

## Hertfordshire Local Resilience Forum Stakeholder Update – 1 April 2021

**A message from Darryl Keen, Director of Community Protection,  
Chief Fire Officer and Chair of the strategic coordination group of the LRF**



Dear stakeholders,

Whilst we now have some freedoms to meet outside in limited numbers and to enjoy taking part in organised outdoor sport, I would urge all Hertfordshire residents to continue acting sensibly over the long Easter bank holiday weekend to ensure we keep transmission rates of COVID suppressed as much as we can. By continuing to play our part and remembering to keep doing the basics – Hands, Face, Space – we can help make sure we reach the next stage on the roadmap out of COVID. You will see our Hertfordshire campaign on social media to encourage people to keep on sticking to the rules. Please share this content with your followers and networks if you can.

I hope you manage to enjoy a restful weekend. On behalf of the LRF, I would like to thank all those key workers who will be on shift this bank holiday keeping our communities safe and well.

### **COVID-19 vaccination programme**

[Vaccination figures](#) have reached more than 750,000 for Hertfordshire and west Essex this week, as the focus continues on vaccinating people in [cohorts 1-9](#), including the increasing number of people who are due their second doses. Around 4,500 second doses have been carried out in care homes to date, which is around 40% of the total. Work will continue over the next few weeks to deliver second doses to remaining residents at their 12-week mark.

West Herts Hospitals NHS Trust's COVID-19 vaccination hub re-opened on 15 March to administer second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to health and social care staff. To date over 4,200 staff have now received their second shots at the hospital and are fully vaccinated. The vaccination hub at the Lister hospital is also making good progress through health and social care staff and patients who are due their second dose of the vaccine.

To make best use of staff time, some large vaccination centres will be open for a reduced number of days over the next two weeks. Revised opening times for the public can be found [here](#). Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust has been contacting anyone whose appointment needs to be rearranged - around 2,000 patients have had their appointments rescheduled. Some people may receive an automatically generated text about their original booking slot, if their appointment has been rearranged to a new time, they should ignore the text reminder.

From now until 12 April, **walk-in** vaccination sessions for health and care staff are available at large vaccination centres for those who have yet to book their first or second dose appointments. More information, including opening times for health and social care staff, is available [here](#). No appointment is necessary but staff will need to bring their NHS number, proof of ID and vaccination card if they've already had their first dose. Health and social care staff are no longer able to book their first appointment using the national booking site.

From today (1 April), unpaid carers who are not on their GP's register of carers and are not known to council services, will no longer be able to book their vaccination appointment using the national booking system. They will instead need to contact their GP to arrange their jab at a GP-run site. Our Hertfordshire GP practices are working hard to encourage those last few eligible patients in priority groups to take up the offer of vaccination.

### **More people added to priority list for vaccinations**

Earlier this week, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advised that people over 16 years of age who live with severely immunosuppressed adults – including people with HIV, or cancer, should also now be offered the COVID-19 vaccination.

This is in response to evidence which has recently emerged which suggests that COVID-19 vaccinations may not be as effective in those adults who are immunosuppressed as it is in others. By vaccinating their adult household contacts, the aim is to reduce the risk of infection for immunosuppressed people. GP practices are starting the process of contacting patients who are immunosuppressed, to identify people in their household who are now eligible to receive the jab.

### **Other NHS updates**

Both East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust and West Herts Hospitals NHS Trust are seeing high numbers of patients with non-COVID symptoms. As a reminder, if you need health help over the Easter weekend, please use NHS 111 online in the first instance ([www.111.nhs.uk](http://www.111.nhs.uk)) or call 111 for free at any time. If you are assessed as needing an appointment with a doctor or other health professional, this can be made for you. Some pharmacies are also open over the long weekend – details of which can be found here: [East and North Hertfordshire](#) and [Herts Valleys](#).

This week West Herts Hospitals NHS Trust hosted a visit from Care Minister Helen Whately who met with frontline staff to hear about their experiences of the pandemic. The minister also learned about the trust's ambitions for its hospital redevelopment programme.

## COVID testing

COVID testing continues to be available to anyone who has symptoms. These tests can be booked online at: <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by calling 119.

### Rapid tests (Lateral Flow Tests)

Rapid tests are also available for particular groups of people who **don't** have symptoms: parents of school-aged children and those in school bubbles and any key and essential workers who can't work from home. Community pharmacies are now being encouraged to sign up to a national 'community collect' scheme, enabling them to distribute home test kits free to anyone who is asymptomatic. 500 organisations in Hertfordshire have also signed up to enable rapid testing in their workplace.

There has been a change in policy so that anyone who has a positive rapid test result in an assisted site, such as the community testing sites, must also now book a PCR test. This is to confirm the rapid test result and will also help with finding variants.

It's very reassuring to see that the vast majority of people are self-isolating as they need to, either because they have tested positive for COVID-19 themselves, or have been told they must do so by NHS Test and Trace. In mid-March, on a special '[self-isolation support day](#)' around 750 visits were made to Hertfordshire residents. On the day, 89% of those visited were found to be self-isolating in line with requirements. Timed to coincide with the government's roadmap towards easing and exiting lockdown, the visits helped to check on people's health and wellbeing - and were a good way of raising awareness of the help available if they needed it, while they were not able to leave the house.

## Supporting our communities

People who are clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID are now no longer being advised to shield. The Volunteer and People Assistance Cell (VPAC) will continue to provide support to both clinically extremely vulnerable residents in need and residents who have been identified as having to self-isolate, in partnership with HertsHelp and other voluntary sector and statutory partners.

VPAC services will be running over the Easter weekend. The principle contact point for support and signposting is HertsHelp, on 0300 123 4044 or by email at [info@hertshelp.net](mailto:info@hertshelp.net). HertsHelp will be open:

Friday 2nd April – 10am – 4pm

Saturday 3rd April - 10am – 4pm

Sunday 4th April – Closed

Monday 5th April - 10am – 4pm

Herts Help can make referrals to the Hospital and Community Navigation Service, volunteer support through Community Help Hertfordshire, Hertswise dementia support, Advocacy services and other appropriate voluntary and community services. Details of other local support services can be found in the document below.



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The COVID Information Champion Project, led by Communities Help Hertfordshire (CHH) has now recruited more than 250 champions across Hertfordshire. Films in eight different languages to encourage vaccine take up have been completed and have been made widely available on YouTube <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgtazLRY5Zd-yrK9YZzsEukHC4SmQ4m00>

Communities 1st and partners have continued to recruit volunteers to provide crucial support with both the vaccination centres and Lateral Flow Testing in schools. More than 4,300 volunteers have now signed up, committing to provide almost 60,000 hours of support for vaccination sites in a variety of roles, from stewarding to administration. Thank you to those volunteers for giving up their time.

## Policing update

With the return of the 'Rule of six' on Monday 29 March, police are keen that people remain responsible and follow the [roadmap out of lockdown](#). Up to six people or two households can meet outside.

Officers are still out on patrol policing coronavirus regulations using the well-established four Es approach of *engaging*, *explaining* and *encouraging* people to comply with the rules and using the final E of *enforcement* as a last resort.

Additional 'hot spot' patrols will continue with officers investigating and responding to reported breaches as necessary, liaising with council COVID marshals, environmental health and trading standards officers.

If you believe someone may be breaching the COVID-19 regulations, you can [report information online](#), speak to an operator in the Force Communications Room via our [online web chat](#) or call the non-emergency number 101.

## Economic Recovery

Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is continuing to invest in key infrastructure to support Hertfordshire's recovery post COVID with a new business and technology centre at Maxwell's Farm, Cheshunt. The new centre will provide a hub for technology firms and small and medium sized enterprises. The centre is one of five key projects selected by Hertfordshire LEP to receive a share of its £16.8m allocation from the Government's **Getting Building Fund**, which aims to kickstart local economic recovery. Read more [here](#).



The Volunteer Business Support Scheme has been extended to support even more businesses to bounce back from COVID-19 and EU Transition. The scheme is delivered by Hertfordshire Growth Hub in partnership with the University of Hertfordshire and will now continue until November 2021. It is part of Hertfordshire LEP's **£3.28m Business Support Package**. Read more [here](#).

Thank you, Darryl.