

Hertfordshire Local Resilience Forum Stakeholder Update – 12 March 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,

The number of coronavirus cases in Hertfordshire continues to drop to levels last seen at the end of September 2020. We all need to play our part to ensure that this trend continues and that complacency doesn't threaten our return to a more normal way of life. The NHS locally remains under pressure, with COVID positive patients in our acute hospital intensive treatment units and COVID-related absences affecting staffing. However, services are moving towards a 'restore, reset and resilience' phase and our health system stands ready to provide support to neighbouring regions if needed.

COVID-19 vaccination programme

GP practices working to ensure no-one is left behind in the vaccination effort

GPs and their teams across Hertfordshire are currently going to great lengths to vaccinate people who are particularly at risk from COVID-19, including some who are not registered with a practice and those who don't routinely access health services.

Recent examples of this work include special vaccination clinics tailored to meet the needs of adults with learning disabilities, outreach visits to Traveller sites, vaccination sessions at drop-in groups for the homeless and drive-through vaccination clinics for people who are extremely clinically vulnerable. The support and expertise of volunteers and LRF partner organisations with this work is greatly appreciated.

A combination of this targeted approach, together with the continuing work at our area's larger vaccination sites to ensure that people feel supported and are cared for efficiently, has meant that the number of people who have received at least one vaccine dose in Hertfordshire and west Essex has now risen to 461,620 (see [latest figures](#)).

Hertfordshire residents aged between 50 and 54 years old will start to receive their invitations to book themselves vaccination appointments via the National Booking Service from this weekend onwards.

New national text alert invitations

Since last weekend, the National Booking Service has sent vaccination invitation letters to around 1.7 million people aged 56 to 59 and in a new move, people aged 55 and over and unpaid carers have also received text alerts inviting them to book an appointment.

From this weekend onwards, a further two million texts will be sent to people across England with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality, encouraging them to book their vaccinations if they haven't done so already.

Some GP-led and hospital vaccination services, which operate their own booking systems, are already using texts for invites. More details about the national text message campaign are being shared, to help prevent scams and reduce concern about whether the text is authentic. Texts will be sent using the Government's secure service and will show as being sent from 'NHSvaccine'. The text will arrive in advance of the standard letter, with a web link to book an appointment. The NHS will never ask for payment or banking details. Reminders will be sent 2-3 weeks after the original alert to encourage people to get their vaccine if they have not taken up the offer.

Additional St Albans vaccination centre to open

On Monday 15 March, another vaccination centre is due to open its doors to the public at the Alban Arena in St Albans. This is the last large vaccination centre planned for our area. As the vaccination programme progresses, a combination of fixed sites and more localised vaccination opportunities should help to ensure that our communities are well-served.

Vaccine supply and second doses

From next week, vaccine supplies in our area are expected to increase significantly and the number of people returning for second doses will also increase. People who booked their first dose through the National Booking Service should have already booked their second dose appointment. If not, they can go back onto the system to book at an appropriate interval.

Anyone who has had their first dose at a GP-led site should return to the same place for their second dose, as vaccine supplies are carefully planned to meet this expected demand. People who don't yet have a date for their second jab will be contacted by their GP practice to book an appointment nearer the time they are due. Arrangements are being made by hospital trusts to invite people back for second doses, if they received their first doses in hospital. Meanwhile, special vaccination clinics are being arranged to support those who need to have their vaccinations in a hospital setting, because of a particular allergy or medical need for example.

For information, resources, and Q&A on the vaccination programme, please go to our area's vaccination micro-site at this address: <https://covid.healthierfuture.org.uk/>

Supporting Carers to get vaccinated

NHS England has published a new standard operating procedure for ensuring that the COVID-19 vaccine is accessible to all eligible unpaid Carers, not just those in receipt of Carers Allowance or registered as Carers with their GPs. As a result, the details of 12,800 Hertfordshire Carers who are supported by the county council or Carers organisations have been securely supplied to NHS Digital, so that they can be invited to be vaccinated. Information for Carers is available via Carers in

Hertfordshire and also at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/vaccine. Hertfordshire County Council's Adult Care Services team is continuing to support access to the vaccine for frontline social care staff, with efforts continuing to increase take-up and to ensure that clear information on second doses is available for everyone.

Care Homes

This week has shown a significant drop in COVID-positive cases among residents and staff. The Adult Care Services team has written to care home providers to invite them to claim a further allocation of the Infection Control Fund, which must be used or returned to the Government by 31 March. The letters are available here: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/providerfunding. Care home monitoring processes are being reviewed by the team to ensure they have robust oversight of any safeguarding concerns raised by family members of friends, once visiting restrictions are eased.

Thank you, Darryl.