

[29/04/2024](#)

Norfolk County Council updates

Norfolk Museums - upcoming events

Norwich Castle

- Quiet hour at Norwich Castle, Sunday 5 May between 12-1pm. This is an hour before standard opening to offer a chance to explore the galleries at a more relaxed pace. Lights will be dimmed video and audio reduced where possible. The front of house team will be there to support visitors. The quiet hour may particularly suit visitors who are neurodivergent and prefer a calmer, quieter sensory environment.
- SUNLIGHT is a new exhibition opening on 18 May, it is the first major survey of the work of British artist Roger Ackling (1947 – 2014).

Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse

- Celebrate Blossom Day on Monday 6 May between 10-17:00. This is an annual festival of fruit trees, flowers and food. There will be blossom-themed craft activities, and people are welcome to bring or buy a picnic to enjoy in the orchard.

Norfolk Museums have an event search bar to search for specific types of events at a particular museum, on a specific date and that are suitable for particular age. Find out more and search online for upcoming events at Norfolk Museums [here](#).

Government updates

Government launches new free business management course for small businesses

On 24 April 2024, the government launched Help to Grow: Management Essentials, a new online training course for small business leaders. This is a short online course with practical tips and resources for small business leaders. Essentials is suited for leaders of newer or smaller SMEs, or those looking to explore the principles of business growth and management before taking the next step or enrolling in a fuller course.

Essentials is the latest addition to the package of SME support announced by Government as part of their 'Help to Grow' campaign: a one-stop shop for SMEs.

[The Help to Grow site](#) makes it quicker and easier for business owners to find resources for every step of their growth journey.

Government sets out major reforms to disability benefits

The Prime Minister has outlined a package of reforms to disability benefits and work aimed at helping people on benefits to stay in or return to work. The government say that they will consult on proposed reforms to disability benefits system to ensure benefits are targeted at those who need it most.

They say that a consultation on the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) will be published in the coming days. This will explore changes to the eligibility criteria, assessment process and types of support that can be offered, so the system is better targeted towards individual needs and more closely linked to a person's condition rather than the current "one size fits all" approach.

The government says that this comes as the number of people claiming disability benefits for mental health conditions has doubled since the pandemic.

The wider government welfare package includes further measures to crack down on fraud and removing benefits entirely from long term unemployed who don't accept a job.

More details available on the government website [here](#).

Fit Note Reform: government call for evidence

This call for evidence will inform a programme of work announced at the autumn statement in 2023, to explore reforming the fit note process to support those with long term health conditions to access timely work and health support. Evidence is being gathered to assess the impact of the current fit note process in supporting work and health conversations and exploring the enhancements stakeholders would require for the fit note to better support people to start, stay and succeed in work. This call for evidence is part of a wider suite of activity to reform the fit note and will act as a prelude to a full consultation on specific policy proposals to be launched later this year.

Government particularly welcomes views from

- employers
- healthcare professionals
- patients, carers and those who access fit notes
- representatives of local systems or local system partners (for example, local authority, integrated care board and voluntary community social enterprise)
- interested academics and stakeholder organisations

The easiest way to participate in this call for evidence is by completing [this online form](#).

Further information about the call for evidence is available [here](#)

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

Kind regards

james