

Hertfordshire Local Resilience Forum Stakeholder Update – 6 November 2020

A message from Cllr Linda Haysey, Leader of East Herts Council, and Chair of the community reassurance cell of the Local Resilience Forum

Dear stakeholder,

As the new national restrictions come into force, it is important that everyone in Hertfordshire plays their part and follows the new Covid-19 lockdown measures in order to address the rising infection rates in the county ahead of the festive period.

Specifically, this means following the new Government restrictions to stay at home, with more detailed information available at www.gov.uk/coronavirus. We need to act now in order to protect those vulnerable and older residents, as well as protecting the NHS during the winter period which is already seeing rising hospital admissions.



Cllr Linda Haysey

We have seen a significant rise in Covid-19 cases over the past few weeks across the whole of Hertfordshire, affecting not only those of working age, but also older, more vulnerable residents.

We are calling for all residents to play their part and stay at home as much as possible during this period – and to only make essential journeys for very specific purposes. We must do all we can to ensure that the new restrictions are not extended over a longer period.

Partners can keep up to date with county wide and district data by accessing [this dashboard](#).

Supporting our communities

Policing update: Hertfordshire Constabulary has organised extra police patrols across the county over the next few days as people adapt to the new national restrictions. Early indications are that the vast majority of people continue to do the right thing and act responsibly, as they have throughout the pandemic.

Our officers are out in communities - engaging, explaining and encouraging people to act responsibly and follow coronavirus rules and moving swiftly to enforcement action if necessary. We are working with local authorities, licensing authorities and businesses to ensure the rules are being followed.

If you are concerned that a business is breaching coronavirus rules, please contact your local district or borough council in the first instance. If you are concerned that an individual is breaking the law or you are experiencing anti-social behaviour, you can report this to police, who will consider the most appropriate response and will target the most problematic behaviour. Reports should be made online at herts.police.uk/contact or via 101 wherever possible. In an emergency dial 999.

Hertfordshire Volunteering and People Assistance Cell: VPAC is continuing to work collaboratively with districts/boroughs, NHS and the voluntary and community sector to respond rapidly and efficiently to the challenges generated from COVID-19, through delivering a coordinated countywide response.

In light of recent announcements, these services will re-mobilise to continue to support CEVs (Clinically Extremely Vulnerable) and those self-isolating so that residents have access to food and basis provisions where required.

All the support services for those self-isolating can be accessed through our countywide information advice, signposting and support service HertsHelp (HH) who will triage clients' needs making appropriate referrals or signposting to relevant support services.

The support offer includes:

- Volunteer support (including shopping, medication collection, befriending, dog walking) via the new Community Help Hertfordshire (CHH) service under which all the Hertfordshire CVS organisations have come together to provide a unified response to support people in need. This network will also act as a support and co-ordinator for smaller but important community groups including mutual aid groups, foodbanks and good neighbour schemes, assisting with organisational development and fund raising.
- Hertfordshire Community Navigation Service (HCNS) which aims to improve health and wellbeing by supporting those vulnerable service users in their own homes and in moving from hospital to home, using Community Navigators and Link Workers and the HCNS Pathway which is built into the overall social prescription pathway.
- HertsHelp will support CEVs with requesting access (if required) for food and basis items such as pharmacy deliveries through the NSSF / Verint pathways designed.
 - A broadened Crisis Intervention Service in which:
 - Intervention support for those in financial crisis and families that are in receipt of free school meals, as well as energy costs and other essentials for those who are in ongoing crisis or who have come into crisis as a result of COVID 19.
 - The new HERT (Hertfordshire Economic Recovery Team) partnership where HCC's Money Advice Unit (MAU) and Citizens Advice Hertfordshire (CAH) have come together to enhance the finance, welfare benefits and debt management advice already available in Hertfordshire to vulnerable residents who have been most affected by the COVID-19 crisis, to aid their financial recovery and embed future financial security and literacy.

Residents can access all of these services by calling HertsHelp on 0300 123 4044, visiting www.hertshelp.net or emailing info@hertshelp.net

Health update

NHS services continue through lockdown: Family doctors across Hertfordshire are urging people to continue to attend hospital and clinic appointments with a simple message: "The NHS is here to see you safely, even during the lockdown."

Although there will be restrictions in many aspects of our lives due to the new lockdown rules, GPs, dentists, pharmacies, hospitals, clinics and other NHS services remain open, although they are working differently to keep patients and staff safe. Face-to-face appointments are still taking place, usually after patients have been triaged online or following a virtual or telephone appointment. However, safety measures introduced to prevent the spread of coronavirus means that fewer patients can be seen in a day, which could lead to longer waiting times for those with less serious issues.

Screening services and other sorts of appointments - for long term conditions for example - are still taking place during the lockdown. Checks and treatments for the most serious illnesses such as cancer, stroke or heart disease will go ahead: anyone with worrying symptoms, or whose condition deteriorates, should talk to their GP immediately.

Doctors are particularly concerned to make sure that anyone with an upcoming appointment turns up. Hospitals, clinics, and GP practices have worked hard to ensure that all screening and treatment centres are safe for people to attend.

In order to ensure patient safety, patients are asked not to arrive at their GP practice without an appointment. For urgent physical or mental health help when your GP is closed, or for help if you are not registered with a GP practice, go online to NHS 111 or call 111. All calls are free to this number. As ever, for very serious life or limb-threatening emergencies, people should dial 999 immediately.

Preparing for the new national restrictions: This week the Adult Care Services (ACS) team at Hertfordshire County Council has been getting in touch with all those who receive a community social care service as well as family carers who are known to them. This aims to reassure people that services, including the council-run day services, continue to operate and that there is support available to everyone.

Breaks and wellbeing support to family carers will be promoted by ACS as well as HertsHelp; people who are clinically extremely vulnerable and others that need extra help in the community will be supported. This includes providing food and medication deliveries, as well as other advice and support on things like benefits, help with getting online and accessing support groups to minimise isolation and promote wellbeing. The team is also writing to all care providers across all settings to set out their expectations around providing care and support, as well as a reminder of the support and advice available to them.

Support to care homes: Over the last two months, there has been a rise in COVID-positive cases in care homes among staff and residents, but currently not to the level seen in March. A prevention element of the multi-agency outbreak cell has been set up to proactively review all care home infection control measures to identify any trends or any other areas of improvement for homes. It is hoped this will help reduce the number of outbreaks. The priority for this work is homes who admit people following a short stay in an acute hospital ward (following a COVID negative test) to support hospital pressures over the winter. The ACS team is continuing to promote the infection control and prevention funding available to providers as well as flu vaccinations for staff and residents.

Care Home Visiting: Care homes have been issued with clear guidance to support them to accept visitors into their care home safely, including a check list of the areas they should consider and best practice from other homes.

Guidance also sets out when homes should be closed to visitors. This includes when:

- the home cannot guarantee that they adhere to the Government guidance
- a home has two or more suspected or confirmed cases of COVID during an outbreak and therefore should close for 28 days
- community transmission of COVID reaches a level where it is deemed unsafe for visitors to enter a care home.

Further guidance from the Government to inform Hertfordshire's approach to visiting during the national restrictions is expected shortly.

Flu vaccination: Priority groups are still being called for their flu vaccinations by their GP surgeries. As soon as these groups have been vaccinated, community pharmacies and GPs will be notified that they can use additional vaccines to vaccinate healthy patients aged 50 – 64 years old. It is important that those who are particularly medically vulnerable to flu are vaccinated first, for their protection. If you are a healthy 50-64 year old, you will be informed when there are vaccinations available for you.

COVID vaccination: The Hertfordshire and West Essex Steering Group for the COVID-19 vaccination programme is currently making arrangements for the delivery of the vaccine to the population of Hertfordshire, when it is approved for use. Details are currently being worked through, with a mixed approach to local and area-wide vaccination centres being planned. The vaccine will be rolled out in a phased way, ensuring that those identified nationally as priority groups are vaccinated first.

NHS 'People Plan' for Hertfordshire and West Essex: In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care System has developed its local 'People Plan' or workforce strategy, with the aspiration to create 'one workforce for health and social care'. The plan incorporates an eight point action plan which aims to support the system to recover health and social care services.

The Plan is aligned with the four foundations of the national People Plan: Looking after our people; belonging in health and social care; new ways of working and delivering care and growing for the future.

We welcome your views and opinions on these proposed plans – acknowledging that the action plan only covers a relatively short time period, but sets out a direction of travel to achieve that 'one workforce' strategic ambition. For further information and to see the plan and give your views, visit the publications page of the [healthier future website](#).

Economic Recovery

Generation Stevenage: Generation Stevenage aims to raise awareness of the opportunities for young people (aged 15-18) within their local area. The virtual event on Tuesday 1 December aligns closely with the Government's plans to 'level up' underperforming and left-behind parts of the UK through a programme of infrastructure development, investing in education, skills and scientific R&D. By encouraging young people to seek work locally, it helps offset our carbon footprint as part of the UK's COVID-19 green recovery. Further information can be found [here](#).

EU Transition

There are 56 days until the UK leaves the EU single market and customs union, and Hertfordshire LRF organisations are working together to ensure the county is ready. The transition period ends on 31 December 2020, and this will affect citizens, businesses, as well as travel to and from the EU.

Local preparations cover all possible eventualities, including that a trade deal is not agreed with the EU. Risks are being reviewed regularly and take into account the challenge of COVID-19.

[Ready 2020](#) is a joint initiative led by Hertfordshire LEP, London Economic Action Partnership and South East LEP, to help small and medium-sized businesses in Hertfordshire, London and the South East prepare for changes relating to the UK's exit from the EU.

Please use the [Government's transition checker](#) to get the guidance most relevant to you, your business, and your family.

Thank you.