

Norfolk County Council Updates

Fire & Rescue Service continuing to respond to high summer demand

Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service is continuing to raise awareness around the threat of wildfires this summer, with more hot and dry weather in Norfolk.

Demand has been especially high on Norfolk's firefighters this summer, with 1,270 emergencies attended in July. Resources continue to be stretched, and activity levels are commensurate with 2022.

The Service has shared posters with parish councils across the county with advice on how to prevent outdoor fires (let me know if you would like me to resend) and worked with Norfolk Trails and the Norfolk Resilience Forum to produce signage on the county's trail posts on what to do in the event of fire. I have requested these or you can ask directly via norfolkresilienceforum@norfolk.gov.uk

The Fire Service would be very grateful if we would all help get out their message and urge Norfolk residents as far as possible to safely dispose of rubbish and cigarettes, and not to use disposable barbecues.

Teaching children and young people water safety this summer

Far too many children and young people lose their lives in the water. The Norfolk Water Safety Forum is offering life saving water safety advice for the summer holidays to keep our children and young people safe.

Details are available here: [Water Safety Advice](#)

Feeling connected

I know all of you are really active in your communities, but you might like to signpost residents to Norfolk County Council Public Health's 'Feel connected' campaign which encourages us all to connect with our community.

With details of events, groups, courses, transport options and digital skills support, find out more at [Feel connected - Norfolk County Council](#) or pop along to your local library where I'm sure they can help you.

Changes to fridge and freezer collections due to national capacity issues

Just a quick reminder: very unfortunately a national shortage of specialist recycling and treatment capacity is affecting fridge and freezer collections across the UK.

From Thursday 6 August, Norfolk County Council will only accept unwanted fridges, freezers and other cooling appliances at the county's largest recycling centres.

Full details of the affected sites and what is accepted are available on the council's website: [Changes to fridge and freezer collections at Norfolk's recycling centres](#).

Where possible, residents are asked to:

- Use retailer take-back or recycling services when buying a replacement appliance.
- Keep using appliances that remain safe and in working order.
- Consider reuse, repair or donation options for working appliances.
- Delay disposal, where safe and practical, until national treatment capacity improves.

Residents should only take fridges, freezers and other cooling appliances for disposal if it is absolutely necessary. If safe to do so, they are encouraged to hold on to unwanted appliances temporarily to help ease pressure on the national system.

Stroke Information Day Norfolk Showground Sept 22nd

The Stroke Association is hosting Stroke Information Live on 22 September 2026 at the Norfolk Showground. This free event has been designed specifically for stroke survivors, carers, family members and friends, offering practical information, inspiring speakers, local support organisations and the chance to connect with others who understand life after stroke. See attached poster for details.

Consultation on proposed new crossing in Fakenham

Residents are invited to comment on a proposed new toucan crossing on Greenway Lane, Fakenham, near the busy junction with Holt Road.

The scheme is expected to cost around £300,000 and will be funded through the government's Active Travel Fund.

A [plan showing the proposals is available to download here](#). Hard copies can also be viewed at Fakenham Town Council office during normal opening hours.

Feedback can be emailed to TOSchemefeedback@norfolk.gov.uk or sent to Highways Design Team, Floor 1, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH. Responses should reference Toucan Crossing – Greenway Lane.

All responses must be received by Tuesday 1 September 2026.

National Updates

Mental health hubs to expand across England

The Government has announced [plans to create nearly 200 community mental health centres](#) and specialist mental health A&Es across England by 2029, aiming to improve access to urgent support closer to home. The first new sites are due to open this autumn, with the programme backed by £343 million.

The rollout includes 100 new community mental health centres, offering walk-in support without a referral and without a months-long wait, and 59 dedicated mental health emergency departments giving people in crisis specialist care in a place

designed for them. They will bring together existing teams of nurses, therapists and support workers.

The initiative forms part of the forthcoming Mental Health Strategy, which will look beyond the NHS to the role of schools, employers, local government and the voluntary sector in supporting good mental health.

Rewiring the state – Cabinet Office statement

The [Cabinet Office has published a statement](#) setting out the Government's intention to shift more power, funding and accountability from Whitehall to local leaders.

This will mean giving elected mayors, strategic authorities and local authorities more influence over decisions affecting their areas, with the stated aim of supporting economic growth, improving public services and giving communities more say over local priorities.

The statement refers to further devolution of powers, fiscal devolution and closer alignment of public services within strategic authority areas. It also restates the Government's expectation that all areas should move towards a strategic authority model by 2028. Future devolution arrangements may include greater local control over areas such as funding, transport, skills, housing and economic development.

The Government says that this autumn, alongside the Budget and a fiscal devolution roadmap that will set out their approach to revenue assignment and rates retention, they will publish a White Paper detailing plans for the full set of reforms and a clear timetable for their implementation. This is expected to include plans for legislation, the alignment of public service geographies, and the devolution of new powers and functions.

Further details and the implications for Norfolk will be assessed once more is known.

Changes to central government's public procurement spending rules

The Government has announced [changes to public procurement rules](#) so that businesses bidding for central government contracts are assessed more strongly on how they support jobs and skills, and more weighting will be given to benefits for local communities.

Suppliers will be expected to show how they will support British jobs, skills and opportunities, including for young people not in education, employment or training, care leavers and people with long-term health conditions.

For central government contracts worth £5 million or more, the weighting given to benefits for the local community will increase from 10% to 20%.

The changes will apply to central government procurement from 1 January 2027, with detailed technical guidance expected this autumn.

The threshold for applying the rules will rise to contracts above £1 million, so they are less likely to apply to smaller contracts typically sought by smaller firms and local social enterprises.