

Hertfordshire Local Resilience Forum Stakeholder Update – 20 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,

Here's the latest update from Hertfordshire's Local Resilience Forum, a multi-agency partnership of public services working to coordinate our approach to COVID-19.



Cllr Linda Haysey

Health update

New approach to urgent and emergency care: Through successful partnership working between our hospitals, GP practices, our local NHS 111 provider (HUC) and NHS England and NHS Improvement, Hertfordshire and West Essex has been given the green light to start an appointment system for urgent and emergency care from 1 December.

Social distancing requirements mean that the capacity of hospital waiting areas has been reduced to protect patients and staff. An appointment system will help to ensure that everyone who needs urgent care help can be seen safely and comfortably. This new way of working will help residents get the help they need without spending time in a waiting room where the likelihood of contracting COVID-19, flu or other viruses is increased.

Unless you are very seriously ill or injured and need 999 emergency services, please go online to NHS 111 or ring for advice before leaving home. From December onwards, if you arrive without a booked appointment at an emergency department, minor injury unit, urgent care or urgent treatment centre, you will be assessed by a senior nurse before being asked to contact NHS 111 to be triaged.

A fully trained NHS 111 adviser will thoroughly assess your symptoms. If a face-to-face consultation with a doctor, nurse or other clinical professional is needed, a booked appointment will be made at a convenient facility without the need for you to make another call. Depending on each patient's needs, this could be at a GP surgery, pharmacy, urgent treatment centre or emergency department. NHS 111 can also put you directly through to a mental health team.

Further information and national publicity will be shared prior to the launch of this new service which is rolling out across the country.

COVID – 19 vaccination programme update: While we don't expect a COVID-19 vaccine to be widely available until 2021, the Government has asked the NHS to be ready to deliver a vaccination programme for England from the start of December, so that those who need it most will be able to access vaccinations as soon as they are available.

Detailed planning is underway to deliver the vaccine across Hertfordshire and west Essex, led by the NHS but involving the county councils, police and GP practices. Efforts will be made to ensure that the COVID-19 vaccination programme does not impact on other vital services.

The NHS is working closely with a number of partners across Government, each with their own roles and responsibilities, such as the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency. Plans will be finalised based on decisions made by those bodies, including when and what vaccines are approved and who should receive them.

Public-facing communications will be led by the Department for Health and Social Care, working with the NHS, Public Health England and other Government departments, and we have been told that initial communications on the safety and effectiveness of vaccines will begin to be shared shortly. As is currently the case with flu and other vaccination campaigns, local organisations and their partners will also play an important part in amplifying these messages in their particular local communities.

In common with this year's flu campaign, the NHS nationally has commissioned NHS Digital and NHSX to provide a national system which will send invitations and reminders to eligible people at the right time, as well as to provide an online and telephone booking system so that people can choose the right time and location for them to attend.

HCT (Hertfordshire Community Trust) the health service organisation known as the 'lead provider' for the vaccination programme in our area, is recruiting to support the vaccination effort as well as seeking volunteers to help with the rollout. You can find out more about the COVID-19 vaccination programme [here](#).

Flu vaccination update: There has been a good uptake of the flu vaccination in several [priority groups](#) so far. However, we would like to encourage and remind those who have not yet had their vaccination to do so as soon as possible. Priority groups should receive an invitation from their GP when stocks are available.

Please do share [this local video](#) which highlights how safe and quick it is to get your flu vaccination this year

The government has confirmed that from December, adults over the age of 50 will be able to get their free flu vaccine in the next phase of this year's expanded flu vaccination programme. Individuals aged 50 to 64 will be able to get a vaccine from their GP or pharmacy.

Please wait to be contacted by your GP practice as not all practices will have sufficient vaccinations for everyone at the start of December. It is important that the most at risk patients are vaccinated first.

Self-Care Week and encouraging people to seek care during COVID-19: Recently published research by the Patient Information Forum found that as a result of the pandemic, one in three people have delayed seeking healthcare or treatment due to concerns over contracting the virus, backing up previous research findings.

Understanding when to seek health intervention is a crucial part of self-care along with knowing how to self-treat symptoms, self-manage conditions, and how to avoid harmful health behaviour.

This week NHS organisations have been promoting self-care week, particularly for those with long term conditions, so that they seek help when they need it. Hertfordshire's community pharmacies continue to provide care, advice, and support with no appointment necessary.

Care Homes: The Adult Care Services team at Hertfordshire County Council continues to see a rise in outbreaks at care homes including care settings for people with disabilities, but still mainly among asymptomatic staff members. Monitoring officers are in regular contact with homes that experience outbreaks and keep the situation under close review. The multi-agency team that supports homes with outbreaks and infection prevention and control meet daily. Particular attention is given to the correct use of

PPE, maintaining safe staffing levels and visitor and admission policies. The team also tries to identify the cause of the outbreak to prevent future occurrences as well as supporting efforts with contact tracing.

Supporting our communities

Policing update: Hertfordshire Constabulary's dedicated Op Sunrise patrols continue across the county, with officers out and about in communities - engaging, explaining and encouraging people to act responsibly and follow lockdown rules, moving swiftly to enforcement action if necessary.

While the vast majority of people continue to act responsibly, we are working with local authorities, licensing authorities and businesses to ensure government rules are being followed and preparing for whatever restrictions are in place post-lockdown. We have issued more than 500 verbal warnings and a number of fines to people contravening regulations, including house parties, larger gatherings and not wearing face coverings where required.

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: Shielding restrictions were officially re-introduced on Thursday 5 November to Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) residents which has advised not to go to supermarkets or pharmacies. VPAC has now re-mobilised to support CEVs (Clinically Extremely Vulnerable, formally known as Shielding) and those self-isolating so that residents have access to food and basic provisions where required.

Volumes of CEVs accessing Support: As of Tuesday 17 November, **5,508** people have registered on the NSSS site, of which 4,268 have indicated they need no additional help and **2,243** have requested a preferential supermarket slot. **1,182** have asked for additional support with basic needs and so will receive a separate webform to request specific support, or HertsHelp will make contact if the resident is unable to access the form. Support can then be requested for either shopping or medicine collection which will refer to Community Help Hertfordshire (CHH) to allocate a volunteer.

If a resident indicates they do not want a volunteer and would prefer to receive a food parcel, at a subsidised rate of £30, Herts Independent Living Service (HILs) have been commissioned to provide this; however demand for this is low as currently 13 residents are in the payment queue to request a parcel and only 1 resident has paid. Where it is evident that an individual is in financial hardship there is no charge for a food parcel.

Communications to CEVs: A letter has now been sent to all residents on the shielding patient list from MHCLG and NHS advising of shielding restrictions and support by registering on the NSSS. A follow up letter has been sent from Hertfordshire County Council, re-iterating this message and signposting HertsHelp as the primary contact if any additional help or access to the NSSS is required.

Alongside this, Hertfordshire County Council have also prioritised contact with those who have not requested support but are at higher risk through receiving support from the previous Operation Shield or being newly added to the shielded patient list. This has included contact through the following methods:

- **2972 emails** have been sent to this cohort where email addresses only are known.

- **7761 texts** have been sent to this cohort where mobile numbers only are known.
- **Phone calls are being made via HertsHelp** to the remaining cohort where landline numbers only are known.

As people with Downs Syndrome have been added to the CEV list, an easy read information letter has been developed to share information, based on Central Governments CEV frequently asked questions. A digital self-isolation leaflet has also begun to be circulated and signposts HertsHelp for support for CEVs and non CEVs. As a result of all these communications, HertsHelp have seen a 60% increase in calls over the last week and have increased their staffing to support this.

Impact of Covid-19 on vulnerable adults in Hertfordshire: As part of its ongoing work to support the county's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Community Reassurance Cell (CRC) is [hosting a webinar on Wednesday 16 December from 11am to 12.30pm](#) via Zoom that will explore the impacts of coronavirus on vulnerable adults in Hertfordshire.

This event will be an opportunity to learn more about the impact the pandemic is having on some of the county's most vulnerable residents, hear about what is being done to help address this and discuss possible next steps. Confirmed speakers include Sarah Wren, Herts Independent Living, and Alexandra Hunter, Herts Mind Network. You can register to attend via [Eventbrite](#).

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership: Partner organisations across Hertfordshire are teaming up with the NSPCC to launch a new awareness raising campaign about neglect aimed at all communities across our county. The 'Neglect Matters' campaign will be launching early on in 2021 and will involve people who are working and living in Hertfordshire as well as children and young people.

To help measure the understanding of the issue of neglect in the community, a [short survey](#) has been developed. [The survey](#) is completely anonymous but is targeted at parents and carers in order to build up a clearer picture of what they understand neglect to be. This will help create a campaign that will be most relevant to Hertfordshire and the people living here.

People of all ages, communities and backgrounds are encouraged to take part but in particular parents and carers – whether they are biological parents, adoptive parents, grandparents, foster carers and so on. Please share the following link to the survey with all your networks:
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/DZYWMGQ>

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 42 days until the UK leaves the EU single market and customs union, and Hertfordshire LRF organisations are continuing to work closely together to ensure the county is ready. The [Government's transition checker](#) is a handy tool to understand what this means to you, your business, and your family. 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 include planning for all possible scenarios with a thorough risk register developed that also includes the additional challenge of coronavirus. All Hertfordshire NHS providers, local authorities, emergency services and other key LRF agencies are putting plans in place to counter any flagged issues. For small and medium-sized businesses, [Ready 2020](#) is a joint initiative led by Hertfordshire LEP, London Economic Action Partnership and South East LEP, to help them prepare for the UK's exit from the EU.

Thank you.