

Hertfordshire Local Resilience Forum Stakeholder Update

7 May 2020



A message from Darryl Keen, Director of Community Protection, Chief Fire Officer and Chair of the strategic coordination group of the Local Resilience Forum.

Dear stakeholder,

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

GP practice and pharmacy opening information on bank holiday Friday (8 May)

Almost all of Hertfordshire's GP practices are open this bank holiday Friday (8 May), with just two practices in Buntingford and Hertford making alternative arrangements.

Practice websites have information about specific opening hours and the usual 'Extended Access' appointments will also be available. GPs and practice nurses are working mainly over the telephone or via video consultation at the moment, helping patients and staff to stay safe. Staff can still see patients face-to-face if there is a medical reason to do so, but a telephone 'triage' appointment or video consultation will take place first.

The majority of pharmacies will also open between 2pm and 5pm on the bank holiday. A number of pharmacies across the county will be open for longer hours, based on local needs. Find further details about pharmacy services on the NHS website: www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-pharmacy Please help to spread the message that the NHS is there for people need medical help. For all urgent health concerns, please visit NHS 111 online 111.nhs.uk, or call 999 in a life or limb-threatening emergency.

Bank holiday policing update

The county's emergency services remain ready to respond 24/7 – as always, with extra police patrols scheduled for the bank holiday weekend.

VE Day represents a matter of national pride and celebration, as well as an opportunity to consider and thank those who fought so bravely for our freedom," said Assistant Chief Constable Nathan Briant, who is leading Hertfordshire Constabulary's response to COVID-19. "I fully appreciate that everyone would prefer to celebrate this landmark date with families and friends, but sadly the current situation makes this impossible. It is vital that people continue to adhere to the government's social distancing guidelines at this time. As a community we have come too far to risk any setbacks, and only by continuing our efforts can we hope to save lives and hasten the removal of the restrictions.

"Our officers will be on patrol as usual around the county. Their role there is primarily public safety,

as we try to reduce the opportunities for the virus to spread. Officers will always seek to engage with people and encourage compliance with the regulations, but where necessary for the benefit of the wider public, we will take enforcement action if required. We have received hugely positive feedback from our communities in relation to our policing style throughout lockdown and I would like to say thank you for your continued support and adherence to the current restrictions.”

If you are concerned about a gathering which contravenes the guidance, please use online reporting methods to contact the police. This will help to relieve some of the pressure on emergency lines and resources, and allow for a quicker response to urgent 999 calls. Online reporting can be accessed at www.hertspolice.co.uk/contact or www.hertspolice.co.uk/report.

Drive-through coronavirus testing in Hertfordshire on bank holiday weekend

People with suspected COVID-19 symptoms who meet the national criteria can access drive-through tests in Hertfordshire once again this weekend.

Pop-up sites in Hertford (Saturday), Watford (Sunday) and Stevenage (Monday) have been commissioned by local NHS organisations and are supported by the military. Testing at each site will open at 10am and run until 4pm. The tests are only effective if people are swabbed in the first three days of having suspected coronavirus symptoms and cannot detect whether somebody has had coronavirus in the past.

To book a test, go online to www.gov.uk/coronavirus. The booking system will only show you details of test locations which are available in the following 24hrs. When all the available tests slots have been booked at a particular test site, the site will be removed from the national list. Additional tests are added to the site regularly, so check-in throughout the day if you are not successful at booking a local drive-through or mail-order test the first time you try.

Watford football club hosts maternity services

The fear of contracting coronavirus is deterring some people from attending routine appointments and stopping them from getting in touch with health services if they have a concern. In its continued collaboration with Watford Football Club, West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust is now running some maternity services from the stadium. These include antenatal and postnatal checks and hearing tests for newborn babies. Coming to the stadium is reassuring for women who were worried about visiting the hospital. The stadium also provides a safe space for pregnant women and new mothers who are experiencing poor mental health or are at risk of abuse.

This week, many members of the public shared their experiences of brilliant care on International Day of the Midwife on social media. The **Lister Hospital in Stevenage** received more than 100 comments praising the trust’s midwives – with special mentions for many staff. You can read many of the comments [here](#).

Minor Injuries Unit at St Albans City Hospital

This unit will continue to remain closed during May while the minors department at Watford General Hospital has reinstated 24-hour operations.

Mental health support during COVID-19

A new multi-agency group – which includes our mental health service providers - has been set up to

oversee the mental health and wellbeing support available to Hertfordshire residents and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hertfordshire's Behaviour Change Unit is supporting the group and has already developed a [Top Tips for resilience at home](#) infographic.

Information for children, young people and their parents is available at www.justtalkherts.org and a live webinar for 11-19 year olds to address their questions about COVID-19 will take place on Thursday 14 May. A [confidential helpline](#) is in operation for health and social care staff across Hertfordshire who need support with emotional issues during the pandemic; and a series of guides to support people through bereavement are available [on the County Council website](#).

Former care homes re-opened to support patients

Two former care homes in Buntingford and Oxhey have now re-opened and registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), enabling 85 people to get extra support as they recover from the virus. These homes are being supported by the local NHS community health providers. A third home in Abbots Langley, which was due to be closed, will now stay open to provide additional capacity in this area.

There has been an amazing community response to staffing and resourcing these new homes, which are being supported to provide safe, high quality care for residents.

Testing arrangements for care home residents

In order to protect care home residents and staff, arrangements are in place to ensure that people are tested for COVID-19 before they are discharged from an NHS hospital into a care home.

Strengthened arrangements have also been put in place to test care home residents who have symptoms which could suggest that they have the virus.

Hertfordshire County Council has worked with NHS colleagues to utilise spare testing capacity at test sites in Hertfordshire for care workers and their family members, as well as providing transport to test centres for care workers and their families who don't have a car.

Twenty residential care homes in Hertfordshire have been chosen to take part in a national home testing pilot led by the CQC, which will involve the homes administering tests for all staff and residents, whether or not they have symptoms. Local support will be offered to help with this complex operation.

Potential changes to current restrictions

The LRF will be keeping a close eye on upcoming government announcements on the current restrictions. Some changes to the 'lockdown' are expected to be announced, which could help get some people back to work or school.

Any change to the current guidelines is likely to be seen as a positive move by some and worrying by others. The LRF will continue to work within national guidelines from the government and Public Health England to ensure that the local population, businesses and schools get the support they need during this time.

Hertfordshire and West Essex area gains 'Integrated Care System' status

It has been announced this week that health and care organisations from across Hertfordshire and West Essex have been granted new national 'Integrated Care System' status. This is in recognition of



the considerable partnership work which has taken place in the area to improve the health and wellbeing of the population. If you would like to find out more about what this means for Hertfordshire, visit www.healthierfuture.org.uk

And finally, we need you...

We hope you manage to enjoy and commemorate VE Day 75. Please encourage others to honour the heroes of VE Day and protect the heroes of today. Over this bank holiday weekend, please stay at home and save lives.

Thank you.