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# Halfway to tree planting goal

**A TREE  
FOR EVERY  
PERSON**



**Ambitious plans to plant 700,000 trees across Leicestershire have passed the halfway mark - with the total reaching more than 356,000.**

The landmark is another leap forward in our pledge to plant one tree for every person in the county and to help secure a greener future for all.

We support the initiative by planting trees directly, applying for funding and giving away tree planting kits.

Last year, we gave away 50,000 trees and hedgerows to farmers, landowners, community groups, parish councils and schools in a bid to encourage more planting across Leicestershire, and we're hoping to exceed that number this year.

The free packs, supplied in partnership with the Woodland Trust, are designed to help renew and restore existing woodland and vegetation, as well as replacing trees which have been affected by diseases such as ash dieback.

Councillor Blake Pain, cabinet member for environment and the green agenda,

said: "Our pledge to plant 700,000 trees shows our commitment to helping to

combat the effects of climate change and to make Leicestershire a cleaner and greener place.

"It is a huge achievement to have passed the halfway mark, and I would like to thank everyone who has helped us to reach this major milestone in our planting programme."



Blake Pain ready to plant one of the 700,000 trees

# 356,000 trees planted

## Progress last year includes:

- A new 'tiny forest' in Coalville, in partnership with North West Leicestershire District Council - where 600 fast-growing native trees have been planted in an area the size of a tennis court.
- Volunteers from Harborough Woodlands have planted more than 34,000 trees, including 4.4km of new hedges around the rivers Welland, Nene, Severn and Trent.
- 30,000 new trees at Nailstone Platinum Jubilee Wood - a country park and environmental education centre, managed by Maydencroft and connected to a supermarket distribution centre.
- Plans for an innovative tree nursery, in partnership with the National Forest - to collect seeds and grow 20,000 trees a year to plant across Leicestershire.



Find out more and  
record your trees at:  
[leicestershire.gov.uk/  
trees](https://leicestershire.gov.uk/trees)



Leicestershire Matters is sent to all residents in the county of Leicestershire.

It costs around 12p to print and deliver each copy. To help save money on the distribution, we work closely with Royal Mail. We're sorry if you receive Leicestershire Matters just over the border in a neighbouring county - but by using standard postal routes we actually save £750 per issue.

## Contact us

### leicestershire.gov.uk

Our website focuses on the most popular things that people want to do online. So next time you need to find or do something with the council, go online at leicestershire.gov.uk

### Email

leics-matters@leics.gov.uk

X @LeicsCountyHall

Facebook f LeicsCountyHall

Instagram i LeicsCountyHall

TikTok @LeicsCountyCouncil

### General enquiries

Mon - Thur: 8.30am - 5pm  
Fri: 8.30am - 4.30pm  
Telephone: 0116 232 3232

### Post

Communications Team,  
Room 400, County Hall,  
Glenfield, Leicester, LE3 8RA

# Welcome to Leicestershire Matters

Council leader, **Nick Rushton**, introduces our spring edition



Our budget is severely stretched - but we're balancing savings with investment in services.

Supporting the most vulnerable people remains our focus. And we're spending an extra £129m, mainly on social care, as well as using extra Government money to tackle flooding and, subject to consultation, keep our much-valued waste sites open.

It's great news that Leicestershire is greener, thanks to your support with tree planting. We've reached a major milestone and thanks to everyone who's helped to get us to this point.

The impact of Storm Henk earlier this year is a reminder of the devastating impact of flooding. It's important we all protect our

homes and loved ones and I'd urge you to heed the advice on pages 8 and 9.

Whatever the emergency, our communities come together to support those in need. I'm extremely proud of the way locals, volunteers, charities and others banded together to help householders in distress during a gas outage in Ratby and Kirby Muxloe. I also must thank host families who are continuing to open up their homes to support those fleeing war-torn Ukraine.

I hope you enjoy the spring edition.

*Nicholas Rushton*

## Budget under microscope

Unprecedented budget pressures mean our scrutiny leads have taken a magnifying glass to our financial plans.

Scrutiny involves councillors providing challenge, receiving questions and petitions and making sure local services are on track.

### Here are the key points our six cross-party groups fed back to our cabinet:

- **Health:** Councillors said it's important to do more to promote the value of public health work and queried whether more can be done to tackle obesity.
- **Highways and Transport:** Members discussed a 'frightening' rise in demand for services, plus the challenges in recruiting special educational needs and disability (SEND) drivers as well as ensuring contributions from housing developers are fully costed.
- **Adults and Communities:** Councillors' key points included the knock-on effects of NHS pressures for social care and whether more funding could be sought from Government.
- **Children and Families:** The possibility of expanding our work with Barnardo's, creating more care placements

locally - reducing reliance on private sector companies - and managing costs connected to inclusion, were highlighted.

- **Environment and Climate Change:** Challenges recruiting HGV drivers and balancing net zero target dates against the funding available, were key points raised.
- **Scrutiny Commission:** Members welcomed funding for trading standards to tackle the import of disposable vapes. They raised concerns about the cost of running commercial services, such as school food, and received assurances business cases were in place for this and transformation initiatives, and discussed how we tackle the deficit caused by rapidly growing demand for SEND support.

**Find out more:** [leicestershire.gov.uk/scrutiny](https://leicestershire.gov.uk/scrutiny)

**Tune in to scrutiny on our YouTube channel:** [leicestershire.gov.uk/webcast](https://leicestershire.gov.uk/webcast)



If you would like the information contained in this newsletter in an alternative version such as large print, Braille or tape, or help with understanding it in your language, please call 0116 305 6274 or email [leics-matters@leics.gov.uk](mailto:leics-matters@leics.gov.uk)

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## FAMILY SUPPORT



# Family Hubs

## First anniversary

### Leicestershire

It's nearly one year since our support service for families, children and communities launched.

Since the first hub opened its doors at the end of May, our family hubs have given families and carers access to a host of services on their doorstep, ranging from antenatal support, new parent groups and one-to-one clinics helping people with issues such as mental health.

Our adult and family learning teams see hundreds of residents a week, giving parents and carers of children aged between 0-19 (or 25 for young people with special educational needs or disabilities) a place to feel supported and listened to, or simply an opportunity to get involved in fun family activities.

There are now 25 hubs open across Leicestershire - with the final five opening later this month, including in Thurmaston and Mountfields in Loughborough.



Deborah Taylor

Councillor Deborah Taylor, cabinet member for children and families, said: "Our family hubs are there for all families and young people. It's been fantastic to witness the service grow and be a key space to turn to for support for so many residents of Leicestershire."



Family Hub at Loughborough library

### What you say

Tara visits the hub with her young son who has been diagnosed with autism. Family hubs help her son get involved with activities like play therapy.

She said: "It feels like you're talking to family, and you feel safe talking to these people. They can support you with food banks, they'll help you if you want to stop smoking - they'll help you with anything you need."

### Family hubs online

Our brand new website is your place to find information on a range of information and signposting to support in one place. Find out more, including your closest family hub, at [familyhubsleicestershire.org.uk](https://familyhubsleicestershire.org.uk) or by scanning the QR code below.

We'll be adding more to the website so keep checking for updates and new information.



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Numeracy scheme adds value

Over 600 people have taken part in Multiply - a three-year, Government-funded programme - which offers free courses on using number skills in practical ways, such as shopping and budgeting.

Michael took part in a cooking course in Enderby. He said: "I learned how to calculate quantities for ingredients, and the costs. Buying ready-made food costs much more than making a meal using ingredients."

Councillor Peter Bedford, cabinet member



Peter Bedford

for transformation and recovery, said: "Our successful programme is nearing the end of its second year and has helped hundreds to boost their confidence with numbers and improve their skills."

Look out for our new 'everyday numbers for everyday life' social media campaign. Visit [leicestershire.gov.uk/multiply](https://leicestershire.gov.uk/multiply) for more details.

### Support for Ukraine

More than 500 families have opened their homes to Ukrainian families. February marked two years since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Leicestershire remains a safe space for many families and we're still looking for new hosts. Visit [leicestershire.gov.uk/support-for-ukraine](https://leicestershire.gov.uk/support-for-ukraine) to find out more.

### Primary school offer day

Primary school places for children starting this autumn will be announced on 16 April.

If you applied online, or provided us with an email address, we will email on the day outlining the school place offer. The parent portal on our admissions pages will be updated on the day.

If you didn't give us an email address, letters will be posted to you on 16 April.

More information about the process: [leicestershire.gov.uk/admissions](https://leicestershire.gov.uk/admissions)

### Easter holiday clubs

Bookings are open for free holiday club sessions which include arts and crafts, sports, dance, games and music activities, as well as a nutritious meal. Leicestershire Holidays Together are available for children aged five to 16 who are receiving benefits-related free school meals. To check eligibility and book places, visit [leicestershire.gov.uk/HAF](https://leicestershire.gov.uk/HAF)





## BUDGET

# Tough budget balances investment with need for change

Significant investment to cover rising costs and demand, wide-ranging savings and a Council Tax increase all feature in our budget - as councils across the country face unprecedented challenges.

Over the next four years, we'll be investing £129m more to meet growing service demand, mainly in social care, and an extra £113m to pay for inflation and the National Living Wage impact on care providers.

We are not in crisis territory like some councils, but to balance the books next year, we need to use £6m of our 'reserves' - the first time this has been required - and we are also forecasting a budget gap of £83m by 2027/28 after planned savings.

A three per cent Council Tax increase for core services - and a two per cent increase in the adult social care precept - will generate £18m more for front line services and will be in place from April. This will add £1.46 a week to the bill of a Band D household.

Scaling back waste site closures, subject to consultation, is also now on the table after we received extra Government funding at the end of January.

Council leader, Nick Rushton, said: "It's good news that the Government has listened to local government's very real

and pressing concerns, and we welcome the extra funding.

"It halves the reserves we need to use to balance the books next year. But it's far from a sustainable solution and does nothing to help with the budget shortfall in later years.

"We remain a well-run council and have saved £262m since 2010 - but spiralling costs and service demands mean this is still the toughest budget we've



Lee Breckon

ever faced." Councillor Lee Breckon, cabinet member for resources, added: "We recognise that the Government is facing big financial pressures - but there are national changes that could provide much-needed support to councils outside of local government funding reform.

"Our focus is on delivering the best services we can within the funding we have available. Major redesigns are already in progress but we now need to go even further and identify other options for bridging the longer-term £83m budget gap."

## BUDGET BREAKDOWN

Take a look at our budget at a glance:

£567m

Is our budget for 2024/25

£6m

Budget shortfall for 2025 rising to £33m in 2026, £60m in 2027 and £83m in 2027/28

£129m

Extra money mainly to support people with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and mental health needs

# Extra £113m

To cover unavoidable inflation and the National Living Wage increase

# £39m of savings

Including redesigning services and reducing the cost of support services by maximising digital technology and smarter procurement, plus changes to bring down SEND costs

# An extra £400k

To help us do more to tackle flooding - after 500 homes flooded in the wake of Storm Henk

# £100k more

A year for waste sites - so we can scale back proposed closures

# £19m

To maintain roads and fix potholes - including £2.2m of Government 'Network North' money

# £445m

Four-year capital pot including £18m to improve bridges, roll out flood alleviation projects and improve road surfaces

## Spotlight on savings

We've saved £262m since 2010 - but now need to do more to deliver services differently. Spiralling social care prices and demand for support are driving up costs - so we're re-designing services to manage future demand.

### Let's look in more detail:

- **Boosting 'supported living'**
  - over 100 new placements created since 2020, enabling people with learning and physical disabilities and mental health needs to learn life skills and live independently.
- **Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)**
  - major work is underway on a new approach, balancing growing demand for support with getting children the right help.
- **Working with Barnardo's**
  - to create and run children's homes locally.
- **Rolling out 'care technology'**
  - over 2,600 pieces of equipment, including falls detectors and GPS location trackers, installed over the last year, benefiting more than 1,000 people.

## Boosting communities

**Teaming up with parish and town councils as well as community organisations to spruce up village centres is just one example of how we're working differently.**

Ten parish councils, including Witherley, Whitwick and Mountsorrel, have signed up to a pilot project enabling them to carry out tasks such as grass cutting, asset maintenance, public rights of way maintenance, painting handrails and sign cleaning.

Councillor Ozzy O'Shea, cabinet member for highways and transport, said: "Town and parish councils are

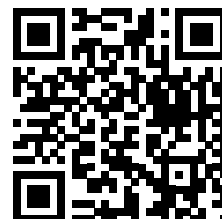
integral to our county's vibrant communities.

"This is a great scheme, but it's really important to stress that the tasks being picked up as part of the pilot are an extra to what we already do as a highways authority."

Huncote Parish Council is the first to get on board and is improving its village green. Parish council clerk, Stuart Bacon, said: "We take great pride in our village and being involved in the Parish Pilot and this initiative gives us the chance to further enhance the attractiveness of the village."

Keep in touch by signing up for our fortnightly news bulletin:

**leicestershire.  
gov.uk/signup**



# Events

Things to see and do this spring in our country parks, heritage sites, museums and libraries.



Book online at [centurytheatre.co.uk](http://centurytheatre.co.uk)  
or call the box office 01530 278444  
[centurytheatre.co.uk](http://centurytheatre.co.uk)

[f/CenturyTheatre](https://www.facebook.com/CenturyTheatre) [@century\\_theatre](https://www.instagram.com/century_theatre)

## Purple Zeppelin

Fri 22 March, 7.30pm, from £19

Purple Zeppelin pay tribute to the two of the greatest rock bands, Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin.



## Superstar Wrestling

Tue 26 March, 7pm, from £12

Superstar Wrestling are bringing a host of international wrestling stars to the ring, to face the very best of home-grown talent.

## Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Wed 27 March, 2pm, from £10



Drawing on the wealth of peculiar episodes from Carroll's classics Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass, you're invited into a timeless world of wondrous fantasy.

## Upcoming at Century Theatre:

6 April - Twin Lizzy

11 April - SIX: Teen Edition

19 April - Budapest Café Orchestra

Scan here to book



Ashby Road, Coalville,  
LE67 3LN

[f/snibstoncollierypark](https://www.facebook.com/snibstoncollierypark)



The park's natural landscape is rooted in its mining heritage and has a rich ecology. It has Green Flag status and includes a 4km blue grade mountain bike trail and pump track. And it's also home to the Century Theatre and the historic Snibston Colliery where regular tours are given by former miners.  
[leicscountryparks.org.uk](http://leicscountryparks.org.uk)

## Bloomin' marvellous team

The work of rangers and volunteers at Market Bosworth Country Park has been recognised by judges, as part of a gold award given to East Midlands regional winners, Bosworth in Bloom.

The Judges' Award was presented to David Luther, Senior Ranger at Leicestershire County Council, to acknowledge the strong partnership with the In Bloom team and extensive countryside management work undertaken on the site. Visit the park this spring to see beautiful blooms and seasonal colour in the arboretum. Details at [leicscountryparks.org.uk](http://leicscountryparks.org.uk)

## Love your local library

With free WiFi, Leicestershire libraries are a great place to work, study, meet with friends or take the kids after school. There are lots of fun activities taking place throughout the holidays and beyond. Visit [facebook.com/yourlibrary](https://www.facebook.com/yourlibrary) for the latest events.



## Beaumanor Hall

A Victorian country house set in 34 acres of idyllic countryside, bursting with exciting events and things to do.

Woodhouse, Leicestershire, LE12 8TX

[beaumanorhall.co.uk](http://beaumanorhall.co.uk)

Tel: 01509 890119

[@beaumanorhall](https://www.facebook.com/beaumanorhall) [X](https://www.instagram.com/beaumanorhall) [i](https://www.instagram.com/beaumanorhall) [f](https://www.instagram.com/beaumanorhall)



Sat 27 & Sun 28 April

10am-4pm

£3 entry (free parking)

Special event

With an array of stalls from local makers, artisans and crafters, Beaumanor's Spring Fair is unmatched. As a hub of inspiration for gifts, foodie treats and items for the home, this fair offers a great day of unique shopping in beautiful historic surroundings. For stall enquiries, email [Beaumanorevents@leics.gov.uk](mailto:Beaumanorevents@leics.gov.uk) or call 01509 890119.

EASTER  
Outdoor  
Activities  
at Beaumanor

KIDS' EVENTS

Join Beaumanor's holiday activity club this Easter for exciting outdoors activities for children aged 7-14. From high ropes and canoeing to mountain biking and climbing, there's something for every adventurer to enjoy. From £45 per child, per day. Childcare vouchers also accepted. Search 'Beaumanor' on Eventbrite to book or call 01509 890119.

[beaumanorhall.co.uk/outdoor-activities](http://beaumanorhall.co.uk/outdoor-activities)





## BOSWORTH

BATTLEFIELD HERITAGE CENTRE  
AND COUNTRY PARK

**Head to the battlefield this spring to get a great value annual pass or enjoy one of many special events.**

Sutton Cheney, Leicestershire, CV13 0AD  
bosworthbattlefield.org.uk

Tel: 01455 290429

Open daily Nov to March 10am-4pm  
and April to October 10am-5pm.

Admission: Adult £8.95, Child (3-15) £5.95, under 3s free. Student, Senior and Family discounts available. Pay once, ticket valid for a year.

### Easter Monday Guided Walks

**Mon 1 April, from 11.30am (approx. 90 min walk). Adult £4.50, Concession £4, Child £3. Family Tickets are also available.**

Join our guide on Easter Monday for an informative and fun guided walk along the footpaths as we explain the Battle of Bosworth, the death of King Richard III and the unlikely victory of Henry Tudor. Book online.

### Spring Fayre

**FREE event**

**Sun 7 April, 10am-4pm.**  
Free entry. Car parking £2.50.

Join us at our annual Spring Fayre and explore a diverse selection of handmade, locally sourced products.

### Bosworth Medieval Festival

**17-18 August 2024**

**SAVE THE DATE**



Great for tracing your family history

### The Record Office for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

A range of resources for researching local history and culture. Extensive collections, dating from early 1100s.

Long Street, Wigston Magna, LE18 2AH  
recordoffice.org.uk Tel: 0116 257 1080



## charnwood museum



**Exhibits reflecting the archaeology, geology, history and industries of Charnwood and the local area.**

Granby St, Loughborough, LE11 3DU  
charnwoodmuseum.co.uk

Tel: 01509 233754

Open Wed to Sat, 10am-3pm.

Closed Sun, Mon and Tues. FREE ENTRY

**Free EXHIBITION**

### Ulverscroft Camera Club Retrospective Photographic Exhibition

**Open until Sun 12 May 2024, Wed to Sat, 10am-3pm. Free**

Your chance to view a range of members' images from the club's annual exhibitions over the past six years.



### THE 1620's HOUSE & GARDEN at Donington le Heath

**A medieval manor house with links to the Gunpowder Plot.**

Manor Road, Donington le Heath, LE67 2FW

1620shouse.org.uk Tel: 01455 290429

Reopens on Thursday 28 March 2024.

Open Thurs to Sun, 10.30am-4.30pm.

**Special events**

### Easter Wreaths

**Tue 26 March, 10am-12pm, £5 per child. Booking essential.**

Forge through our craft materials to make the perfect Easter wreath for you to take home or gift.

### Easter Bonnet Workshop

**Tue 26 March, 1.30-3.30pm, £5 per child. Booking essential.**

Have a bash at our bonnie bonnet workshop, with a range of crafts including egg painting and Easter card making.

### Plant Hunter's Fair

**Sun 21 April, 10am-4pm, £1, free parking, dogs on lead welcome.**

Hosting top plant nurseries that are sure to have something special for every garden, this popular event is one not to miss.



## MELTON CARNEGIE MUSEUM

**Traces the history of Melton, with exhibitions on the world-renowned Stilton cheese and pork pie industries, and the history of fox hunting.**

Thorpe End, Melton Mowbray, LE13 1RB

meltonmuseum.org

Tel: 0116 305 3860

Open Tues to Sat, 10am-4.30pm.

Closed Mon and Sun. FREE ENTRY.

### Well-Loved Tales: Stories from a Ladybird Childhood

**Free EXHIBITION**

**4 May to 14 September 2024, Tue to Sat, 10am-4.30pm. Free**

Come along to Melton to see the exhibition about the famous series produced by Ladybird Books. See the books, trip trap over the troll's bridge and ask the mirror "who is the fairest of them all?".



## Harborough Museum

**Explore the historic and recent communities who have shaped the story of the Market Harborough area.**

The Symington Building, Adam and Eve St, Market Harborough, LE16 7LT

harboroughmuseum.org.uk

Tel: 0116 305 3627

Open Tues to Fri, 10am-6pm &

Sat 10am-4pm. Closed Sun. FREE ENTRY.



### Harborough at Work: Earning a Living in a Ladybird World

**23 March 2024 to 1 February 2025**

A family friendly exhibition looking at the Ladybird Books series 'People at Work'. This exhibition considers how occupations and attitudes have changed since the publication of the first title over 60 years ago. Original illustrations and museum objects will be joined by local community portrait photos and stories. A creative response to the exhibition co-curated with the local community will also be displayed from September.

© Ladybird Books Ltd



# Your guide to

**Storm Henk brought the worst flooding seen in Leicestershire for years - with over 500 homes flooded across the county and more than 40 roads closed.**



Ozzy O'Shea

Councillor Ozzy O'Shea, cabinet member for flooding, said: "The sheer level of rainfall on already saturated ground led to the dreadful flooding of homes in Leicestershire back in

January. I want to thank everyone who pitched in from their local communities to help those whose homes were damaged by the floods.

"I'd urge everyone to bring flooding to the forefront of their minds. Do you have a plan? Are you prepared? It can happen at any time of year so it's really important to be as ready as you can be."

## Who to contact in a flood

**There's no single body solely responsible for flooding. If you're at risk you should take measures to protect yourself. Take a look at who to contact in the event of a flood in your area.**

### 1 Reservoirs and main rivers

- Environment Agency Incident Hotline 0800 80 70 60 (24 hour)
- Floodline 0345 988 1188

### 2 Railway

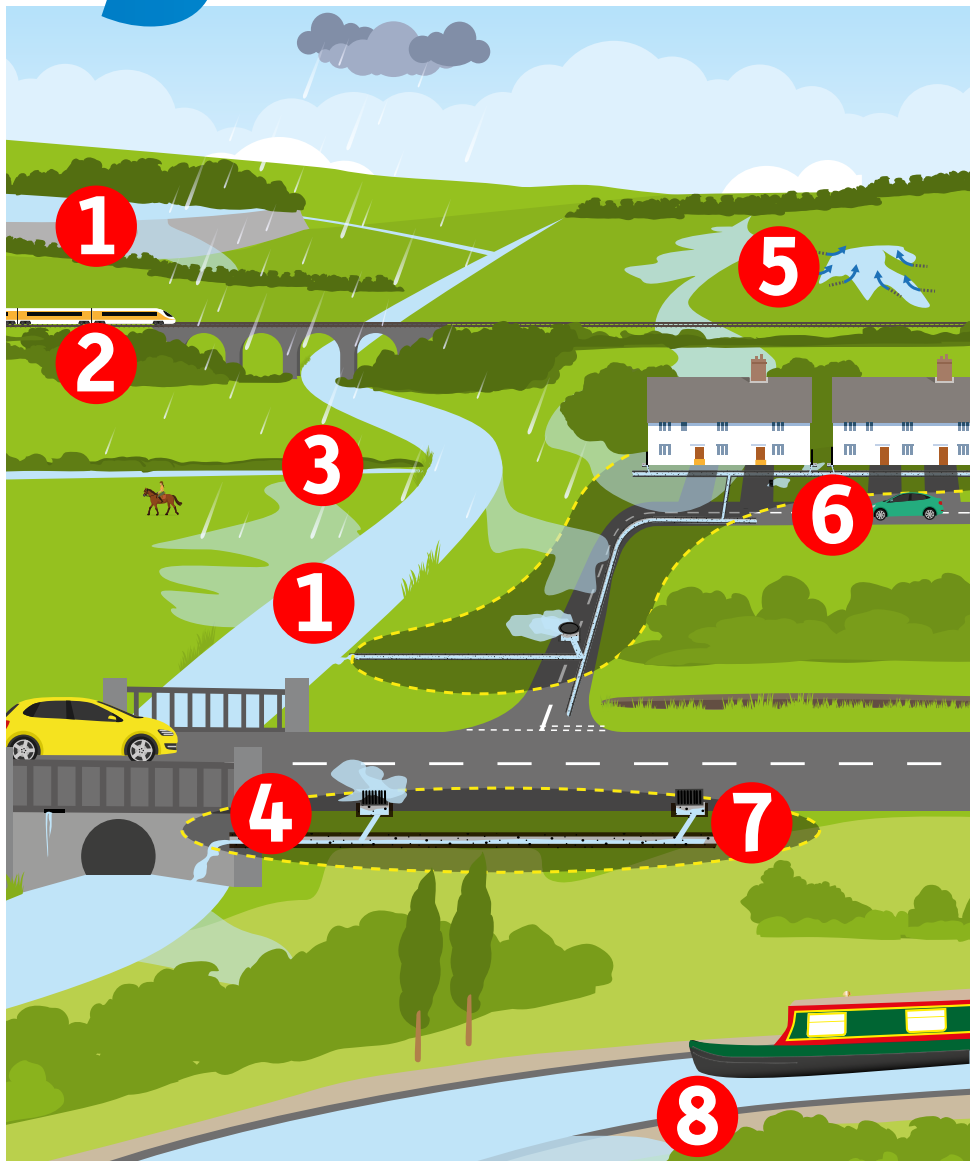
Network Rail 03457 11 41 41 (24 hour)

### 3 Small streams and ditches

**(also known as ordinary watercourses)**  
Leicestershire County Council:  
leicestershire.gov.uk/report-a-flood  
or 0116 305 0001 (Not out of hours)

### 4 Public highway

Leicestershire County Council:  
leicestershire.gov.uk/report-a-road-problem



**In an emergency call 999**

### 5 Surface water and groundwater

Leicestershire County Council:  
leicestershire.gov.uk/report-a-flood  
or 0116 305 0001 (Not out of hours)

### 6 Private residence or business

Private owner responsible for the property

### 7 Mains sewer and wastewater sewer

- Severn Trent: 0800 782 4444 (24 hour)
- Anglian Water: 03457 145 145 (24 hour)

### 8 Canal

Canal and River Trust:  
• 0303 040 40 40 (Office hours)  
• 0800 479 9947 (24 hour)

**⚠ If a watercourse runs through your land you may have responsibilities.**



# flooding

## Become a flood warden



Robert Butler is one of 30 volunteer flood wardens across the county. His work in his local community is vital in preparing for and responding to flooding incidents. Robert has covered Sileby and surrounding areas for nearly 15 years alongside Richard Oldham.

### Why did you become a flood warden?

"Because of the amount of flooding I'd witnessed growing up and knowing the dangers it causes. Also because of the traffic delays caused when local through roads become flooded and impassable, but not closed."

### How much time do you have to commit?

"As you'd expect, less time in the summer and drier periods, but more time is needed when floods are more common. This includes time on the ground, social media and calling the councils and emergency services and posting on social media."

### What do you do during a flooding incident to help?

"Before a flood happens we raise awareness and tell people not to travel through flood water."

"When it floods we raise awareness of flooding, protecting properties, families and neighbours, as well as reporting roads that need closing."

"After a flood we work with the council to report flooded roads which need cleaning or reopening and make sure properties and affected areas are OK. We also keep our Facebook page 'Sileby Volunteer Flood Wardens' up to date so people know when flooded or impassable roads are clear."

### What's the best bit about being a flood warden?

"Being able to support the community through flooding. Our social media account has around 4,000 followers with people not only from Sileby but across the county who rely on our 'Flood Patrol updates' to know about the situation on the ground."

### What would you say to anyone interested in becoming a warden?

"You'll become the eyes on the ground to notice and report flooding and gather the knowledge across your area. The area you cover could be your local street, estate, village, town or wider area. You also get support from the Resilience Partnership and Environment Agency officers."

### If you're interested in becoming a flood warden please contact us:

- [llrprepared.org.uk/flood-warden](https://llrprepared.org.uk/flood-warden) or scan the QR code
- **Email:** [Emergency.Management@leics.gov.uk](mailto:Emergency.Management@leics.gov.uk)
- **Phone:** 0116 305 6101



CUT OUT AND  
KEEP SAFE

Find out more  
about flood plans at  
[leicestershire.gov.uk/  
prepare-for-flooding](https://leicestershire.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding)



## Create a household flood plan

- ☐ Sign up to receive flood alerts and warnings.
- ☐ Investigate your property's flood resilience options.
- ☐ Check your home insurance covers flood damage.
- ☐ Put important documents safely away from flood risk.
- ☐ Make a flood kit.
- ☐ Make sure your pets are chipped and consider where they would go if they needed to be evacuated.

### Where are your cut-offs at home:

Electricity

Water

Gas

### Prepare a flood kit that includes:

- ☐ Torch (check batteries)
- ☐ Food and drinking water
- ☐ Medication and first aid kit
- ☐ Toys for children and pets
- ☐ Rubber gloves and wellingtons
- ☐ Mobile phone and charger
- ☐ Battery operated radio
- ☐ Insurance documents
- ☐ Keys e.g. house, car
- ☐ Purse/wallet (cash and cards)



# Update on waste site proposals

We want your views on our plans to scale back our waste site savings proposals. We were previously looking at shutting three of our recycling and household waste sites.

A three-month consultation took place and we've listened to what you said. We are now proposing to keep Shepshed and Market Harborough sites open part time.



Blake Pain

Councillor Blake Pain, cabinet member for waste, added: "We've listened and responded to people's concerns – we've heard just how important waste sites are for our residents. That's why we're proposing to use an extra £100,000 of funds to scale back plans and keep the Market Harborough and Shepshed sites open part time."

## Our proposals at a glance:

- Keep Market Harborough waste site open three days a week
- Kibworth waste site to open four days a week instead of five days
- Keep Shepshed waste site open two days a week
- Use an extra £100,000 to fund keeping these sites open

The consultation is now open and you can have your say on plans which would save us £170,000 per year. Visit [leicestershire.gov.uk/current-engagement](https://leicestershire.gov.uk/current-engagement) or scan the QR code now to give us your views before Wednesday, 20 March.



## Silver service for county's food

Leicestershire was recently given a Silver Sustainable Food Places Award - the only one given out in the Midlands in 2023.

The national awards recognise and celebrate the success of our initiatives that have supported people, communities and businesses across Leicestershire to access healthy, local nutritious food.

Our county has a fantastic record of producing high quality food and drink, and we're proud to boast that we are home to England's rural capital of food, Melton Mowbray.

Our rural areas are renowned for producing organic food and protecting our biodiversity, which benefits what we eat and drink.

## Take charge of battery disposal

Only last month, Mountsorrel became the most recent recycling and household waste site to temporarily close after a discarded lithium battery caused a fire – one of several fires since 2022.

Councillor Blake Pain said, "In the UK, up to a billion batteries are used and thrown away

every year – equivalent to 10 batteries per resident.

"When they are thrown away with the general rubbish, or mixed with other recycling, hidden batteries cause serious fires. Everyone can help to reduce the growing amount of battery fires by recycling them correctly."



Fire at Mountsorrel recycling and household waste site

### Follow this advice:

- Never put any type of battery in your waste or recycling bins.
- Only recycle batteries using a proper battery recycling service, such as at your local recycling site, or battery collection point in a supermarket.
- Remove batteries from broken devices if possible and recycle the battery and device separately.
- If you're unable to remove the battery, recycle it with your old electricals.
- Find out where to recycle batteries responsibly at [takecharge.org.uk](https://takecharge.org.uk)

# **JOBS**

# Change a child's life

## *Become a specialist carer*

What children say about specialist carers:

**"It's been life changing having a specialist carer."**



**"I've had opportunities that I never would have had in residential care and by being part of a family."**

With the number of children requiring specialist care increasing, it means more are living in residential care.



**Helen Taylor from our fostering team told us about the difference specialist carers make.**

### **What does a specialist carer do?**

"They enable a child or young person to have stability within a family home and be cared for by someone who can provide focused and therapeutic care."

### **What happens if we can't find a specialist carer?**

"The alternative for a child or young person is to go into residential care. This can be an excellent standard of care but some young people miss out on the specialist focused care these carers provide."

"Unfortunately, some children as young as 10 may have to live in residential care. It makes me sad to think of a child as young as this, who really wants to be part of a family and live in a family home, being in a residential setting."

### **How much does this care cost?**

"Each specialist carer recruited saves the council £500,000 per year. A residential home is not the best option for most of our children and it also puts a massive financial strain on the council."

"Children in care have often experienced trauma, and they need one-to-one time with a trusted adult, which is what our specialist carers do."

### **What are we looking for?**

"Being a specialist carer is a skilled role so our payments are generous. We want people who:

- Have experience of working with children and young people in any voluntary or professional role
- Can support young people through challenges and achievements
- Are empathetic, kind, understanding and patient
- Are good at talking and explaining
- In short, people who are compassionate, empathetic and nurturing, and who may already have an interest in working therapeutically with children."

## **Can you help us?**

We pay a minimum of £511.65, up to £765.50, plus additional allowances per week for specialist carers. If you know someone who would suit the role, spread the word and share this role. Could it even be you? Visit [leicestershire.gov.uk/jobs](https://leicestershire.gov.uk/jobs) or get in touch with our friendly team for an informal chat. Call 0116 305 0505 or email [fostering@leics.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@leics.gov.uk).

### **Find out more**

Learn more about our roles at our virtual **Find Out About Fostering event** on Wednesday, 3 April. The event will focus on our specialist foster carers. You'll also get to hear from team manager Helen Taylor, and have the opportunity to ask questions.



Register at [leicestershire.gov.uk/fostering-events](https://leicestershire.gov.uk/fostering-events) to book your place.

See more about working at the council at [leicestershire.gov.uk/inclusiveworkplace](https://leicestershire.gov.uk/inclusiveworkplace)







Oak Court Extra Care housing in Blaby

# Boosting independence

Schemes across the county are giving care and support so people can live in their own home.

Not only do 'extra care' schemes increase independence, they can also reduce pressures on both health services and demand for specialist residential care, as people have access to 24-hour support.

We're aiming to expand the offering across Leicestershire in the future.

## Malcolm's story

Malcolm is totally blind and has slight hearing loss. He has lived in the Oak Court scheme in Blaby for three years to give him more independence.

He said: "At home I felt isolated and lonely. I knew at Oak Court I would be well looked after, be able to keep my independence and have my social needs met as I enjoy being friendly and meeting people.

"I receive care calls from the onsite carers which allow me to build rapport and positive relationships with staff and other tenants.

"I feel included at Oak Court, we have games in Braille and my social and

physical care needs are met. I feel the staff are my hands and eyes, which is so important to me as a blind person.

"My friends assisted me to fill out the initial paperwork, the process took me around five months. It has made a huge difference to my quality of life.

Malcolm added: "For anyone considering moving into extra care I would encourage them especially if you are feeling isolated and are struggling at home."



Christine Radford

Councillor Christine Radford, cabinet member for adults and communities, said: "I'm so pleased Malcolm is enjoying his extra care living. I hope many more will benefit from these schemes for years to come."

**Find out more about extra care for you or somebody you know, including eligibility, at [leicestershire.gov.uk/extra-care-housing](https://leicestershire.gov.uk/extra-care-housing).**

## Your experiences help shape services

Our Adults and Communities engagement panel is made up of residents and carers who use our services. It meets once a month, sharing ideas and helping to produce projects to shape our services.

Ellie has been on the panel for nearly three years. She said: "I am really proud that I am able to represent people like me who have a physical disability, and use my experiences of knowing people with mental health issues, carers and those with a learning disability, to benefit the panel too.

"I also felt that I needed to be the voice for those of us with disabilities by showing others without them, how the system should be built and work well."

Visit [leicestershirecommunities.org.uk](https://leicestershirecommunities.org.uk) for more information and to apply.



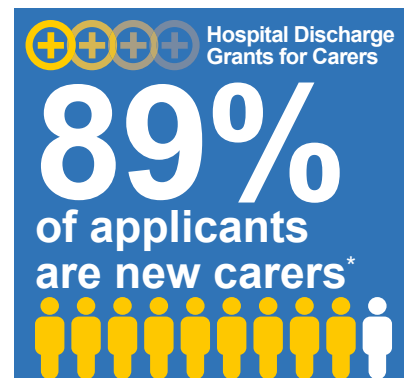
Attendees at the engagement panel

## We've paid more than £68,000 to carers

Looking after a loved one in Leicestershire who has been discharged from hospital during the last four weeks? You have until 31 March to apply for a grant to help with extra costs you might have faced.

We've already given grants to more than 150 people, paying out over £68,000.

Visit [leicestershire.gov.uk/grants-for-carers](https://leicestershire.gov.uk/grants-for-carers) to find out more and apply, or call Voluntary Action South Leicestershire on 01858 468 543.



## Your round-up of the latest **Trading Standards** guidance >>>

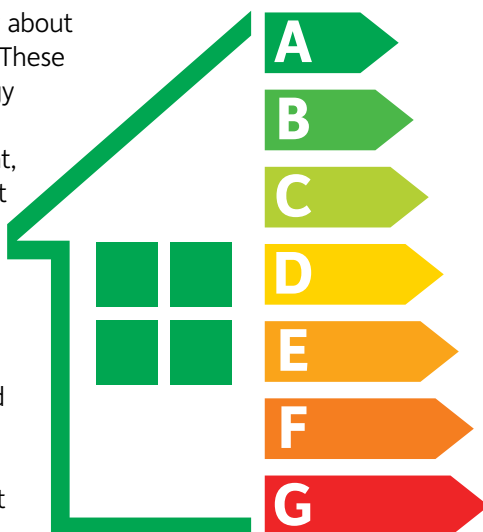
### >>> Remember your EPCs

Anyone who has moved house will know about Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs). These give information about a building's energy performance, rating from A-G.

When a property is listed to buy or rent, it must have an EPC dated within the last 10 years or have an EPC commissioned with an accredited energy assessor.

A valid EPC must be provided to potential buyers and tenants for free at the earliest opportunity.

If you have concerns about a marketed property's EPC, or have recently rented or purchased a property without being provided with a valid EPC, please contact us at 0808 223 1133.



### >>> Are they who they say they are?

Criminal scams can be very hard to spot. Some will state that they are calling from trustworthy organisations like the police, HMRC, the council or your bank.

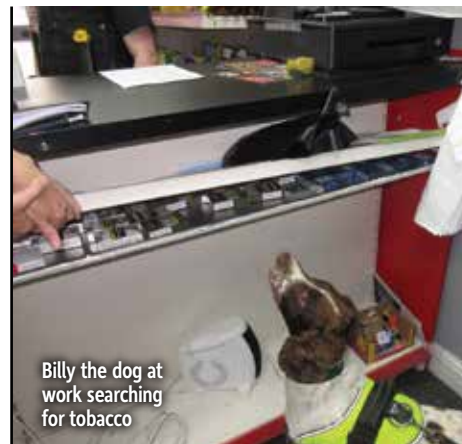
They may even say that they are from businesses that you shop with or receive services from.

Here are our top tips for dealing with scam calls to protect yourself are:

- Just because someone knows your name and

address, it doesn't mean they are genuine

- If you get a call from any place asking for money or your bank details, hang up and call the organisation using their contact details to ask them if there is a problem
- No organisation will ask you for your PIN number for your bank account or cards, including the police or your bank
- The police will never ask you to transfer money out of your account or hand them cash or cards for safe keeping, or collect anything from your home
- Never give anyone who calls remote access to your mobile phone or personal computer
- Need help or want to report a fraud? Visit [actionfraud.police.uk](https://actionfraud.police.uk)



Billy the dog at work searching for tobacco

## Illicit vapes and tobacco

Illicit tobacco and vapes pose a number of risks for people - and we're asking for your support to identify this criminal activity that impacts on our legitimate businesses and affects local communities.

Information about the sale of illicit tobacco and vapes can ultimately lead to a premises being searched and any illegal products will be seized. Last year tobacco detection dog, Billy, successfully sniffed out a concealed shelf containing counterfeit cigarettes.

Smuggled, illegal disposable vapes appeal to children and cheap cigarettes are sold for pocket money prices. They do not comply with the legal requirements in the UK and the lack of traceability of these products means we do not know what substances they contain.

Together with our partners in Leicestershire Police, we'll continue to carry out operations tackling the supply of illegal vapes and tobacco.

If you think potentially dangerous or counterfeit products are being sold in Leicestershire, report it to us on our website: [leicestershire.gov.uk/tradingstandards](https://leicestershire.gov.uk/tradingstandards).

# Improving lives across Leicestershire

We have 30 local area coordinators - working closely with professionals, voluntary groups and the local community, they support people who need all types of help.

You can introduce yourself or someone else to our local area coordinator in your area. Located in communities across Leicestershire, their detailed local knowledge means they can guide support towards professionals, as well as local organisations and groups.

## Lesley and John's story

Our team met Lesley at her doctor's surgery. Lesley has been married to her husband John for more than 50 years. Her GP was worried about Lesley's quality of life after John was diagnosed with dementia. Both Lesley and John wanted to share positive time together just as they always had.

The local area coordinator, Mary, helped Lesley find simple ways to adapt to the change in their circumstances. Through their conversations, Lesley and John had meals with friends at lunchtime instead of the evening, which allowed Lesley to go and do some tasks.

The "big shop" was ordered online rather than at the supermarket, and with John no longer driving, activities within walking distance were found, including a seated exercise group.

Through Mary's work and the changes she helped to bring in, Lesley felt confident and didn't need any social care support to help her.

## Vera and Sarah's story

Great grandmother Vera was struggling after losing her husband and having a serious fall. This, along with health issues, meant that she needed some support.

Vera's daughter, Sarah, is a working grandmother herself and wasn't able to be a full time carer. Vera also wanted to stay in the house she'd lived in for so many years.

Sarah was introduced to Mary in the Local Area Coordination team. Mary made sure that Vera got both support and equipment from the Lightbulb\* team to help her live independently in her home. They identified a place for healthy ready meals to be delivered to reduce the need to cook, and arranged for Vera to join a local painting and knit and natter group.

Sarah was also referred to Voluntary Action South Leicestershire to assess her as a carer.

Councillor Louise Richardson, cabinet member for health, said: "Local area



Louise Richardson

coordinators make a huge difference to people's lives. If you need support, please contact our brilliant team and they will be able to give you the guidance and help you need.

## Who do they work with?

Directly with Leicestershire residents looking to improve their health and wellbeing, including anyone who may be experiencing challenges in coping with daily life due to their age, disability, mental health or due to social isolation.

## Get support

Visit [leicestershire.gov.uk/local-area-co-ordinators](https://leicestershire.gov.uk/local-area-co-ordinators) to find the contact details of your coordinator, or call 0116 305 0705.



\* Find out more about the Lightbulb service mentioned in Vera and Sarah's story by visiting [lightbulbservice.org](https://lightbulbservice.org)

## Leading the digital revolution

We've secured Government support to roll out lightning-fast broadband across Leicestershire. Thanks to £1.5m of national funding through Project Gigahubs, the first 25 of 43 public buildings - including schools and libraries - now have access to high-speed connectivity.

The Government also recently announced over £70m to deliver ultrafast, reliable, gigabit-capable broadband to homes and businesses across the county, mostly in rural areas. These properties which may have missed out on the commercial roll out of faster, more reliable broadband, will also be able to gain access to top-of-the-range connections, thanks to this investment.

Gigabit speeds mean households can download a high-definition film in under one minute, stream and download entertainment and shop online across several different devices at once.



Pam Posnett

Councillor Pam Posnett, cabinet member for digital, said: "Faster broadband improves the day-to-day lives of our communities. Not only

does this help businesses to flourish, it allows Leicestershire's children living in hard to reach areas to have better access to the internet for their lessons and means teachers can experiment with new innovative ways of learning."

The boost is part of Project Gigabit, the Government's £5 billion programme to deliver lightning-fast, reliable broadband in hard-to-reach areas of the UK. Visit [digital-leicestershire.org.uk](https://digital-leicestershire.org.uk)





# First Contact Plus

When you need support, we'll guide you to the right place to get the help needed.

From money management and a risk of being homeless, to living independently and improving your health and wellbeing, First Contact Plus is a one-stop service to help Leicestershire residents with information, advice and support.

Users of the service can visit our website to find the best places to go for support or be referred to an advisor for one-to-one help.

First Contact Plus is delivered by our Public Health team, and works with partner agencies who specialise in a wide range of support areas, meaning anyone needing help can be directed to the right person or organisation.

## We deliver the First Contact Plus service with:

- Department for Work and Pensions
- Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service
- Leicestershire Police
- Health organisations
- Voluntary groups
- Social care departments
- District councils

See the back page to find how to get in touch with First Contact Plus.

## "My Story"

**Howard, from Melton Mowbray, is an army veteran who received support from our First Contact Plus team.**

Working with Citizens Advice, Howard accessed help with managing money and debt advice.

Following a referral being made to the Department for Work and Pensions, he has been awarded his Personal Independence Payment (PIP) worth £101.75 per week. This has helped him to sort out his finances and now he has enough money each month.

### How did you get First Contact Plus support?

"I was homeless and sofa surfing before being put in emergency council



Howard was helped by First Contact Plus

accommodation, but this would only be temporary. Because of my previous living situation, a family worker recommended me to First Contact Plus."

### What support did you access?

"They helped me and guided me to apply for what I was eligible for. They helped me get my PIP. I got put in a permanent council flat which is brilliant."

"The PIP makes a big difference because it gives me 'living money' than 'surviving money'."

"My Universal Credit and Employment Support covers the bills, but PIP means I've got money to look forward to doing something."

### How important has the support been to you?

"It's changed my life. Instead of just worrying about what's going to happen in the future,

I've now got somewhere stable and plan to do something in the future. I can look forward instead of stressing."

"I've never had a space this big before and it's mine. I've used some of my PIP backpay to get a washing machine and an air fryer."

"If I hadn't got the PIP, I was going to have to move to north Nottingham - I would've had to leave Melton and been away and isolated from people I know."

### What would you say to anyone in a similar situation?

"Contact First Contact Plus. It's not just the help, the help is nice, but it's also knowing you're not alone."

"If you're in a sticky situation and feeling like there's no hope, find out and contact because it takes a massive weight off. Things don't seem so hopeless anymore."

# Your First Contact for information, advice and support in Leicestershire

First Contact Plus is an online tool which helps adults in Leicestershire find information about a range of services all in one place.

## Step 1

Visit [FirstContactPlus.org.uk](https://firstcontactplus.org.uk)

## Step 2

Find information and advice on improving your health and wellbeing

## Step 3

Contact the team if you need help - **click the 'make a referral' button**

## Step 4

Start your journey to a healthier future

Cut out and keep this section for future reference

## First Contact Plus



Improving health



Falls prevention



Money and benefits



Your home



Families and relationships



Feeling safe



Independent living



Work and volunteering

[firstcontactplus.org.uk](https://firstcontactplus.org.uk)

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Our Public Health Team provides a range of support and services to help improve your health and wellbeing. These include stopping smoking and weight management, to help with making your home more energy efficient. For more information visit [leicestershire.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing](https://leicestershire.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing)

Visit our website by scanning the QR code on your smartphone

