

Norfolk County Council updates 12/01/24

New Year – Ready to Change

More than half of Norfolk's residents are planning to make a New Year's resolution this year, with losing weight and healthier eating topping the list, according to a survey carried out by Public Health at Norfolk County Council.

Members are encouraged to promote the [Ready to Change](#) website to anyone who's looking to make a change.

Ready to Change is a great free online tool with lots of support. Those looking to reach a healthy weight, drink less or give up smoking can go online and there are quizzes to help understand what might be needed to improve, as well as loads of tips and information about free support in Norfolk.

Stop at 14 – new campaign to reduce alcohol consumption

Members are asked to support and promote a new campaign, which will be launched on 12 February 2024, to encourage men aged 40-75 to reduce their alcohol consumption,

Although there is an overall decrease in the average amount Norfolk residents are drinking in general, figures have revealed that middle aged males in Norfolk, particularly those aged 40-75, are most likely to be drinking more than the recommended 14 of units of alcohol per week.

The campaign will encourage people to visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/readytochange for a better understanding of what 14 units looks like, step by step guidance to help reduce drinking and develop healthy habits for a healthier lifestyle, and to access to six free support sessions via Drinkcoach.

Members can support the campaign by:

- Visiting www.readytochange.co.uk and find out more about the drinking support that's available
- Sharing any social media posts on your own Facebook or Twitter platforms
- Signposting any residents in your community who might be interested

To order Drink Less campaign posters please email marketing@norfolk.gov.uk

Norfolk County Council's emergency care team - busiest Christmas on record

Social workers in Norfolk had a busier Christmas and New Year than ever, with more than 800 calls coming in over the festive period.

The council's Emergency Duty Team, which helps respond to out of hours social care emergencies, was available 24/7 over the holiday period, supporting some of the county's most vulnerable people. Requests ranged from mental health assessments, safeguarding children's referrals, and community care calls, such as elderly residents needing an increase in care or night visits.

This is a good example of the ongoing services that the team provides to support the county's most vulnerable people - and of the ongoing pressures, including financial pressures, upon social care provision.

More information about the work of the Emergency Duty team available [here](#).

Free bus travel for disabled bus pass holders in Norfolk

From 1 February 2024 all Norfolk residents who hold a disabled concessionary travel pass will be eligible for free bus travel 24 hours a day, seven days a week when travelling within the county.

The decision, taken by Norfolk County Council, means that more than 14,500 people across the county who hold a concessionary bus pass due to disability - and their eligible companions, will now be able to travel on any bus at any time free of charge across Norfolk.

This enhancement will help to provide better access to work, education and leisure and supports more use of public transport which also helps towards net zero targets.

The cost of providing this will be funded by the Council's ring-fenced public transport budget provided by the Department for Transport.

Adult Learning

Norfolk County Council's Adult Learning has been rated as 'Good' following their latest Ofsted inspection.

The inspection report praised the ambition of the service, which provides community-based and online learning for around 6,000 adults a year. The service achieved a 'Good' rating across all six areas that were inspected, alongside the overall 'Good' rating.

Norfolk County Council Adult Learning offers a wide range of courses for adults of all levels and interests that can help with career changes, skills improvement or specific interests.

Residents can find out more about Adult Learning and browse the course catalogue [here](#).

Government updates

Flu and Covid-19 vaccinations

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is reminding all those eligible that it's not too late to book their flu and COVID-19 vaccinations. Cases are expected to continue to rise over the next few weeks following increased travel and socialising that occurred over the festive period.

Eligible groups can book their vaccine by contacting their local GP surgery or pharmacy to make an appointment. Vaccinations against COVID-19 are being offered until 31 January, while flu vaccinations are available until 31 March.

New career path and qualifications aim to boost domestic care workforce

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has launched a national career structure for the adult social care workforce, called the Care Workforce Pathway, and a new adult social care qualification backed by £50m of funding.

The Government said its [newly announced plans](#) will help to recruit and retain people in the domestic care workforce. Under the new measures, local authorities and adult social care providers will be able to draw on £20m of funding to train and supervise new social work and nurse apprentices. The plans being rolled out nationally include:

- The launch of the Care Workforce Pathway
- Over £50 million of funding for a new qualification: This will support up to 37,000 individuals in direct adult social care roles to enrol on the new Level 2 Adult Social Care Certificate qualification between June 2024 and March 2025.
- An investment of over £20 million for apprenticeships: Local authorities and adult social care providers will be able to use the money towards training and supervising hundreds of new social work and nurse apprentices.
- Subsidised training places: An uplift to the Workforce Development Fund will expand access to learning and development, creating opportunities for the workforce to become experts in their field or progress into new roles.
- A new digital leadership qualification: This will help equip social care leaders and managers with the confidence and capability to lead the implementation and use of technology in the delivery of care.

According to data on the adult social care workforce in England published in October last year by [Skills for Care](#), there are 152,000 vacant posts in the sector.

Care England, the largest representative body of independent providers of adult social care in England, welcomed the announcement, but warned it 'may only scratch the surface of what is required to resolve the recruitment and retention challenges.'

Support for domestic abuse victims

From 31 January 2024, survivors of domestic abuse who do not have the financial means to leave their abusers will be able to apply for a one-off payment of up to £500 via one of over 470 support services, for essential items such as groceries, nappies or support with new accommodation to help them and their children flee to safety.

Survivors will also be able to apply for a further one-off payment of up to £2,500 to help secure a sustainable independent future, such as putting down a deposit for rental accommodation. This could play an important role in preventing homelessness and alleviate some of the financial pressures faced by survivors, providing stability and independence.

The government fund, which will initially last until March 2025, builds on a successful pilot delivered by Women's Aid and the Home Office, which helped over 600 women find safety. The evaluation of the pilot found that 83.4% of those applying said that the payments were used to help flee an abuser. With most survivors fleeing with little or no belongings, 77.6% said the money helped them to purchase essential goods such as fresh food for their children. Mental health and peace of mind was also improved, with the payments enabling them to purchase security measures such as CCTV and doorbell cameras.

The emergency fund pilot evaluation report can be accessed [here](#).

Further information on how to apply for the new funding will be made available soon.

Current information, guidance, and sources of advice and support relating to domestic abuse are available on the Norfolk County Council website [here](#).

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

Kind regards

james