

For immediate release
January 7, 2025

Great Yarmouth Borough Council launches new booking system for appointments along with office moves

In a move designed to get people the help they need as easily as possible, Great Yarmouth Borough Council is introducing a new advance booking system for face-to-face appointments for a range of key services.

From Monday, 13 January, residents who need extra help or advice about Council Tax, Housing Benefit, applying for housing or homelessness will need to book an appointment to see someone in person at the Novus Centre, adjacent to the Jobcentre on the Conge.

Tenants who want to speak to the Housing Income Team about their rent account, rent arrears or the Right to Buy are also encouraged to make an appointment because there may be a wait to see a member of staff at the Novus Centre.

People will still be able to contact the council by telephone from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, with the exception of Wednesday, where lines will be open between 10am and 5pm.

And residents who are about to become or find themselves homeless and who need emergency assistance because they have nowhere to sleep that night will be able to speak to an on-call member of the team at the Novus Centre.

The changes coincide with the council re-locating from Greyfriars House in Greyfriars Way - which closes at 5pm on Friday, 10 January - and moving its person-centred teams to the centre of Great Yarmouth in re-purposed offices at the Novus Centre.

The closure of Greyfriars House and the move to the Novus Centre is part of the council's drive to make further efficiency savings. Operating from fewer buildings reduces the authority's overheads.

A spokesperson for Great Yarmouth Borough Council said: "These changes are designed to make our systems and services easier to navigate in the most cost-effective way possible.

"We looked at a number of other local authorities to see how they support customers in an increasingly digital age and hope these changes will ensure people who need assistance get the right help and advice promptly.

"We also hope that having teams based in the town centre will make appointments more convenient."

Bookable appointments at the Novus Centre can be made online or by telephone as follows:

- To book an appointment relating to Council Tax visit www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/virtual-appointments or call 01493 846244.
- For Housing Benefit/Council Tax support appointments visit www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/virtual-appointments or call 01493 846291.
- For an appointment to discuss rent arrears, rent payments or Right to Buy applications please call 01493 846726.
- For appointments to discuss leasehold bills or payments please call 01493 846259.
- For residents who are about to become or who are homeless, you can let us know using the online form at www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/homelessness. Appointments to see a

member of the Housing Options team about homelessness can be made by calling 01493 846140.

- People who want to apply to join the Housing Register for social housing in the borough can do so online at www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/article/2274/How-do-I-make-a-housing-application.

For general enquiries, the council's Customer Services team will continue to operate as usual for people contacting them by telephone on 01493 856100.

Meanwhile, there are also plans to convert the Gorleston and South Yarmouth Area Offices into new council housing. Both offices, subject to planning permission being granted, will provide one new home.

More information about services the council offers and who to contact for assistance can be found at: www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk