

NI Direct phone line currently not working

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We are experiencing difficulties presently with the NI Direct phone line.

This is being worked on and we hope it will be fixed shortly.

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ICT apprenticeship scheme offers opportunities

If you're interested in a career in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), opportunities are available on the new ICT apprenticeship scheme. The closing date for applications is 5.00 pm on 8 September.

How to apply

The scheme has more than 30 apprenticeships available in various software development and IT infrastructure roles.

This innovative apprenticeship scheme, involving government and a number of ICT employers, is an excellent opportunity to start a career in ICT.

It will make sure that, when you're seeking employment, you'll have the necessary skills to take advantage of potential opportunities.

Details on how to apply can be found on this page:

If you're successful in being recruited as an apprentice, you will be given the opportunity to develop skills, achieve qualifications and enhance your career prospects.

More useful links

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[GCSE results – support and advice](#)

The GCSE results are out. Now it's time to make important decisions about your future and there are many options available for you to consider.

Contact a careers adviser

The [Careers Service](#) has a team of professionally-qualified careers advisers who offer impartial careers information, advice and guidance.

To contact a careers adviser, you can:

Careers advisers will be available from 9.00 am to 7.30 pm to provide support to GCSE students on Thursday 24 and Friday 25 August.

Careers advisers can provide advice and guidance on:

- Further and Higher Education
- continuing on at school
- apprenticeships
- CVs
- job applications
- job interviews
- advice on job trends, including occupations which will be important in the future

Online information

Further information on the many options available to you are also available in the following section:

If you have an issue with a result

If you have a query on any issue relating to your exam results (for example appeals, re-marks or re-sits) then contact your school, college, or the [Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment \(CCEA\)](#) helpline:

The helpline will be open 9.00 am to 5.00 pm until Wednesday 30 August.

More useful links

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[Emergency payment scheme for flooding](#)

Following the recent heavy rainfall, there is an emergency scheme for householders affected by related flooding. Individual householders who have suffered severe inconvenience can claim a £1,000 payment from their local council.

Contact your local council

If you feel that you may be entitled to the payment, contact your local council as soon as possible.

Your local council will arrange for an urgent inspection of your property. If the council decides that your claim is eligible, you will receive your payment promptly.

You can find contact details for all local councils on the page below:

The payment is an offer of practical help to those who have suffered severe inconvenience, to make sure homes are made habitable as quickly as possible. It is not a compensation payment.

You can also find useful information about making an insurance claim at this link:

People are also asked to keep an eye out for elderly and vulnerable neighbours and check that they are ok.

More useful links

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[Protect yourself against tick bites](#)

People are being reminded to protect themselves against the risk of tick bites. Ticks can carry Lyme disease which may be transmitted to humans through their bite. There are no vaccines to defend against tick-borne

disease in the UK and Ireland. Therefore, the best defence is to avoid being bitten.

Signs and symptoms of Lyme disease

Ticks are tiny spider-like creatures, which feed on the blood of animals and sometimes people.

If you are involved in outdoor activities which take you into the countryside, parks, or gardens with wildlife such as squirrels and hedgehogs, you may be at risk of tick bites.

[Lyme disease](#) is a bacterial infection which is transmitted by tick bites.

The earliest and most common symptom of Lyme disease is a pink or red circular rash that develops around the area of the bite, three to 30 days after someone is bitten.

The rash is often described as looking like a bullseye on a dartboard.

You may also experience flu-like symptoms, such as:

- tiredness
- headaches
- muscle or joint pain

Consult [your GP](#) if a rash or other symptoms develop within a few weeks of a tick bite, as early treatment can prevent progression to chronic disease.

If Lyme disease is left untreated, further health issues may develop months or even years later, including:

- problems affecting the nervous system
- heart problems
- inflammation of the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord

Preventing tick bites

Late spring, early summer and autumn are peak times for tick bites, which coincide with people venturing outdoors in the warmer weather.

It's important to take preventive measures against tick bites and also look out for ticks after visiting affected areas.

The best way of preventing Lyme disease is to avoid being bitten when you are in grassy or woodland areas known to have a high tick population. The following precautions might help to prevent Lyme disease:

- keep to footpaths and avoid long grass when out walking
- wear a long-sleeved shirt
- tuck your trousers into your socks
- wear light-coloured clothes (to help you spot a tick on them)

- use insect repellent
- check yourself for ticks and remove any promptly
- check your children and pets for ticks

There is currently no vaccine available to prevent Lyme disease.

How to remove a tick

If you find a tick on your or your child's skin, remove it using a pair of tweezers that won't squash the tick (such as fine-tipped tweezers) or a tick removal tool (available from pet shops or vets).

Gently grip the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull steadily away from the skin without crushing the tick. If you use a tick removal tool, follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Wash your skin with water and soap afterwards, then apply an antiseptic cream to the skin around the bite.

Don't use a lit cigarette end, a match head or substances such as alcohol or petroleum jelly to force the tick out.

More useful links