainability of public finances and deliver the best services for the public.

The plan has 5 main areas of focus: procurement; reducing fraud, error and tax evasion; major projects; asset management; digital transformation.

The chancellor also confirmed an additional total of £165m for local authorities towards the creation of 200 more children's social care placements to "combat profiteering" and strengthen "preventative action to reduce demand on public services"; that the Treasury will match funding of up to £45m to build children's homes placements; and that £105m would go towards creating 15 new special free schools, with locations to be confirmed by May.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

james