

InformationNow News 31 July 2026

NEWS

InformationNow Needs You!

Could you help supercharge how people in Newcastle access information, plan ahead, and get support?

If you've used InformationNow.org.uk in your personal or professional life, we'd love to know what you think of it! We're looking for a group of people to meet us for an informal session in the Civic Centre where we put the website to the test and hear your honest feedback. Your thoughts will help us make InformationNow as accessible and navigable as possible for all who need it.

The group will meet on **Tuesday 25 August 2026, 2pm to 3pm** with refreshments provided. If you can spare an hour to join us, [register your interest here](#).

Read more on InformationNow about the ways you can currently [make InformationNow more accessible](#).

InformationNOW

Did you know that the Recite Me toolbar has a built-in dictionary?

To use it, highlight any word you don't understand, or that you're unsure of, and click the logo of the book icon and A-Z on the Recite Me toolbar. A handy column will pop up that gives you the word's definition. This helps you understand all of the information on a page without having to leave InformationNOW. The tool will even give you words with the same meaning, further helping your understanding.

Visit www.informationnow.org.uk to use the toolbar and dictionary feature.

Read more on InformationNow about [Recite Me](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON

Help Us Shape the Future of Adult Social Care

We're developing a new three-year plan for Adult Social Care and Prevention, shaped by people who use care, support and prevention, unpaid carers, families and communities across Newcastle.

We want to hear:

- What matters most to you (or someone you support) about wellbeing, support or care?
- What good support, care and community connections looks like?
- What should be focused on and improved?

We're particularly keen to hear from people whose voices are not always included.

There are lots different ways you can have your say or help others get involved, such as hosting a discussion, inviting us to one of your events and activities, or sharing or taking part in our survey. Your support will help ensure the plan reflects people's experiences, priorities and ideas for the future.

To request resources, or to find out more about having your say on the three-year plan, contact letsworktogether@newcastle.gov.uk

Read more on InformationNow about [working together](#).

NOVUM Festival

7 August to 9 August, City-wide

NOVUM Festival returns next weekend with a three-day takeover of creativity, entertainment and unexpected moments across Newcastle city centre. Come along for free, family-friendly fun with a full programme of events, outdoor performances, artist workshops, and more.

[Find out more about the full schedule of events by clicking here.](#)

Read more on InformationNow about [Novum festival](#).

OPPORTUNITIES

Health Literacy Training Courses

These free sessions are available to people working in the health, care, local authority and VCSE sectors in the region. They are aimed at anyone who is interested in how we can communicate more clearly with the public to improve health and wellbeing.

Our courses are:

- Health literacy: what it is and why it matters
- How to write simply
- Speaking skills

- Writing for health literacy: beyond the basics
- Train the trainer

We are now two different versions of some of the courses, aimed at different types of roles and organisations. You'll find full details of each course below.

Find more information and sign up through the Boost Learning Academy –

<https://academy.boost.org.uk/programmes/health-literacy/catalogue?category=health-literacy>

Read more on InformationNow about [Health Innovation North East and North Cumbria \(HI NENC\)](#).

Introduction to Office, Word, Excel and PowerPoint

22 September 2026 to 16 October 2026, Newcastle City Library

Perfect for anyone wanting to get a basic understanding of how to use Word, Excel and PowerPoint. This course will show you how to use these programmes to edit your CV, cut and paste options, how to sort a spreadsheet and how to present your work on slides.

There are four sessions to attend over four weeks for anyone taking the course. [Learn more about how to apply to attend here](#).

Read more on InformationNow about [digital skills support and computer classes](#).

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Bus Franchising Scheme Consultation

This is an opportunity for everyone to provide their views on the future of public transport and how it is operated and managed.

Make your voice count!

Call: 0191 277 4223

Email: haveyoursay@northeast-ca.gov.uk

In person – there is a team of people who will be out and about in neighbourhoods and communities holding drop-in events. You are welcome to get in touch directly to have a conversation or arrange a visit.

If you would like to complete the more detailed questionnaire, then you can access a copy [here](#). Simply complete and return to haveyoursay@northeast-ca.gov.uk.

Read more on InformationNow about [Public transport](#)

Read more on InformationNow about [North East Combined Authority](#).

Wave 15 – VCSE Barometer

The VCSE Barometer is a regular national survey of voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise organisations. It provides up-to-date evidence on the pressures organisations are facing, how the sector is responding, and what support may be needed.

Previous waves have shown that funding, rising demand, inflation, energy costs and volunteer recruitment remain major issues for many organisations. Around 4 in 5 organisations told us income and funding was a top concern. Almost half pointed to rising demand, more than 2 in 5 highlighted rising non-energy costs, and around 1 in 3 raised energy costs. National data also shows that regular formal volunteering remains below pre-pandemic levels.

Wave 15 asks what is happening now. With a new Prime Minister coming in and national priorities being reshaped, this is a useful moment to build a clearer picture of what organisations are experiencing on the ground.

Findings from the Barometer are shared with policymakers in DCMS as part of their sector intelligence-gathering, helping inform cross-government understanding of sector sentiment, health and resilience.

Organisations that complete the survey will receive an individual report showing how their responses compare with others across the sector.

[Please complete Wave 15 here](#). The survey should take around 20 minutes and closes 5th August.

Make Work Pay: Employment Rights for Unpaid Carers

Closing 1 September 2026

The Department for Business and Trade has launched [a consultation on employment rights and carer's leave](#), with proposals to introduce paid carer's leave and a right to return to work following a period of intensive caring.

Anyone can participate in the consultation, but they particularly welcome views from those with lived experience of caring responsibilities, businesses, those with experience in supporting unpaid carers in the workplace, and those with expertise in unpaid care.

[Find out more information on the consultation here](#).

Read more on InformationNow about [looking after someone](#).

Shape Future Research into Multiple Long-term Conditions

A new public survey has been launched to identify the most important unanswered research questions about care for people living with multiple long-term conditions (MLTC).

The survey is looking to identify the most important unanswered questions about people living with MLTC. The goal is to ensure that future healthcare research directly reflects the real-world needs of patients, carers and professionals.

They're looking for responses from:

- People with lived experience of MLTC
- Family members and unpaid carers who support them
- Professionals working across health, social care, the voluntary sector, policy and research

[Learn more about taking part here.](#)

Read more on InformationNow about [living with a long-term health condition or disability](#).

REPORTS AND RESOURCES

GP Patient Survey Results

The GP Patient Survey was an independent survey run on behalf of NHS England. The survey asked patients about their experiences of their GP practice, like how easy it was to get in contact, the care they received and how confident they felt about the healthcare professionals they saw.

[Click here to see the results for your surgery](#)

Read more on InformationNow about [Newcastle GP Services](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

Walker Wildlife Walks

4 August 2026 and 18 August 2026, 10am to 12.00pm, Walker Park

Join Natural History Society of Northumbria for a fun, family-friendly walk in search of the birds, bugs and other wildlife found in Walker Park.

You will be on the lookout for birds, bugs and interesting botany, with an introduction to the identification of species, and how to use wildlife recording apps. This walk is aimed at complete beginners and enthusiasts alike. Feel free to bring along your cameras and binoculars, and remember sunscreen.

Information can be found here for the [4 August walk](#), and for here the [18 August walk](#).

Read more on InformationNow about [Natural History Society of Northumbria](#).

Free Family Fun Days at Newcastle College

Weekly, 4 August 2026 to 25 August 2026, 10am to 1pm, Trevelyan Building, Newcastle College

Join Newcastle College every Tuesday in August to enjoy a range of fun, informal and inclusive activities designed to help families learn together. These sessions will support parents, carers and children to build confidence, develop practical skills and strengthen learning together as a family.

The sessions are completely free to attend, relaxed and welcoming, with lots of enjoyable activities for children and families.

[More information can be found here.](#)

For more information and to confirm attendance, please contact **Mike Cooper** at Michael.Cooper@ncl-coll.ac.uk and **Helen Wilkinson** at Helen.Wilkinson@ncl-coll.ac.uk

Red Squirrel Dusk Walk

6 August 2026, 8pm to 10pm, Choppington Community Woods

Discover Choppington Community Woods at dusk to look for signs of local red squirrels and other wildlife.

Take a leisurely stroll through the woods in the evening to try and find signs of the shy and beautiful native red squirrel. You'll join Bedlington and District Red Squirrel Group, learn more about red squirrels and how the group are helping to protect them locally. You'll stay out late enough to get the bat detectors out to see what other wildlife uses the woods in the evening.

[Further details can be found here.](#)

Read more on InformationNow about [Northumberland Wildlife Trust](#).

Reshaping the Toon

7 August 2026, 10am to 3pm, Newcastle City Library

Over the summer on the lead up to #NOVUM26, community groups from across Newcastle have been working with Cabinet of Curiosity Studio to create miniature paper landmarks inspired by the city's buildings, streets, stories and people. Together, they've explored what makes Newcastle special, sharing memories, celebrating local identity and imagining the city's future.

On display during #NOVUM26 at Newcastle City Library, Reshaping the Toon celebrates the power of making together and offers a unique opportunity to explore a miniature Newcastle created by its communities.

For any questions or for accessibility info about Reshaping the Toon or any NOVUM programmed events or performances email: novum@newcastle.gov.uk.

Read more on InformationNow about [NOVUM Festival](#).

Ouse Burn Way: Dragonfly Walk

15 August 2026, 12pm to 2pm, Ouseburn

Join local entomologist, Neha Mujumdar, to celebrate the amazing dragonflies and damselflies of the North East.

This beginner-friendly walk will take place at Woolsington Parish Ponds. This local site is a mosaic of different habitats like woodland, freshwater ponds, and grasslands supporting an array of invertebrates. It is also a popular spot for watching dragonflies like Banded Demoiselle, Common Hawker and the Four-Spotted Chaser.

[All details can be found here.](#)

Read more on InformationNow about [Newcastle's green spaces](#).

NEW AND UPDATED ON INFONOW

Pest Control

If you are bothered by pests such as mice, rats, or insects in your home or garden, [Your Local Services at Newcastle City Council](#) can help you. The team deals with pest and insect control in all domestic homes in Newcastle and advice on further prevention.

There will be a charge for treatments of all pests, unless you are a [Newcastle Council Housing](#) tenant. You will be told the charges involved before the work starts.

Read more on InformationNow about [dealing with pests](#).

Report Fraud

Report Fraud is the place to tell police about cyber crime and fraud in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Using their service you can make a report online via: <https://www.reportfraud.police.uk> or by phone on 0300 123 2040.

You can contact them:

- By phone **24 hours per day, 7 days per week** (please note, you may experience reduced availability 8pm to 8am, to prioritise busiest periods)
- By online chat with one of their webchat agents from 8am to 8pm, 7 days per week
- By automated chatbot for more general advice and answers to frequently asked questions. This is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week
- On social media here: Facebook.com/reportfrauduk, X.com/reportfrauduk and Instagram.com/reportfrauduk

Report Fraud replaced Action Fraud in November 2025. Any reports received by Action Fraud were transferred over to the Report Fraud system as part of a transition process.

Read more on InformationNow about [cyber crime, online fraud and scams](#).

British Gas

British Gas is a large energy provider to homes and businesses all over the UK. Their products and services include:

- Gas
- Electricity
- Boiler and Heating
- Home Insurance
- Plumbing and Drains
- Home Electrics
- Home Appliance Cover
- Solar Panels
- Energy Saving Products

Their updated customer service contact telephone numbers are available at <https://www.informationnow.org.uk/organisation/british-gas/>.

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[InformationNow News 17 July 2026](#)

InformationNOW Hello from Hannah Riley – the new Prevention, Information and Advice Lead joining the InformationNow team! I've spent recent weeks settling into my new role, getting out there and learning lots ab...