

Hertfordshire Local Resilience Forum Stakeholder Update – 12 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,

I would like to thank all of the different agencies involved in the work that has been carried out in Broxbourne to test residents for COVID-19, following the identification of an isolated case of a new variant of the virus. These include Hertfordshire County Council, Broxbourne District Council, fire fighters and police officers, HertsHelp and many other volunteers, as well as the local residents. It really has been a tremendous achievement, mobilised at pace and with fantastic results.

It is also really encouraging to see that the vaccination programme is continuing to roll out at an impressive pace, with even more vaccination centres established this week, increasing the choice of local options for residents and staff. Uptake is looking very good amongst those who are currently eligible to be vaccinated, with targeted work taking place to support anyone who has concerns about getting their jab. Every single vaccination takes us another step along the journey of protecting our population and restoring our personal freedoms and ways of life.

COVID-19 vaccination programme

The [latest figures](#) show a total of 268,412 first vaccinations have been given to people across Hertfordshire and west Essex so far. 91% of 80 year olds, 98% of 75 – 79 year olds and 79% of 70 – 74 year olds have now received their first vaccinations. Excellent progress has been made to protect those people who are housebound, with the aim of ensuring that everyone who is unable to get to a vaccination centre has been offered a vaccine at home by next week.

This week, in a change to the previous arrangements, everyone aged 70 or over, those who are clinically extremely vulnerable and front line health and social care staff who have not yet had their first COVID vaccination, have been **actively encouraged to contact the NHS and book their jab**.

If you, or somebody you know, meet this description, they can now book their appointment without needing to wait for an invitation. Please encourage them to use the [online booking system](#) or call 119 if they are unable to go online. If a suitable and convenient slot is not available, they can alternatively call their GP practice for an appointment at their local GP-led site.

The call is part of a drive to ensure that everyone who is most at risk from COVID-19 can get protected as quickly as possible. To make it even easier for frontline health and social care workers to get their vaccine, the national booking system has been opened up to staff until 28 February, meaning they can now book themselves an appointment at a large centre or pharmacy site close to home or their work base. With new vaccination sites opening this week at Watford Town Hall and Hemel Hempstead Hospital, even more people will find an option that fits in with their busy lives and responsibilities.

There is a significant amount of work taking place across the LRF to encourage people to take up the vaccination who might have concerns or need extra support to do so. Staff leading on this work from across our organisations met this week to collaborate on activity and share best practice.

There is a growing resource of locally-generated information and resources for people who may be hesitant about having their vaccine, with a particular emphasis on meeting the information, cultural and language needs of people from Black, Asian or other Minority Ethnic backgrounds. Thank you to those staff and community leaders who are championing the cause of the vaccine amongst their colleagues, friends and communities. You can view these resources for yourself on the [Hertfordshire and west Essex Health and Care Academy website](#)

The latest figures available for our area show that 78.5% of health and front line social care staff have now had their first vaccination. In the weeks to come, continuing efforts will be made to reach those staff who have yet to be vaccinated, as well as people aged 16 and over with learning disabilities.

Testing for the new variant in Broxbourne

Following on the identification of an isolated case of the new South African variant of COVID-19 in the EN10 area of Broxbourne, almost 10,000 COVID-19 tests have been completed in that area through a mixture of community hub testing (4,491 tests), door to door testing (1,961 tests) and mobile testing units (2,812 tests). This project, which was part of a national programme of testing, is now coming to an end.

Currently, 92 people without symptoms who were tested as part of this project have been found to have COVID-19. Those residents are now self-isolating. NHS Test and Trace will be following up with these people, and local contact tracing will take place, as per usual. None of these positive cases have yet been found to have had the South African variant, although further laboratory tests are still ongoing and could take several more days.

Any EN10 residents who are yet to be tested can book a test online at one of the drive or walk-through test sites. For more information, visit: <http://hertfordshire.gov.uk/EN10>

Residents in EN10 are also being asked for their feedback on how they found the process, so that testing and resident engagement can be further improved in the future. If you were involved in testing in EN10, please take in a [short survey](#) and share your views.

West Herts Hospitals NHS Trust

West Herts Hospitals' vaccination hub, running from Watford Football Club, will pause today (Friday 12 February) for a few weeks. Since opening in early January, the vaccination team has provided nearly 11,000 local health and social care staff with the first dose of their COVID-19 vaccines. The vaccination centre will open again in mid-March to provide staff with their important second doses.

Attendance at the Hemel Hempstead Hospital is by NHS appointment only.

East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust

Numbers of patients with COVID-19 continue to decrease at the Lister, and work is underway to plan the resumption of some services after the February half term. This will be based on clinical prioritisation of patients.

Critical care numbers are reducing, but there are still a significant number of patients requiring very high levels of support. The trust continues to work with system partners to avoid preventable admissions to hospital, with 'virtual wards' in place where patients can be treated and monitored in their own homes.

The hospital vaccine hub at Lister has paused for two weeks and will begin delivering second vaccination doses later this month.

Care Homes

There has been another fall in COVID-19 outbreaks and deaths among care home residents this week. However, the strong messaging to care home managers and staff is not to let their guard down and to continue to follow stringent infection prevention and control measures.

GPs and community trust vaccination teams are working to vaccinate those residents who have not yet been able to be vaccinated (for example, due to illness or a recent COVID-19 infection). The Adult Care Services team is recruiting a temporary care 'taskforce' which can be deployed at short notice to care settings that need support. The government now provides free PPE to family carers and we have promoted this through Carers in Herts.

Policing update

Hertfordshire Constabulary's additional targeted police patrols continue and officers are responding to reported lockdown breaches, investigating and responding as necessary, though fewer breaches have been reported this month.

Officers are also responding to quarantine check requests, attending addresses to ensure that people are self-isolating as required on return after travelling abroad.

Officers work closely with council COVID marshals, environmental health and trading standards officers to engage with people, explain the rules and encourage adherence, and 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.