

## Hertfordshire Local Resilience Forum Stakeholder Update – 26 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,

Earlier this week the Government [published a four-step roadmap](#) to ease restrictions across England and provide a route back to a more normal way of life. Each step will be assessed against four tests before restrictions ease, starting with the return of schools on Monday 8 March. The Prime Minister is clear that the decision on each stage will be based on data not dates, and that the government will move cautiously to keep infection rates under control. The four tests are:

- The vaccine deployment programme continues successfully
- Evidence shows vaccines are sufficiently effective in reducing hospitalisations and deaths in those vaccinated
- Infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisations which would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS
- The assessment of the risks is not fundamentally changed by new variants which cause concern.

There will be a minimum of five weeks between each step: four weeks to allow for data to be gathered to assess the impact of changes in restrictions; followed by seven days' notice if a decision has been made to ease restrictions.

Our Local Resilience Forum will do all we can to help us work towards this ease of restrictions. As ever, I am thankful to all our frontline workforce, not just those in health and social care, but all the blue light service personnel, council, retail and school staff, as well as our band of volunteers and those driving our amazing vaccination programme.

### **COVID-19 vaccination programme**

Efforts to protect residents and staff from COVID-19 continue, with a number of developments over the course of the last seven days. Keeping up with the pace of change can be difficult, but the [www.healthierfuture.org.uk/covid](http://www.healthierfuture.org.uk/covid) pages are regularly updated with information and resources, with a new themed Q&A section making it easier to get the answers you need.

The [latest figures](#) for Hertfordshire and west Essex show that a total of 383,737 people have been vaccinated in the area, according to data released on Thursday 25 February. 182,938 (96%) of people aged 70 and over and 181,885 of under 70s, including health and care workers, and those who are either clinically extremely vulnerable or with a specified [underlying health condition](#), have now received their first dose. If you are interested in viewing the data yourself, which now includes constituency and district council level information, see this [national statistics website](#).

This week's developments include:

### **Vaccinations for Carers**

The route to vaccination for eligible friend and family Carers is now clearer. Work is getting underway to vaccinate people aged 16 and over who provide close personal support to an adult who is at high risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19.

Carers of children are not included in this phase, apart from Carers of children who have serious neuro-disabilities and other complications.

People who are eligible to receive Carer's Allowance don't need to wait to be contacted - they can book an appointment now via the national booking service [www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination](http://www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination) or by calling 119. Carers who do not receive Carer's Allowance, but who are registered with their GP practice as an unpaid carer, will be contacted by their practice to arrange a vaccination when supplies allow.

Further, more detailed information for Carers can be viewed in our Q&A pages [here](#).

### **Vaccination for adults with learning disabilities**

We are delighted that the national position on vaccinating adults with learning disabilities has fallen into line with that already adopted across Hertfordshire. Protecting this group of residents, who are known to face very serious health inequalities, has been welcomed by the adults themselves and their families and carers.

### **60+ age group to be added to the vaccination priority list**

From this weekend (27 February onwards) people aged 60 and over will become eligible to be vaccinated. Letters will be distributed to raise awareness of this, although we anticipate that anyone who is 60 or over will be able to book themselves an appointment online, via the [national booking service](#) website or by calling 119, from the 27 February onwards.

### **More vaccination centres adding to the choice available**

The choice of vaccination locations increased again in Hertfordshire this week, with a new large centre opening at the former grammar school in the heart of Letchworth Garden City. Next week, another large centre is due to open just over the border in west Essex. Vaccinations at both of those locations are bookable via the national booking service.

On Thursday this week, the first government minister was vaccinated at a GP led site in Hatfield. Secretary of State for Transport, Grant Shapps MP used the opportunity of his vaccination appointment to promote the vaccine to others who are eligible.

## **BREAKING NEWS – interim advice for next phase of vaccination programme published**

The independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation published its interim advice for phase 2 of the COVID-19 vaccination programme today (February 26), setting out that the most effective way to minimise hospitalisations and deaths is to continue to prioritise people by age.

This is because age is assessed to be the strongest factor linked to mortality, morbidity and hospitalisations, and because the speed of delivery of the vaccine is viewed as crucial.

All 4 parts of the UK will follow the recommended approach, subject to the final advice given by the independent expert committee. The JCVI is the group of independent clinical and scientific experts which advises government on which vaccines the UK should use and provides advice on prioritisation at a population level.

The [interim advice from the JCVI](#) is that the best way to achieve this objective is to continue prioritising people for vaccinations by age, as this will enable the most rapid deployment across the population. The final advice from the JCVI will be published in due course.

It is important to remember that phase 2 of the vaccination programme can only begin once [everyone in the first phase](#) (cohorts 1-9) has been offered a vaccination, with the national expectation that this is complete around the end of April. Today's announcement has been reported in a confusing way by some news outlets. Generally healthy people aged 50 and over will have some time to wait before they will be eligible to be vaccinated.

### **East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust**

The trust has reopened their on-site vaccine hub this week, to begin to deliver second doses of the vaccination to patients and staff – with over 18,000 doses delivered in total so far.

As the numbers of COVID patients in the Lister reduce, the trust is slowly increasing the number of diagnostic and cancer procedures it is carrying out.

### **Care Homes**

The Adult Care Services team is reporting an improved picture in care homes this week and the team is not aware of any homes with a current pause in their admissions. Once the new government guidance regarding care home visiting from the 8 March is received, the team will support care homes to implement this.

Within learning disability care homes, over 80% of residents and 60% of staff have now had their first jabs and more staff are being prioritised for the vaccine. Within Supported Living settings, 55% of residents and 55% of staff have been vaccinated so far.

As well as supporting and promoting the vaccination programme, Adult Care Services staff are working to ensure that Government infection control funding reaches care home providers,

particularly targeting communications to smaller providers which have not claimed their full entitlement.

### **Policing update**

It is anticipated that policing coronavirus regulations will become more challenging in the coming weeks, as restrictions begin to ease and residents are less clear about what they can and cannot do.

All public sector organisations will work together to publicise what is permitted at each stage and Hertfordshire Constabulary will continue to use the well-established four Es approach of engaging, explaining, encouraging people to comply with the rules and using enforcement as a last resort.

Our additional targeted police patrols continue and officers will be investigating and responding to reported breaches as necessary, liaising with council COVID marshals, environmental health and trading standards officers.

Quarantine and self-isolation check requests also continue.

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.