

Hertfordshire Local Resilience Forum Stakeholder Update 17 September 2021

A message from Genna Telfer, Assistant Chief Constable and Chair of the strategic coordination group of the LRF



Dear colleague,

This week, the government shared its [2021 COVID autumn and winter plan](#), outlining its programme to suppress COVID-19 infection rates in the coming months. It's clear that we all need to continue to protect ourselves and one another from the virus, by getting vaccinated, continuing testing and self-isolating if we test positive. We've come such a long way and I'd ask you to encourage people in your networks to get vaccinated if they haven't already.

Vaccination roundup

COVID vaccination offer extended to all 12-15 year olds

Following a recommendation from the Chief Medical Officers, the most senior government advisers on health matters, the government agreed this week that all 12-15 year-olds should be offered a first dose of the Pfizer vaccine. This is to protect them against COVID-19 and the disruption and distress it can cause. The government will take more advice on whether and when to offer a second dose in future.

You can read more about this decision here: [Universal vaccination of children and young people aged 12 to 15 years against COVID-19 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The county council is working closely with Hertfordshire Community Trust (HCT), the NHS organisation leading the roll-out of this phase of the vaccination programme in Hertfordshire, which will mainly take place in schools. School immunisation nurses are very experienced in delivering routine vaccinations to children and young people. HCT works closely with parents and carers on consent issues and can provide clinical advice and guidance. Arrangements will be made for children who do not attend school, or who are absent on vaccination days.

To help parents and children with any questions they might have about the COVID-19 vaccination programme, some new resources have been put together. Information aged at 12 to 17 year olds can be found [here](#). Information and guidance for parents can be found [here](#).

'Booster' jabs plans confirmed

COVID-19 'booster' jabs will begin to be offered in the next few days to the following groups of people, if at least **six months** has passed since they received their second dose of the vaccine:

- people living in residential care homes for older adults
- all adults aged 50 years or over
- frontline health and social care workers

- all those aged 16 to 49 years with underlying health conditions that put them at higher risk of severe COVID-19
- adult household contacts of immunosuppressed individuals.

Either the Pfizer vaccination or a half dose of the Moderna vaccination will be given as a 'booster' dose. When it's their turn, eligible people will be invited by phone, text or letter to get their booster vaccination either by making an appointment through the [national booking service](#) or through an invitation to a local GP-run service. New booster vaccination sites are due to be added to the national booking system all the time, so people are advised to check back if there are none showing near them the first time they try to make a booking. There will be no walk-in appointments for now.

Flu vaccinations

There have been nationwide delays in the delivery of some flu vaccination supplies, but flu clinics are now getting underway in Hertfordshire GP practices, community pharmacies and schools. This year the flu vaccination programme has been extended to include all children aged between 2 and 15 years old on 31 August 2021, who will be offered the vaccine via a nasal spray.

In addition to those receiving the seasonal flu vaccination due to their age, health or the health of someone they live with or care for, government has advised that frontline health and social care workers will also be given priority, as long as they work in a Care Quality Commission or Ofsted registered setting.

Supporting our communities

Rapid testing changes

The county council-run roving rapid testing service will be stood down at the end of September, as demand for supervised testing decreases. The public has become more confident using home test kits, which can still be collected at a [local site or ordered online](#) for delivery

Hertfordshire Volunteering and People Assistance Cell: Hertfordshire Independent Living Service has produced its [Annual Impact report](#), showcasing its work supporting Herts residents during the pandemic and thanking everyone who helped to provide care and support to those in most in need.

The Volunteering and People Assistance Cell continues to support the local Afghanistan response:

- Herts Community Navigation Services are supporting the British Red Cross with initial assessments and general welfare support, as well as triaging support. Additional staff members have been brought in to support those in need.
- The Department for Work and Pensions will provide a concierge role at each hotel where Afghans are staying, supporting residents with information, advice and financial support and triaging their needs to other organisations which can support them. These concierges will work closely with the British Red Cross who are currently fulfilling this role.

- NHS and voluntary sector mental health services are supporting people who need their help.
- The [Hertfordshire Community Foundation Afghan arrivals fundraising appeal](#) has raised approximately £30,000.

Vaccine grants of up to £5,000 have been provided to 21 voluntary sector organisations which are currently mobilising and working with communities to provide targeted communications and engagement to address vaccine hesitancy. Progress is being monitored regularly, with a report being delivered by November. All districts appear to be represented through countywide or targeted areas, with the bids covering community engagement, communications and transport support.

Communities 1st: Communities 1st continue to recruit volunteers to assist with the local vaccination effort, in centres across Hertfordshire, West Essex, Luton, Bedford, and Milton Keynes. Their volunteers have now provided over 145,000 hours of support, in stewarding and front of house roles. Volunteering can be a wonderful way to get out and about, make friends and gain experience. If you or someone you know would like to sign up, they can visit: <https://www.communities1st.org.uk/sign-up>, call 020 3940 4865, or email volunteer@communities1st.org.uk.

An army of volunteer Digital Champions from Community Help Hertfordshire are helping those who are digitally excluded to build the confidence to stay connected through technology. A programme of digital skills training is also available. If you or someone you know needs help from a Digital Champion volunteer, email: info@communityhelpherts.net or call: 020 8207 5115.

Thank you.