

Support to stay warm and well

More pensioners are getting support to claim pension credit this winter, thanks to a new partnership with Age UK.



(l-r) Deborah Taylor with Beryl Lane - whose house is now warmer thanks to Leicestershire County Council and Age UK - and Kat Coggan from Age UK

We're using some of the Household Support Fund money we receive from the Government to help Age UK. This means they can help more people check if they're eligible for Government support and complete the application process for pension credit.

The charity has been over-subscribed with requests this year and the move means they can help more older people and deal with the surge in calls.

Figures show that 6,500 Leicestershire residents are at risk of missing out – over half of those who qualify.

Acting council leader, Deborah Taylor, said: "Navigating the pension credit application process is not straightforward. And with colder weather kicking in, we want to help as many pensioners as possible to get that money in the bank.

"The figures are stark, so it's important we step in. A small amount of cash can make a big difference and means Age UK

can bolster their face-to-face support, which we know many older people value."

Tony Donovan, Executive Director of Age UK Leicester Shire & Rutland, said: "The Winter Fuel Payment cut is a huge blow to many. It's put great pressure on our Benefits Advice Service and an influx of people calling us for help.

"That's why we are pleased that Leicestershire County Council has agreed to provide some support to enable us to help more people this year."

Age UK's Warm & Wise Service also supplies and fits new energy saving products in the homes of people aged over 50. For more information call 0116 2614604 or email warmandwise@ageukleics.org.uk.

From gritting to grants, the county council is working hard to support you this winter. There are also many steps you can take to help yourself – find out more inside.

Our £3.6m Household Support Fund is open now:

Over £1m

to help households with food and energy costs

More than 19,000 children will get a £15 food voucher during holidays

£200,000

given to food banks to help with food and white goods



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 t 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

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

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Welcome to Leicestershire Matters

Deborah Taylor, acting leader of Leicestershire County Council, introduces our winter edition



As cost of living pressures continue to bite, we're stepping up to support our residents. Whether it's cutting energy bills, keeping our 1,000+ mile road network moving or securing cash for pensioners, we're working hard to help.

I'm pleased so many people picked up practical advice on preparing for flooding at our recent drop-in events. With wetter weather on the rise – and the wettest September on record – we face a new challenge. Our highways teams regularly clean gullies and work 24/7 to clear roads, but we're seeing downpours overwhelm drains. Local councils, emergency services and others work hand-in-hand, but protecting our homes has to be everyone's responsibility – find out what action you can take on page seven.

Green spaces and transport are quite rightly a big deal for our communities. And it's great news

that we're closing in on planting half a million trees. Thank you to everyone who's helped us to reach this ambitious milestone and make Leicestershire even greener.

We're making the most of Government cash to boost buses. I know transport links are particularly important for rural areas and look forward to new on-demand services starting up.

Page 15 offers a glimpse into our Trading Standards team's last year. And it's been a busy 12 months. With Christmas not far away, take the time to digest their top tips and stop scams scuppering your festive shopping.

I'd like to wish all our residents a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

D. Taylor

Your views help to shape our plans - and our 'scrutiny' function also plays a big role in consultation

By scrutinising issues, our councillors make sure local services are on track and this includes commenting on proposed changes or new strategies.



Let's look at how our councillors took a magnifying glass to our new transport blueprint.

Our 10-year Local Transport Plan sets out our future approach to cutting carbon, improving health and boosting our economy. In August, we published a draft and asked people for their views.

Scrutiny is central to consultation and in September,

our highways and transport committee discussed the plan and gave feedback:

- It's detailed and aspirational, with an engaging style
- Uncertainty about the availability of Government funding
- Concerns about the condition of the strategic road network
- Concerns about the condition of private roads in new housing developments.

Consultation responses were carefully considered and the feedback helped to inform the final plan discussed by our cabinet.

This month, our scrutiny commission also looked at plans designed to help people contact the council. Councillors fed back

that new tech options should be considered, alongside stepping up monitoring of email response times.

At a glance

Over the autumn and winter, our councillors who lead on scrutiny:

- Received a presentation on flooding
- Considered an update on plans to plant more trees
- Suggested doing more publicity for the NHS's Pharmacy First service – helping patients get treatment for minor illnesses, or repeat prescriptions, at the pharmacist.

For more information, visit: **leicestershire.gov.uk/scrutiny**



Help
us plant
trees

A TREE
FOR EVERY
PERSON



‘Root’ to half a million in sight

We’ve passed the 430,000 mark in our ambitious project to plant 700,000 trees across Leicestershire – and we’re now calling on you to help us hit the half a million milestone.

Three years ago, we pledged to plant, or help to plant, one tree for every person in the county, and set ourselves a target of 10 years.

We’re now well past the halfway mark, with 437,000 planted so far, and you can play your part in adding to the ever-growing total.

As we mark National Tree Week, which runs from 23 November to 1 December, we’re looking to top 500,000 before the tree planting season ends in March.



Blake Pain

Councillor Blake Pain, cabinet member for the environment and the green agenda, said: “People and organisations across Leicestershire have done a brilliant job in helping us to get this far, and I want to thank everyone who has been involved in making this possible.

“Now we need you to help us to get to the magic half a million milestone.”

In the past year, we’ve given away 50,000 trees through our hugely

successful free trees scheme, in partnership with the Woodland Trust. These are given to farmers, landowners, community groups, parish councils and schools in a bid to encourage more planting across Leicestershire.

If you’ve received and planted trees, or worked with community groups and landowners to do so, please make sure you let us know, so that we can add them to our interactive map and help to boost the total.

You can email the details, including your name, address, number of trees planted and their location, to **Forestry@leics.gov.uk** and we will add them on for you.

Visit leicestershire.gov.uk/trees or scan the QR code to view the tree totaliser and find a form where you can tell us about trees you’ve planted. You can also share your pictures of tree planting on our Facebook, X and Instagram pages.



‘Water’ victory for park project

Our environmental project to restore a reedbed at Donisthorpe Woodland Park has won a major award.

The park is at a former colliery site in the National Forest, which closed in 1990, and has become a popular spot for locals.

Our project has been given the prestigious Green Apple Environment Award, recognising the work carried out on the site by contractors, King Industries, with the presentation taking place at Kensington Palace.

As part of the work, a borehole pump was replaced to pump water into the reedbed, where it is cleaned by the reeds and fed back into the Ashby Canal by gravity. The reedbed was improved to provide a natural and sustainable water filtration system and boost the local wildlife habitat.

King Industries installed eight bird and bat boxes in the park and got a helping hand from pupils from Donisthorpe Primary School (pictured).



Lee Breckon

Councillor Lee Breckon, cabinet member for resources, said: “These environmentally-friendly improvements will ensure that people can continue to explore the Ashby Canal for years to come, and it’s great to receive such high-profile recognition.”



Pupils from Donisthorpe Primary School

Plan now for the future

Planning for later life can bring long-term benefits.

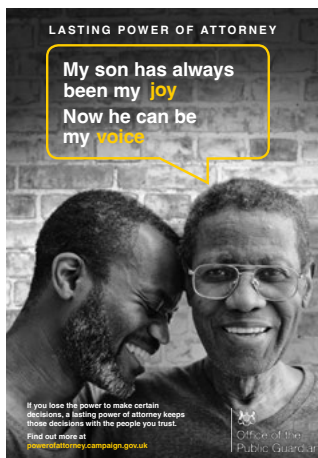
No one really wants to think about it but planning for later life helps you to stay at home with the people and things you love. And thinking about your accommodation and who would make decisions about finance and health are perfect examples of what to consider now.

Deciding on who you would like to give power of attorney to is entirely up to you. Many people find it reassuring to know that a person they trust will be able to make

decisions for them if they become too unwell, people who know you will also take into account your past views and wishes.

A lasting power of attorney for someone with dementia can be especially helpful, as their illness will increasingly affect their ability to understand things and make decisions.

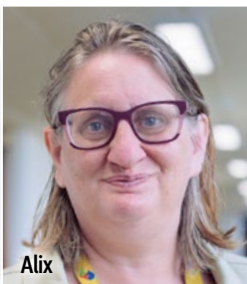
Visit our web page for practical advice and links to organisations who can help – at leicestershire.gov.uk/plan-for-the-future



Leicestershire Learning Disability Partnership Board



David



Alix

A group dedicated to supporting people has unveiled its new-look website at its recent conference for care professionals and providers.

Alix and David led the revamp and worked with the board to direct the website's look and content. It includes information and

resources to help our board and group members keep healthy and safe when out and about or online.

Alix said: "It's what we think as self-advocates and taking it back to all the professionals out there. We know better as self-advocates and the professionals listen to us in the Partnership Board."

Councillor Christine Radford, cabinet member for adult social care, said: "We're proud to have such an engaging board to help us listen to the needs of disabled people. They help shape our services and the work they do is invaluable."

Find out more at leicestershire.gov.uk/learning-disabilities-partnership.

New website matches carers with residents

Personal assistants (PAs) make a huge difference to over 600 people who need help.

If you have a 'personal budget', you can use a newly-launched website to find one.

It's a varied role and our new free service helps people to find a PA who can provide the support they need.

If you are a PA or would like to become one, you can take a look at the range of jobs and apply. Visit leicestershire.panoticeboard.org.uk or scan the QR code for full details, or email dpsoemploymentsupport@leics.gov.uk.

Councillor Christine Radford, cabinet member



Christine Radford

for adults, said: "PAs make a huge difference to people's lives and help them to live independently."

If you need help or want to become one, visit the website now to find out more."



Bus boost is just the ticket

We're using Government cash to improve services.



We're using £7m we've received from the Government to improve the bus network and bring on-demand services to more areas of Leicestershire.

We've been trialling an on-demand service called FoxConnect, which covers the south of the county, for over two years. So far, more than 50,000 passengers have called or used the mobile app to book a journey.

The Government money means we're looking to identify parts of the county – particularly rural areas – where this type of service could benefit residents. Just like FoxConnect, they'll join up with other modes of sustainable transport to help people get to work, health centres, shopping locations and social meetups.

Making sure that people can reach popular locations by bus is an important part of our approach.

We've already put some of the money to use with the re-introduction

of a Saturday service between Melton Mowbray and Nottingham – the Centrebus 19 service – which is back for a trial period until next March.

Thanks to our free fares scheme, thousands of people benefited from free Saturday bus travel. We've also been bringing our plans to life at green travel roadshows – with more planned early next year. Find out more about free Saturday fares and our roadshows: [choosehowyoumove.co.uk](https://www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk).



Ozzy O'Shea

"We're working more collaboratively with commercial bus companies to promote initiatives."



How we want to use the cash:

- Improve bus service reliability and frequency.
- More travel choice and access to key services.
- Helping to support and stabilise commercial networks.
- Give residents a mix of service types, better frequencies and later journeys.
- New ticketing arrangements to make bus travel more affordable.
- Better links between different bus services and other modes of transport.
- Expand on-demand services in Leicestershire.
- Support the move to 'greener' fleets.

Scan the QR code or visit [leicestershire.gov.uk/bus-improvement-plan](https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/bus-improvement-plan) to find out more



Keeping you safe and well this

winter



Beat the viruses

It's probably not top of your Christmas list, but getting seasonal vaccinations is central to keeping you and your loved ones safe and well.

Viruses spread more easily in our communities during the winter and getting vaccinated will provide the best possible protection against both flu and Covid-19.

Immunity built up from previous jabs reduces over time, so it's important to boost your protection, even if you have previously been vaccinated.

Vulnerable people who contract Covid-19 or flu can become seriously unwell and could require hospital

treatment. Eligibility for both vaccinations includes:

- People aged 65 and over
- Residents in care homes for older people
- People aged six months to 64 years in a clinical risk group – including pregnant women
- Frontline health and social care workers – including staff in care homes for older adults.

The Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccine is also available to pregnant women (after 28 weeks) and people aged 75 to 79.

To find out more about who's eligible or to book a vaccination appointment, search '**vaccination llr**' online.

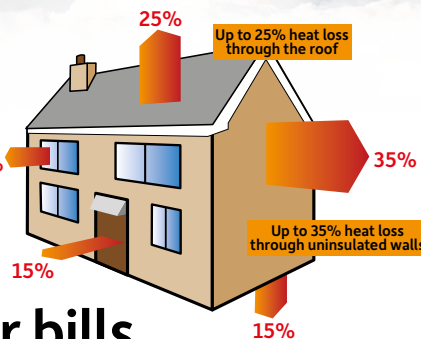


**Warm
homes**

Stay warm and cut your bills

Our Warm Homes team is on hand to help you keep toasty at home and reduce your energy bills. Free support is available to eligible residents about improving energy efficiency, securing grants to reduce bills and bring down your carbon footprint. Last year alone, the team helped over 1,000 households across Leicestershire.

Visit leicestershire.gov.uk/home-energy-grants or scan the QR code to read 'Your guide to staying warm at home this winter'. For further support call us on 0116 305 2524.



Supporting you this winter

Christmas can be the most wonderful time of year – but the festive season can also be overwhelming and tough, for a number of reasons.

If you need support or advice, use our one-stop service and head over to the First Contact Plus website:

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

We also understand the colder winter months can take a toll on our mental health and

it is easy to feel alone, but our Start a Conversation campaign provides advice, support and guidance, for you or someone you know, who may be struggling with their mental wellbeing.

You can find a variety of support services located across the county as well as a range of tips and advice at **startaconversation.co.uk**. You are never alone.

Keeping roads clear

If last winter and the last two months are anything to go by, we can be sure of one thing this festive season – rain.

But with temperatures also likely to drop this winter, we're ready to protect roads, if a cold snap bites.

We've been stocking up since September with supplies at our five grit barns. We've got 16,500 tonnes ready to wrap a protective coat over our roads.

At the height of winter, gritting can continue 24 hours a day if necessary.

Covering around 1,300 miles, we treat major roads, including all A roads and heavily-used B roads, major bus routes, roads linking towns and larger villages,

outside bus, train, police, fire and ambulance stations and hospitals.

There are 23 gritters – with the latest, hi-tech temperature tracking – and 20 drivers on standby to be called into action.

Weather conditions in 2023 were generally milder, but our gritters were still out and about – while most of us were sleeping. During the winter, our gritters undertook 47 runs around the county, treated roads with over 5,000 tonnes of salt, and covered almost half of the road network.

Our network of snow wardens and farmers are also ready to grit paths and fit ploughs to their tractors to help us clear roads.



After the wettest September on record, we're teaming up with emergency services, councils and other key agencies to call on communities to protect their homes and be flood ready.

With flooding becoming increasingly common, this new drive urges people to take practical steps to prepare:

- Check your home insurance policy for flood cover
- Sign up for flood warnings
- Make a flood plan
- Check your flood risk
- Prepare your home
- Report blocked gullies.

Councillor Ozzy O'Shea, cabinet member for flooding, said: "We recognise that residents and businesses have been hit incredibly hard by storms and flooding in recent months.

"Protecting ourselves from flooding is the responsibility of all of us, so I would encourage everyone to learn more about how to keep themselves, their businesses and their homes safe in the event of a flood."

This autumn has also seen drainage systems in parts of Leicestershire overwhelmed and homes and businesses

affected by downpours, as well as road closures.

Councillor O'Shea added: "Our highways teams worked round-the-clock to deal with hundreds of calls about fallen trees, manhole covers popping off and flooded roads.

"We regularly clean the drains and gullies but instances of intense rainfall are becoming more common. We saw one month's rainfall in just a few hours during a period of bad weather this autumn.

"I'm pleased that many people came along to our recent drop-in sessions where experts from the council, Environment Agency, district councils, water companies and others were on hand to answer questions."

Over the winter, we'll be pushing out helpful videos and interviews with experts to help you get the most up to date information and advice, as well as providing live weather updates, warnings on our social media channels and advice to landowners.

Find out more online at: leicestershire.gov.uk/flooding

If you're out and about in ice and snow:

- ❄️ Check gritted routes using our interactive map at leicestershire.gov.uk/gritting – and stick to them when temperatures fall.
- ❄️ Take extra care when it's icy – make sure your vehicle's winter ready and if you need to travel, allow extra time. Search 'Met Office'.
- ❄️ Visit uk.one.network or listen to local radio for the latest traffic updates.

Festive Events

Things to see and do this winter in our country parks, heritage sites, museums and libraries.
leicestershire.gov.uk/whats-on



Snibston COLLIERY PARK

Ashby Road, Coalville,
Leicestershire, LE67 3LN

leicscountryparks.org.uk

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



Lots to do including a 4km blue grade mountain bike trail, skills area, adventure playground and café, and home to the Century Theatre.

Colliery Tours



Sat 30 November & Sun 15 December, 11am & 1.30pm.
Adults £5, children under 15 free (must be accompanied by an adult).

Tours of the former colliery park which delve into its mining roots. Hosted by Snibston Heritage Trust, the tour, led by former coal miners, gives you an insight into the life of a coal miner during the 1960s and 1980s. Tickets available from eventbrite.co.uk

CENTURY THEATRE

at Snibston Colliery Park

Book online at
centurytheatre.co.uk
 or call the box office
 01530 27844
centurytheatre.co.uk
[f/CenturyTheatre](https://www.facebook.com/CenturyTheatre)
[@century_theatre](https://www.instagram.com/century_theatre)

Scan here
to book



Cinderella

**7 to 15 December,
 12pm & 4pm, from
 £16.50**

The Century Theatre in association with 409

Productions is delighted to be bringing the pantomime back this year, with the most magical tale of all. Don't miss this spectacular performance that's filled with jokes for all ages, fabulous songs, dazzling costumes and plenty of magic. Includes relaxed and adult only performances.

Upcoming in 2025

- **22 February – Rocket Max:**
A Tribute to Elton John
- **28 February – The Signatures**
- **20 to 22 March – Jesus Christ Superstar**

Beaumanor Hall FESTIVE GIFT FAIR

Woodhouse, Leicestershire, LE12 8TX
beaumanorhall.co.uk
 Tel: 01509 890119

[X](https://www.x.com/beaumanorhall) [@beaumanorhall](https://www.instagram.com/beaumanorhall)

**Sat 30 November and
 Sun 1 December,
 Sat 7 and Sun 8 December,
 10am-4pm.**

**£3 entry per person.
 Free entry for age
 12s and under.**

**FREE
 PARKING**



Enjoy the splendour of Victorian Beaumanor Hall while you browse more than 70 stalls – each packed full of beautifully prepared and carefully crafted

Christmas gifts, pampering treats and home accessories. There'll be some delicious food and drink to tempt your taste buds too.



BOSWORTH

BATTLEFIELD HERITAGE CENTRE
AND COUNTRY PARK



**Explore the stories
behind the Battle of
Bosworth in 1485 and
the death of Richard III.**

Sutton Cheney, Leicestershire, CV13 0AD
bosworthbattlefield.org.uk
Tel: 01455 290429

📱 @bosworthbattlefield

Open daily Nov to March, 10am-4pm
and April to October, 10am-5pm. Visit
the 1485 Tithe Barn for refreshments at
Bosworth everyday 10am-4pm.

**For
children**

Silly Santa Hunt

Sat 7 to Mon 23 December.

**£2 per sheet from the ticket office
or shop (car park charges apply).**

It's Christmas time and Santa is getting ready
to fly around the world, but he's misplaced
the list of names to deliver gifts to. Can
you help Santa find the gifts on his list?



charnwood museum



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

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

Tel: 01509 233754

Open Weds to Sat, 10am-3pm.
FREE ENTRY.

**Great for
tracing your
family
history**

The Record Office for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

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

Resources for researching local history and
culture. Extensive collections, dating from
early 1100s.



MELTON CARNEGIE MUSEUM

**See what's behind the red house door,
discover animal history and uncover
the past times of this market town.**

Thorpe End, Melton Mowbray, LE13 1RB
meltonmuseum.org Tel: 0116 305 3860
Open: Tues to Sat, 10am-4.30pm. FREE.

**Free
EXHIBITION**

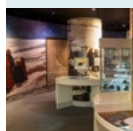
**Villiers Revealed –
Darling of the Stuart Court**
Open until June 2025

George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham,
was one of the most famous figures
of early 17th century Europe. Born at
Brooksby Hall in Leicestershire, he became
the 'favourite' of King James I. Villiers' story
is a reminder that LGBTQ+ life and love
isn't a side story in history,
but it shapes history.

**Scan the QR code to view
the online exhibition**



Harborough Museum



**Discover the mysteries
of the Hallaton Treasure,
pioneers of fashion and
local history.**

The Symington Building, Adam and Eve St,
Market Harborough, LE16 7LT
harboroughmuseum.org.uk

Tel: 0116 305 3627

Open: Tues to Fri, 10am-6pm and Sat,
10am-4pm. FREE ENTRY.

**Culture
Leicestershire
project**

Ladybird-inspired mural
On display until January 2025.

A new mural reflecting the
ever-evolving world of work is now on
display at Harborough Museum. The piece,
which was co-created with heritage staff,
creative practitioners and residents, was
inspired by the Ladybird Book series,
'People at Work' and acts as a response
to the current exhibition on display
'Harborough at Work: Earning a Living
in a Ladybird World'.



THE 1620s HOUSE & GARDEN at Donington le Heath



**Historic 1620s
manor house
with links to the
Gunpowder Plot.**

Manor Rd, Donington le Heath, LE67 2FW
1620shouse.org.uk Tel: 01455 290429

The site is now closed for the winter
season except for special events.
Re-opens on Thursday 3 April, 2025.

Illuminated Christmas Carolling
Sun 22 December, 3-5pm.

£3 per person. No booking necessary.

Accompanied by Ibstock Brick Brass
Band, visitors can sing along to well-loved
Christmas carols to herald in the festive
season. With a free light trail, crafts in the
house and refreshments, we can see why
it will be a festive favourite.

**Scan the QR code to
see more at the manor**



**Bringing the joy of
art, heritage and
culture to your door**

If you find it difficult to visit our
heritage sites, then Culture to You might be
for you! Piloting in Oadby and Wigston, this is
a FREE new offer that provides access to our
unique art, museum collections and interactive
activities to people in their own homes.

If you're interested:

Email culturetoyou@leics.gov.uk
Phone 0116 305 1221
cultureleicestershire.co.uk



**Free
to join**

**YOUR
LiBR@RY**
KNOWLEDGE • DISCOVERY • ENTERTAINMENT

There's lots of activities taking place this
season across Leicestershire Libraries. Visit
leicestershire.gov.uk/whats-on or follow
the Libraries Facebook page - /yourlibrary

Number confidence equals success

Kerry signed up to Multiply – and found it boosted her mental health, not just her numbers skills.

Multiply is our Government-funded programme helping build confidence with numbers through hundreds of free courses, available in person or online, at work or at home, on a part-time or intensive basis.



Kerry took the ‘Cook, Meet and Eat’ course:

Q: Why did you start?

KERRY: “I wanted to do the cooking course to push myself and my doctor recommended I did it to support my mental health after my parents died, because I suffered with anxiety.”

Q: How has it helped you?

KERRY: “I look at recipes and don’t use packets anymore. I have made spaghetti bolognese in my slow cooker and my girls want me to make it again. The maths learning comes in handy as I can judge the timing it so it’s all cooked right.”

Q: Has it given you number confidence?

KERRY: “My daughter’s school says that they can see that I help them with their maths and that they are doing really well, one of them loves cooking now and might pick it for one of her GCSEs.”

Find out more about taking part in Multiply by scanning the QR code or visiting leicestershire.gov.uk/multiply



Volunteering

Could you spend a few hours supporting a young person in care?

Whether it’s walking in the park, going to the cinema or visiting a restaurant, we’re looking for people to sign up as ‘independent visitors’.

Neil’s story



Neil became an independent visitor a year ago and has been

enjoying making a positive difference to the young person he was matched to:

Q: Why did you become an independent visitor?

NEIL: I first heard about the scheme on BBC Radio 4. The piece mentioned that there was a shortage – I was interested in the role and I did some research into it.

Q: What’s the application process like?

NEIL: The application process was painless and took about three months all in all. It involved a couple of meetings with a support worker. There was nothing too intrusive and it was quite relaxed.

Once I had finished the interview process, I was quickly matched with

a young person and went to a joint meeting at their home with my dedicated support worker and their foster family.

Q: What’s it like being an independent visitor?

NEIL: I have only been participating in the scheme for a year and so far, we’ve done so many activities: visiting a National Trust estate, a retro computer game museum, a rugby match and a regimental army museum.

I see the role as a source of stability for the young person and someone that they can rely on that is not directly involved in their care.

I have found it incredibly rewarding and would wholeheartedly recommend being an independent visitor to others.

Find out more about the scheme by emailing fostering@leics.gov.uk or calling 0116 305 0505.



Classroom at Bowman Academy

Photo courtesy of Bowmer + Kirkland

Two new schools opened their doors for the first time this term

Bowman Academy in Shepshed is a specialist school for those aged four-to-16 with social, emotional and mental health needs.

And in Market Harborough, 210-place Wellington Place Primary is an eco-school and was built on the William Davis Airfield Farm development.

Support from the SEND Local Offer

Information about education, health and social care is available for families with children with special educational needs and disabilities through our SEND Local Offer.

Visit leicestershire.gov.uk/send or scan the QR code for more information on the local offer. The website will also soon have the dates of our upcoming roadshows in 2025, which are attended by providers.

You can also check out Leicestershire Local Offer on Facebook.



Get in early

Early years childcare helps youngsters to learn and parents and carers to feel confident to leave their child when returning to work.

You can choose from pre-schools and playgroups, day nurseries and childminders. And eligible working parents can now access 15 hours a week of free childcare for children aged from nine months, and 30 hours for children aged three to four.

Find out more by scanning the QR code or visit leicestershire.gov.uk/funded-childcare-places.



Support with attendance

Make sure you get support if your child is experiencing difficulties attending school.

It's best to contact your school first to discuss what help and support could be put in place. We can offer advice if they're not able to resolve the matter, including helping schools to provide access to education.

Statistics show that young people with the highest achievement at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance, meaning it's important for children to attend every day, when possible.

Find out more by scanning the QR code or visit leicestershire.gov.uk/inclusion-service



Wellbeing matters

Working for the council means support at every stage



What our team says...

Working for us means a whole host of support, including a healthy work life balance and the chance to progress.

We're also committed to looking after staff wellbeing, no matter what the issue.

Business Analyst Wendy has worked for the council for

24 years, and experienced support while going through the menopause. She said: "I noticed the first signs of menopause – hot flushes and most frustratingly, issues with sleep. I began to lose concentration at work as a result and started to feel anxious that I might not be able to do my job properly.

"I tuned in to a webinar at work about menopause support, as well as a face-to-face event, where I was able to find support and guidance. This helped me to feel so much less alone and confident enough to ask my manager for reasonable adjustments at work."

Wendy's line manager, Joseph, said: "Wendy took the lead and made use of available menopause resources. I got to work straight away by adjusting her

hours and scheduling in focused time to complete complex tasks. Supporting workers through menopause truly is a win-win for everyone."

Councillor Pam Posnett, cabinet member for staff relations, said:

"This story, and winning Menopause



Pam Posnett

Friendly UK's Employer of the Year and Best Peer to Peer Support Awards, shows the great work we do to accommodate our staff's needs."

Could our friendly, flexible and inclusive workplace be right for you?

Current vacancies are available on our website [leicestershire.gov.uk/jobs](https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/jobs).

What our team says:
"I was able to find support and guidance."

Why work for us?

1. A fair day's pay

A competitive salary, generous annual leave, local government pension and enhanced maternity, paternity and adoption pay.

2. The importance of a healthy work/life balance

Supporting flexible start and finish times, compressed hours and hybrid working.

3. Employee wellbeing

Support networks, free confidential counselling, workers groups, wellbeing and exercise sessions are available.

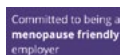
4. A diverse workforce

We pride ourselves on employees feeling comfortable and confident about who they are and promoting equality and opportunity.

5. Progression

Making the most of your talents. You can job shadow, be mentored, take coaching for leadership and management and even move between departments to progress up into senior roles.

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



QUIT

Schools targeted in stop smoking campaign

Our latest work to help reduce smoking and vaping in key target areas has started.

Using more than £600,000 of Government cash, we're focusing on working with young people and pregnant women.

Our work with young people includes both smoking and vaping following an increase of vaping in children. The Quit Ready team has already visited secondary schools, including South Charnwood High School, to highlight the dangers of both smoking and vaping.

With smoking during pregnancy affecting the health of both the baby and the mother, new stop smoking advisors are also being introduced into local midwifery services, antenatal classes and pregnancy booking clinics. This will help to support pregnant women quit smoking through specialist courses.

We will also turn our attention to workplaces, and the Quit Ready team will bring preventative sessions to employees of businesses

in key sectors across Leicestershire that experience higher rates of smoking.

North West Leicestershire and Charnwood are areas in the county with higher rates of smoking than the national average, and our targeted work will focus on these areas first.

Councillor Louise Richardson, cabinet member for health, said: "Leicestershire has the lowest rate



Louise Richardson

of smoking in the East Midlands but this money means we can do more and help more people.

"These new target areas are a way of us working to prevent issues rather than our local health services having to resolve them."

Want to join the 11,000 people our Quit Ready team has helped quit smoking since 2017? Our free and confidential service is ready and waiting. Scan the QR code or visit quitready.co.uk. You can also call 0345 646 66 66.

QuitReady
Leicestershire & Rutland



Health annual report published

Mental health and promoting healthy lifestyles are in the spotlight in a new report.

Leicestershire's Health and Wellbeing Board brings together local health and care organisations to help improve residents' health and wellbeing and has published its latest yearly review.

Alongside us, partners include the local NHS trusts, police and the Integrated Care Board. Voluntary sector community organisations such as Healthwatch and Voluntary Action Leicestershire as well as district councils are also part of the board.

Over the last year, it's focused on expanding community mental health services and promoting healthy lifestyles as well as better integration of health and social care services.

The annual report showing the work of the board is now available to see at leicestershire.gov.uk/health-board

Have your say on suicide prevention



We're updating our suicide prevention strategy – and you can have your say on our priorities.

The refreshed strategy focuses on five key priorities for how the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Suicide Audit and Prevention Group will help to prevent suicide and save lives.

Read the strategy and have your say before 22 December at leicestershire.gov.uk/current-engagement.

Our Start a Conversation website includes advice and guidance, aimed at people who may be having suicidal thoughts, are at risk of suicide, those who are worried about someone else and people who've been bereaved as a result of suicide. Visit startaconversation.co.uk for more information.



Volunteering

Action in your environment

Our volunteers are making the county greener.

Whether it's reducing waste, reducing carbon emissions or conserving and enhancing nature, our 45 environment action volunteers are busy bees.

We're looking for more people aged over 18 to join the team and provide tailored training.

Anstey-based volunteer, Lynsey, said: "I get the chance to talk all things waste. This includes everything from preventing food and general waste to advising communities on swapping single use items for reusable ones, as well as home composting."

Lynsey has helped her child's primary school to set up a pre-worn uniform scheme, and said: "We ask the school community for donations of good quality outgrown school uniform, including PE kits and unclaimed lost property. Families can take what they think they can use at no charge."

Councillor Blake Pain, cabinet member for the environment, said: "Our brilliant volunteers help us to achieve our goals to help improve the local environment, and we are grateful for those who dedicate their time and help to support our services."

Find out more about the upcoming training sessions and apply online by scanning the QR code, visit lesswaste.org.uk/volunteering or email wasteprevention@leics.org.uk.



Recycle right this Christmas



Here's our quick-look guide to popular Christmas items and whether you can recycle them.



Can be recycled:



Batteries:

Recycle at specialist collection points - never in kerbside bins.



Bubble wrap:

Can be recycled.



Cardboard boxes and packaging:

Flatten them before recycling.



Christmas cards and envelopes:

Can be recycled - remove glitter or embellishments first.



Christmas crackers:

Non-glittery paper and card can be recycled.



Christmas trees (real):

Check for local collections or compost at recycling and household waste sites.



Fairy lights:

Can be recycled at recycling and household waste sites if broken.



Gift bags, tags and boxes:

Can be recycled if non-metallic, without glitter or decorations - remove any string.



Wrapping paper:

Can be recycled if non-metallic, without glitter or decorations.



Can't be recycled:



Christmas crackers

made from glittery paper:

Can't be recycled



Christmas cracker toys:

Hats and toys can't be recycled.



Christmas decorations and tinsel:

Can't be recycled.



Christmas trees (artificial):

Can't be recycled.



Food waste:

Put this in your waste bin.



Polystyrene:

Can't be recycled.



Ribbons and bows:

Can't be recycled.



Tissue paper:

Can't be recycled.

If you can, minimise the amount of non-recyclable items and dispose in your general rubbish once they're finished with.

Recycling in North West Leicestershire is sorted at an alternative facility so may differ. For more information, please visit nwleics.gov.uk



Find more details about what can and can't be recycled at lesswaste.org.uk/recycle or scan the QR Code. Remember, food waste, nappies, batteries and textiles do not belong in your kerbside recycling.



TRADING STANDARDS

What we do

Our Trading Standards team helps protect consumers from illegal trading practices and supports businesses to comply with consumer protection legislation. Here's the team's year in numbers:

8 successful convictions, which resulted in just under **£1 million** in fines and 310 hours of Community Punishment Orders

1,157

visits to food premises

Provided compliance advice to **890** new and established food businesses

1,465

complaints relating to unfair trading practices and doorstep crime incidents

459

complaints about home improvements recorded

51 victims of scams were supported

424

complaints about second-hand car sales

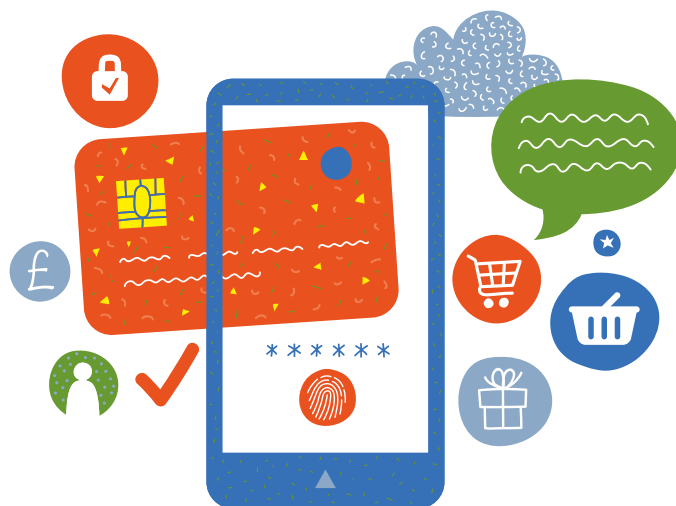
Almost 490,000 unsafe products intercepted at East Midlands Airport and prevented from entering the supply chain

110

animal health and welfare visits

12,577

vape and tobacco products seized from retailers with a street value of **£115,000**



Avoid online misery

Sadly neither Christmas nor Black Friday are immune from scams. And with shopping looming large for both, here are our top tips for festive cheer:

- **Buy from reputable retailers** – stick to websites you know and trust.
- **Use secure payment methods** – avoid using direct bank transfers and pay with a credit card if you can, especially if over £100 for extra online protection, or use a secure online payment service.
- **Watch out for fake emails and ads** – be cautious of emails or adverts that claim you've won prizes or that there's a problem with an

order or delivery. And don't click on suspicious links.

- **Be wary of online selling platforms** – these can be a great place to find deals, but they also come with their own risks. Read feedback and look for any red flags.
- **Is it too good to be true?** – is the previous price over-inflated and the sale price the real price? Research to see if it really is a bargain.

Find more advice at [ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/shopping-online-securely](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/shopping-online-securely) or scan the QR code.



Firework safety

Most businesses can only sell fireworks at certain times of the year. With Diwali and bonfire night over, licensed businesses can now only sell fireworks between Boxing Day and New Year's Eve.

We inspect licensed businesses selling fireworks. If you have any concerns around the sale of fireworks contact our team by visiting leicestershire.gov.uk/trading-standards or scan the QR code.






If your child is starting primary school for the first time in autumn 2025, you need to apply by

Wednesday 15 January 2025

For hints and tips about the process, information on Leicestershire schools and to apply, visit

leicestershire.gov.uk/admissions



GoLearn!
Leicestershire Adult Learning Service



Discover a wide range of **community learning courses** with **GoLearn!**

20%
New Year Discount on course fees available from 8:30am on Monday 2 December, till 7pm on Friday 31 January 2025

Day and weekend courses designed around your life and work and available in venues across Leicestershire.

Open doors to work | Meet new people
Gain confidence | Support your wellbeing
Discover a new passion | Be more active
Give back to your local community

Call us on **FREEphone 0800 988 0308** or visit us online at **www.GoLearnLeicestershire.ac.uk**







Funded childcare for children aged nine months to four years

To check eligibility visit **childcarechoices.gov.uk**




My Council

X My Vote

County Council elections
Thursday 1 May 2025

Sign-up to get the latest updates:
leicestershire.gov.uk/sign-up

