

Hertfordshire Local Resilience Forum Stakeholder Update – 5 February 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,

This week has seen incredible activity levels as we look to test everyone aged 18 and over living in the EN10 postcode area in Broxbourne after a resident tested positive for the South African COVID-19 variant. This is a logistically tricky operation, with 10,000 tests being delivered in quick-time. There's more on this below and I would like to thank everyone involved in making this huge operation happen.

Thankfully, the vast majority of residents are doing the right thing and adhering to the [‘stay at home’ instruction](#). Please encourage your communities to continue playing their part, working from home where possible, keeping up social distancing, hand hygiene and getting tested and self-isolating if required.

I'm sure, like me, you are appalled to hear that a minority of people are ignoring lockdown rules and holding illegal gatherings. I would like to thank Hertfordshire Constabulary for responding decisively to these incidents.

Let's follow the lockdown rules, save lives and help to get our county back on the road to recovery.

COVID-19 vaccination programme

Across Hertfordshire and west Essex, [latest figures](#) released on Thursday 4 February show that a total of 206,291 people in the top priority groups have now received their first vaccination.

When we drill down into those numbers, we can see that 90% of 75-79 year olds and 87% of those aged 80 and over have now had their first dose. Our GP networks, acute hospitals, community trusts, and community pharmacies – supported by district and county council colleagues, the uniformed services and thousands of volunteers – are making significant strides towards protecting our most vulnerable elderly population.

In a further expansion of the vaccination network, four more sites across Hertfordshire opened this week to people eligible to receive their vaccinations who have booked in advance. These are:

- Two new pharmacy-run vaccination centres, one in Watford's Asda supermarket and one in a community centre in the Chells area of Stevenage.
- Two new large-scale vaccination centres – one in Welwyn Garden City at the Roche Pharmaceuticals building and another in the new Avanti Meadows primary school in Bishop's Stortford.

These all add to the growing choice of locations where eligible people can receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Two more large vaccination sites are due to open next week in the west of Hertfordshire.

For those people who have been invited to receive their COVID-19 vaccination, but are unable to make their own transport arrangements, the East of England Ambulance Service has launched a new information service in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council, East and North Hertfordshire CCG and Herts Valleys CCG, to help people find out about their eligibility for transport services. People who have booked an appointment and need transport help can call 0300 790 6254 (Monday-Saturday, 9am-5pm) to ask about the support that is available.

The process of vaccinating people in our area who are housebound is underway. GPs and local community trusts are contacting those who are housebound, or the carers who look after them, to arrange for them to be given their vaccinations at home.

Care Homes

The number of outbreaks in care homes has significantly reduced this week. Sadly, there has been another increase in deaths amongst care home residents and in particular people with learning disabilities. The Adult Care Services team has partnered with hospices across the county to provide support to learning disability homes, where residents and staff often have long-standing relationships developed over many years.

The team continues to work with health colleagues to support the remaining vaccination roll-out in care homes, including the process of vaccinating people in homes where residents have been affected by COVID-19 outbreaks. The vaccination of social care staff at the acute hospitals is now drawing to a close and eligible frontline social care staff are now being signposted to other vaccination centres, including Robertson House in Stevenage.

Supporting our communities

South African variant: More than 4,500 COVID-19 test kits were distributed and collected across the [EN10 area of Broxbourne](#) over two days this week, with the aim of identifying and containing the South African variant of the virus. This follows the government's announcement that there has been one [confirmed case of the variant](#) in EN10. All residents aged 18 years and over are being encouraged to get a test even if they don't have symptoms. Every household in EN10 will be visited and offered free home testing kits for the adult occupants. People in the EN10 postcode area should continue to attend medical appointments as planned.

Hertfordshire Volunteering and People Assistance Cell: The Volunteering and People Assistance Cell is supporting the response to the new virus by using the volunteer organisations established in the Broxbourne area to help with the delivery of testing kits and other critical information. HertsHelp is working with vulnerable residents in this area who need support with self-isolation or

who have any additional needs. This has led to an increase in call volumes and support requests received by the organisation.

Crisis Intervention Services are continuing to see an increase in demand across nearly every area, as a result of both the ongoing pandemic and active promotion of the practical and financial support services available. Funding from the Winter Grant Scheme received from the Government is being used to help with this increase in demand, with requests for support being triaged by HertsHelp to a range of providers across the voluntary and community sector.

Communities 1st: Communities 1st and partners have continued to recruit volunteers to provide crucial help at both the vaccination centres and with school COVID-19 testing. Around 3,200 volunteers have now signed up, providing 8,422 hours of support for community vaccination sites in a variety of roles, from stewarding to administration. It is expected that a further 3,000 volunteers will be needed over the coming weeks as more vaccination centres open. Anyone who would like to volunteer in a non-clinical role can sign up [here](#).

Economic Recovery

Tourism Economic Impact Study: Visit Herts' latest Tourism Economic Impact Study, published this week, shows that before the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the county's visitor economy had topped £2.4 billion for the first time ever, welcoming a record 29 million visitors in 2019. Further details can be read [here](#).

Skills and Employment Strategy: Hertfordshire's key decision makers have unanimously agreed that a joined-up countywide approach to skills and employment will be key to unlocking Hertfordshire's long-term economic growth and future prosperity. Read the full news story with links to the survey, webinar recording and presentations [here](#). The next Skills Strategy webinar will take place on 25 February when it will go into more depth on the priorities and next steps. Register [here](#). The final strategy will be shared with stakeholders late Spring.

Apprenticeships, work earn learn: As part of National Apprenticeship Week (8-12 Feb), the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership has partnered with the University of Hertfordshire to deliver two events aimed at learners and employers. Further information on the first of these two events is available to be view [here](#). Over 350 people have currently registered for the event and there has been a surge in searches for apprenticeships.

Kickstart Scheme: The Kickstart scheme is a government initiative to help young people aged 16-24 into paid roles in a range of businesses. 200 applications have been received from Hertfordshire businesses to join the scheme and the approval process has now been made easier to navigate. The Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership continues to promote the role of intermediaries in helping to manage the process and will be sharing case studies once applicants have settled into their roles.

Policing update

Hertfordshire Constabulary's additional targeted police patrols continue and officers are responding to reported lockdown breaches investigating and responding as necessary. Police have issued a number of fixed penalty notices following blatant breaches of lockdown, with people holding parties in the last week.

Officers are also responding to a growing number of quarantine checks, attending addresses to ensure that people are self-isolating as required on return after travelling abroad.

Officers work closely with council COVID marshals and environmental health and trading standards officers to engage with people, explain the rules and encourage adherence. Anyone found to be knowingly breaking the rules can expect to receive a fine.

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

Thank you, Darryl.