

## Hertfordshire Local Resilience Forum Stakeholder Update – 18 June 2021

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



Dear colleague,

For the county's football fans, the weekend is shaping up to be a good one, with plenty of Euro 2020 action to look forward to. If you're planning to watch with friends indoors to dodge the predicted showers, don't forget that lockdown restrictions still apply. Please ensure that no more than six people or two households meet inside – and remember to let fresh air in wherever you can.

I know that my NHS and police colleagues are braced for a busy weekend – please, celebrate responsibly and let's all use our emergency services wisely.

### Vaccination Update

From today (18 June) **everyone** aged 18+ is now eligible to book their COVID-19 vaccine. Over the coming days, the NHS nationally is planning to send around 1.5 million texts to people aged 18-20 as part of a push to get as many adults protected as soon as possible.

This latest announcement comes as people aged 40 and over are being urged to have their second vaccination eight weeks after their first dose, instead of 12 weeks.

Anyone wishing to book their first or re-book their second vaccination can go [online](#) or ring 119. Demand is expected to be high, as more than one million appointments were booked in a single day following the recent invitation to people in their 20s.

As well as booking appointments through the National Booking Service or participating GP practices, people in Hertfordshire and west Essex who are eligible for the jab can also go to one of the local walk-in sessions being offered at some vaccination centres, without the need for an appointment. Locations, details on which vaccines are available, and opening times are published [here](#). Walk-in sessions are dependent on supplies and are on a first come, first served basis. People planning to attend should check the website before travelling, be prepared to queue in all weathers and bring a drink of water. It's also advisable to have a snack and a drink before setting off to a vaccination centre.

Across Hertfordshire and west Essex, more than 1.6 million doses of the vaccine have been given so far. Almost 74% of eligible adults have had their first dose and more than 680,000 people have had their second – meaning 54% of the eligible adult population is fully vaccinated. It's vital that the remaining people complete their course to ensure they get full protection as soon as possible.

## **Research reveals the importance of second doses**

Research published this week has found the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to be 96% effective against hospitalisation after two doses, while the Oxford-AstraZeneca is 92% effective, showing how important the second jab is at protecting people against the Delta/Indian variant.

In response to the call to bring second doses forward for the over 40s, people are being encouraged to re-arrange their appointment where possible, unless it's already booked for within the next ten days. People due their second dose will either be contacted by the NHS or they can reschedule their appointment if they booked via the National Booking Service, by cancelling and re-booking. Work is due to be completed on the online booking system shortly so that patients that wish to rebook are able to check the level of appointment availability before cancelling and rescheduling their existing second dose appointment.

## **Health Round-Up**

### **Advice on hospital visits**

It's important to remember that everyone who attends a hospital site must play their part to protect patients, staff and services.

Everyone must wear a mask or face covering on a hospital site, unless they have a valid reason to be exempt. It is very important that people do not visit a friend or family member if they are feeling unwell – particularly if they have symptoms which could mean that they have COVID.

The government also advises that those visitors who don't show any symptoms of coronavirus take a rapid lateral flow test twice a week for the period that they are visiting their loved one and confirm that they have received a negative result. You can order your free lateral flow testing kits by visiting the [UK Government website](#).

If you have a positive result from a lateral flow test or you start showing symptoms of coronavirus, you must not visit your loved one in hospital and should book a PCR test by visiting the [UK Government website](#).

### **Testing**

The national Community Testing Programme has been extended to March 2022. The strategic focus will be on reaching and supporting disproportionately impacted and underrepresented groups.

In our area, the Watford fixed testing site will close, with last day of testing set to be 27 June. There will be no fixed site provision after this date. To date, the Stevenage and Watford fixed sites have carried out 11,977 supervised tests and have handed out 5,665 home testing kits to businesses and the public.

Supervised testing is still available in Hertfordshire through the roving model which will now include Stevenage and Watford sites. Two roving vans working seven days a week are being successfully

used for supervised testing and distribution of home testing kits across the county. A third van is available to be mobilised as required.

To date, the roving vans have carried out 2,306 supervised tests and handed out 22,515 home testing kits to small high-risk businesses and the public. Work continues to create a testing model to support surge and variants of concern testing using the roving vans.

Roving crews are receiving training to help them support quality conversations with the public at the point of testing, or while handing out a test kit.

### **Have your say on urgent care services at St Albans City Hospital**

People across west Hertfordshire are being invited to have their say on future urgent care services at St Albans City Hospital as part of a public engagement exercise that launches today (18 June) and runs until Sunday 1 August.

The Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) at St Albans City Hospital has been temporarily closed since April 2020 when West Herts NHS Trust staff were redeployed to support the COVID-19 response. It remains closed to avoid having people walk into St Albans City Hospital; the whole hospital needs to stay 'COVID-19 free' for the safety of all patients and so that planned surgery can safely take place there.

Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), which is responsible for planning and funding health services locally, is now progressing work to look at what urgent care service to provide at St Albans City Hospital once services can reopen next year.

The engagement exercise will seek people's views on four different options, including opening a new integrated care hub. To find out more and take part in the survey, go to the Get Involved section of the Herts Valleys CCG website <https://hertsvalleysccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/public-engagement>.

Thank you,

Darryl.