

Hertfordshire Local Resilience Forum Stakeholder Update – 19 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 sees several new cohorts invited to receive their vaccinations, which helps us ensure all those who are most vulnerable get the protection they need as soon as possible. New national evidence highlighted more people that are at higher risk of serious illness due to COVID and therefore are now being asked to shield. More about this below. Hertfordshire County Council and partner organisations will continue to provide support to those residents who need extra help during this time.

COVID-19 vaccination programme

Numbers of vaccinations across Hertfordshire and west Essex have reached 322,286 this week, according to the [latest figures](#). So far, a total of 180,866 (95%) of people aged 70 and over and 141,420 under 70s, including health and care workers and patients who are clinically extremely vulnerable, have received their first dose.

All care homes for older people have been visited by vaccination teams and those who are housebound have been contacted and offered the vaccine at home. People with learning disabilities and their carers are also being contacted by their GP surgery to arrange an appointment to have their first dose of the COVID vaccine by the end of February. See [question and answer sheet on the Herts County Council website](#) for more information. You can read more detail on our vaccination progress across Hertfordshire and west Essex [here](#).

Now that the majority of people in the top four priority groups have been vaccinated, NHS England has [announced](#) that vaccinations are now starting for people aged 65 to 69 (Cohort 5) and for people aged 16-65 with a specified [underlying health condition](#) (Cohort 6). This covers people with a nationally identified range of conditions or treatments that put them at a higher risk of serious illness if they catch Covid-19.

Vaccinations will also soon be offered to adult carers. This includes those who are in receipt of a carer's allowance and also people registered as a carer with their GP. Other people who are the main carer of an elderly or disabled person at high risk from covid-19 will also be eligible.

Carers will be identified and then contacted by letter to invite them to get their vaccine. There will be a national process for this in place soon. It is important that people who think they might be entitled to the vaccine because they are a carer do not contact their GP or other health professional about this as they will not be able to give any more information or arrange a vaccination at this stage. We will make sure that everyone knows what the next steps are as soon as the information is available.

Next week (25 February), a new vaccination centre will open at the former Da Vinci Grammar School, in Letchworth, with another site opening just over the border in Luton on the same day.

Shielding programme

The national shielding programme is being extended to protect more people. This responds to evidence that some people are at higher risk due to multiple personal and health risk factors including age, gender, ethnicity and weight (BMI). Of the extra 1.7m residents being included on the shielding programme nationally, so far 12,800 Hertfordshire residents under 70 will receive shielding letters and will be prioritised for the vaccine. Residents over 70 who are being added to the shielding programme will be contacted as part of a second phase. Alongside this, the existing group of approximately 41,000 residents will be told shielding is being extended until 31 March.

The county council and partner organisations are continuing to support residents who request support via the National Shielding Support Service (NSSS) website: www.gov.uk/coronavirus-shielding-support. This provides access to support with deliveries of food and medication and also offers crisis intervention for people in financial difficulty or needing urgent support as well as mental health support, befriending, wellbeing visits or transport for vaccinations. HertsHelp are also continuing to support those who do not have access to online services or are in urgent need of support. People are being signposted by councils or can contact Herts Help directly seven days a week on 0300 1234 044 or info@hertshelp.net.

Rapid testing

Rapid testing continues to be available across the county for those without symptoms of coronavirus. Several new test centres have opened since the launch of rapid testing so if you are a key or essential worker who cannot currently work from home, please do book a test every few days at your local test centre.

To book a test and for more information, please visit: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/rapidtest. Please share this message through your community networks. If you have symptoms of coronavirus you cannot book a rapid test, and should instead book a standard PCR test at www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Care Homes

An improved picture with our care homes remains with only two homes having a current pause in their admissions due to COVID. Updated guidance on cleaning and testing (relating to people who have tested positive in the last 90 days) has been issued by the Adult Care Services team.

Supporting our communities

Hertfordshire Volunteering and People Assistance Cell: VPAC will continue to work in partnership with the voluntary and community sector delivering the support for those shielding (as mentioned

above) and put into place contingency plans if capacity is exceeded, whilst monitoring the data on volumes regularly.

Communities 1st: Communities 1st and partners have continued to recruit volunteers to provide crucial support to both vaccination centres and to schools carrying out COVID-19 testing. Around 3,800 volunteers have now signed up, of which 1,500 are fully registered and actively helping. So far, they have provided 27,616 hours of support to community vaccination sites in a variety of roles, from stewarding to administration.

Healthwatch Hertfordshire: Healthwatch Hertfordshire has launched two vaccination surveys to better understand local residents' experiences of the COVID-19 vaccination programme. [Find out more.](#)

Local Enterprise Partnership: Hertfordshire LEP is continuing to deliver the COVID-resilience infrastructure and investment in Hertfordshire's people and places to boost the recovery in the county. You can keep up to date with progress [here](#). The LEP is also launching #HertfordshireSupportsApprenticeships; find out more about how you can get involved [here](#).

Policing update

Hertfordshire Constabulary has issued a number of fixed penalty notices to individuals breaching lockdown laws, including a number of house parties across the county. Additional targeted police patrols continue and officers are investigating and responding to reported breaches as necessary.

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

If necessary, teams liaise with bereaved families, funeral directors and other agencies ahead of funerals to remind mourners of the 30-person limit and minimise disruption and public health risks.

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.