

25/07/2025

Norfolk County Council updates

Household hazardous waste days

Norfolk County Council has announced a new series of household hazardous waste days (HHWDs) this autumn, offering residents the opportunity to safely dispose of unwanted hazardous materials at seven recycling centres across the county.

The autumn HHWDs will take place on the following dates:

- Norwich South – Friday 3 & Saturday 4 October
- King's Lynn – Friday 10 & Saturday 11 October
- Caister – Friday 24 & Saturday 25 October
- Dereham – Friday 31 October & Saturday 1 November
- Thetford – Friday 7 & Saturday 8 November
- Hempton – Friday 21 & Saturday 22 November
- Norwich North – Friday 28 & Saturday 29 November

Further information about hazardous waste disposal is available [here](#).

Airport link road

Norfolk County Council will soon begin construction on a new, direct and convenient connection between Norwich Airport and the nearby industrial estate. The scheme, due to start on 28 July, will deliver a new link by upgrading and widening Liberator Road to enable two-way pedestrian, cycle and bus travel.

The Airport Industrial Estate currently has no direct public transport connection to Norwich Airport. The new road will help to improve bus services serving this area coming from the east and southeast of the city.

Those walking and cycling will also benefit from a new and direct route connecting the airport site and a key missing link to the Yellow Pedalway route which connects the city centre to Horsford and Horsham St Faiths.

The scheme is expected to cost £925,000 to deliver and take around eight months to complete with all works being funded from the £32m Transforming Cities Fund awarded to Norwich by The Department for Transport.

Due to the scheme's location there will be minimal impact for general traffic.

Summer holidays - activities for children and young people

Norfolk County Council provides a range of ideas for things to do on their Activities for Children and Young people webpages [here](#).

Highlights this summer include:

- Activities at [Norfolk Museums](#), including the re-opening of Norwich Castle Keep from 7 August.
- Activities at [Norfolk Libraries](#), including the [Summer Reading Challenge](#) a fun, free way for children aged 4-11 to stay motivated to read during the summer holidays.

- [Big Norfolk Holiday Fun](#) activities for children aged 5-16. Those eligible for means-tested free school meals can claim free spaces (including a healthy lunch), while paid spots are available for those not eligible.
- Norfolk County Council teaming up with [Good Journey](#) to offer Norfolk visitors and residents the chance to get discounts on dozens of attractions if they choose to access these sites sustainably- by train, bus, bike and foot. Incentives range from 50% off entry to free coffee.
- Activities at [Whitlingham Adventure](#) for children aged 8-16, including sailing, paddle sports weeks and adventure days/weeks.
- [Norfolk Trails](#) - exploring Norfolk's 2,400 miles of paths, trails, cycle routes and bridleways.
- [SEND events](#) - a searchable calendar of events and activities suitable for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

National Updates

Funding and Sustainability of Local Government Finance

The cross-party Housing, Communities and Local Government (HCLG) Committee has published a [Funding and Sustainability of Local Government Finance report](#). It covers a range of topics, examining council services under strain and the big pressures on local finances - including adult social care, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and homelessness and temporary accommodation.

The summary says that local authorities provide vital public services that local taxpayers rely on every day and the costs of these are skyrocketing; this year they will cost local authorities £139 billion. Local authorities are being asked to deliver more than ever before, but they have not been given adequate funding to allow them to do so, even with their ability to increase council tax.

The report finds that the broken link between tax and service quality is leading to a growing dissatisfaction among residents and risks undermining trust in local democracy in England. The report also points to widespread cuts to preventative services over many years having exacerbated the financial crisis in local government.

The report recommends the Government overhauls council tax and looks at greater fiscal devolution to allowing councils to set their own forms of local taxes (such as tourist levies) to help make the local government system fair and effective. As an interim step to reforming council tax, the report calls on the Government to give local authorities more control over the council tax in their areas, including the power for individual councils to revalue properties in their area, define property bands, set the rates for those bands, and apply discounts.

Ofwat to be abolished

The Government has [announced](#) that Ofwat is to be abolished and replaced by a single water regulator responsible for the entire water system.

There are currently four separate regulators responsible for the water industry which has led to contradictory and competing priorities. Ofwat's functions will be merged with water functions from the Environment Agency, Natural England, and the Drinking Water Inspectorate. The creation of one powerful regulator will, the Government hopes, be responsible for the entire water sector restoring public faith and investor confidence.

The Government's proposals will be consulted on this autumn and form the basis of a new Water Reform Bill.

Clean Flexibility Roadmap

The Government have set out a [Clean Flexibility Roadmap](#) for a clean, flexible, and consumer-focused electricity system. It is a key component of the government's Clean Energy Superpower Mission, aiming for clean power by 2030 and net zero by 2050.

Developed by the Government, Ofgem and NESO, alongside energy industry stakeholders and consumer groups, the roadmap commits named organisations to specific, timebound actions to unlock flexible electricity capacity. The plans include more support for consumers to bring down their bills, with new ways to take advantage of off-peak, lower electricity prices, flexible tariffs and smart technologies to allow consumers to shift energy usage to times when it is cheaper

Alongside the roadmap, the Government has published [a consultation on consumer engagement in consumer-led flexibility](#), which explores how more consumers who want to use energy flexibly can be supported to do so, to help optimise and sustain uptake over the short, medium and long term

Government consultation on self-driving vehicles

The public and industry are being encouraged to help shape the future of self-driving vehicles, as they are invited to offer their views to make them safe and accessible before the first services become available next year.

Future of Roads Minister Lilian Greenwood has launched a [consultation on the automated passenger services \(APS\) permitting scheme](#) and the draft statutory instrument, a key legal element of how taxi-, private-hire- and bus-like services of self-driving vehicles will be regulated once they hit roads in Great Britain. The consultation follows the recent government decision to fast-track pilots of self-driving passenger vehicles to Spring 2026.

The consultation closes on 28 September 2025.

Domestic Abuse Funding to target perpetrators

The Home Secretary has [announced](#) a £53m investment over the next four years to directly target domestic abuse perpetrators. He says that those who pose the highest risk will be 'forced' to change their behaviour and stop offending as more police and agencies are enabled to use tactics shown to reduce abuse. The funding will enable the expansion of the Drive Project that has been piloted since 2016. Up to 15 new areas will go live by March 2026, with full roll-out across England to follow.

The Drive project addresses the root causes of abuse through intensive one-to-one case management for up to 12 months. The pilot results have seen the numbers of perpetrators using physical abuse cut by 82%, sexual abuse by 88%, stalking behaviours by 75%, and jealous and controlling behaviours by 73%.

Call for evidence on unpaid internships

The Government has [launched](#) its call for evidence on unpaid internships with a view to better protecting younger workers from being exploited.

Internships offer young people invaluable experience as they build their careers. When these are unpaid or paid below the National Minimum Wage, barriers to equal opportunity are created based on where people live, how old they are, or their social background.

Unpaid internships are already largely banned under current law, when they are not part of an educational or training course. The Government says it is committed to strengthening these protections by gathering more evidence on how unpaid internships affect young people, and how businesses use them to assess candidates.

The call for evidence closes on 9 October 2025.

Pension review

The Work and Pensions Secretary, Liz Kendall, has [announced](#) a review of the state pension age and warned that there is a growing threat of pensioner poverty if the system is not reformed. She says that the triple lock on pensions is "non-negotiable" and will not be part of the review.

Around 4 in 10 (15m) people are understood to be saving insufficient amounts for retirement at present, meaning that retirees in 2050 are on course for £800 or 8% less private pension than those retiring today. The Government reports that new analysis also reveals a 48% gender pensions gap in private pension wealth between women and men.

The Department for Work and Pensions is reviving the Pensions Commission to look at how to tackle the issue. The Commission will explore the complex barriers stopping people from saving enough for retirement. It will examine the pension system as a whole and look at what is required to build a future-proof pensions system that is strong, fair and sustainable.

The Commission's final report is due in 2027.