

Hertfordshire Local Resilience Forum Stakeholder Update 10 December 2021

A message from Genna Telfer, Assistant Chief Constable and Chair of the strategic coordination group of the LRF



Dear colleague,

I think it's safe to say that COVID-19 continues to challenge scientists and policy makers the world over. You will be aware that on Wednesday (8 December) the government announced that England will move to 'Plan B' in response to the new COVID-19 variant Omicron. The latest measures include face coverings in most indoor settings from today (10 December), office workers to work from home where possible from 13 December, and the introduction of checks (NHS COVID Pass or proof of negative test result) in certain venues from 15 December. Full details of the guidance can be found on the government website here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>.

Early analysis by the UK Health Security Agency (previously known as Public Health England) of the new Omicron variant indicates that a booster vaccination **significantly** increases an individual's protection against COVID symptoms, when compared with the protection offered by just two vaccines. If you have been called for your booster vaccination, please don't delay in getting the extra protection that you need – it could save your life or the life of a loved one.

With 58,000 new COVID cases reported in the UK today – the highest daily total since January – please remember to test yourself regularly with a rapid or 'lateral flow' test, in case you have symptomless COVID and spread it to others. Self-isolate and get a PCR test if your lateral flow test is positive.

COVID vaccination update

COVID vaccination programme reaches its 1st anniversary

The NHS is saying a heartfelt 'thank you' as it celebrates the first anniversary of the COVID-19 vaccination roll-out in the area. It has been a year like no other, in which the NHS has delivered more than 2.5 million vaccinations in Hertfordshire and west Essex alone. Thanks to the AstraZeneca, Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, lives have been saved, residents have been protected from severe illness and many thousands of families have been spared the distress and disruption that COVID can bring.

Successfully vaccinating our population requires a huge team effort and the support and commitment of the public, volunteers, NHS staff, councils, partner organisations and a huge logistical and planning effort to make it work. If you have played a part in the vaccination programme – thank you. This short film celebrates a year of vaccinating our residents and staff: [Celebrating a successful year of vaccination delivery across Hertfordshire & West Essex - YouTube](#) Please enjoy watching and sharing it – you might see places or faces that you recognise.

More people now eligible for their booster vaccinations

This week, the booster vaccination programme widened to enable everyone aged 40 or over who had their second vaccination at least three months ago to book or walk-in to have their booster jab.

In our area, this means that more than 100,000 additional people will soon be able to join the 460,000 who have already topped up their immunity levels with a booster dose. People aged over 40 who had their second vaccination at least two months ago can go online or ring 119 to get their booster jab booked in – but will have to wait until three months have passed before they get their vaccinations. Some people aged under 40 can already have a booster – if they work in a front-line health or social care role, are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 because of their own health, or to protect a close relative’s health for example.

Check out your eligibility for a vaccination, find a walk-in clinic, or find out how to book your next vaccine here: <https://covid.healthierfuture.org.uk/>

Vaccination capacity increasing across our area

Vaccination capacity is being stepped up to help to meet the demand for booster doses. Thirty community pharmacies are already offering vaccinations in Hertfordshire and west Essex and this number is due to more than double over the weeks to come. Groups of GP practices are working together to vaccinate their patients and many have committed to increasing the number of vaccines they deliver. Large vaccination centres are extending their opening hours and our hospitals are lending their staff to the vaccination effort.

In Hertfordshire and west Essex, around 60,000 people are currently being vaccinated every week. By the end of January, that number is planned to increase to approximately 90,000 every week.

If you, or someone you know, are eligible for a first, second or booster vaccination - even if you’ve never taken up your offer before - there will always be a warm welcome for you in venues across our area. Over the next few weeks, people aged under 40 will start to be invited to have their booster vaccinations too. If you are registered with a GP in England, you will be contacted directly. If you are not a registered patient – check online at this address for details of walk-in clinics you can visit when it’s your turn

<https://covid.healthierfuture.org.uk/events/vaccination-walk-in-clinic-times>.

Testing update

Over the last two weeks, demand for free, home-delivered ‘rapid’ or ‘lateral flow’ tests has increased by 65%, with 47,664 tests kits ordered online by Hertfordshire residents. The county’s libraries are also playing their part, with 17 branches now providing a collection service for the public.

The importance of taking a rapid test before visiting family or attending social events is being stressed in a new joint campaign, called ‘Let’s Win Winter’. Three short, specially commissioned animations will spread the testing and vaccination message in a user-friendly way. You can watch the first animation in the series here: <https://youtu.be/vKDPyIVSkTQ> - please share it with people you know – it’s a good reminder of the simple actions we can all take to help to celebrate safely over Christmas and the New Year. Thank you.