

COVID-19 Hertfordshire Local Outbreak Plan



Foreword

This Local Outbreak Plan builds on existing health protection plans and puts in place measures to contain any outbreak and protect the public's health. Hertfordshire County Council's Director of Public Health is responsible for defining the measures required to do this.

It is intended to enable agencies in Hertfordshire, including all of our councils - including district and boroughs, the NHS, businesses, voluntary agencies and the county council - to work together to prevent, manage, reduce and suppress outbreaks of COVID-19 infection across the county.

It sets out the arrangements for surveillance of and response to local outbreaks and infection rates. Some of these (such as work in Care Homes) are already in Place. Other parts (such as how the National and Local Contact Tracing Systems interface) are still being developed nationally.

At the time of writing, we are exiting some of the restriction measures which were put in place in March.

However, COVID-19 is not over. It is still circulating widely in our community.

We need residents, businesses, workplaces, schools and care settings to keep these preventive measures up until we have finally stopped this virus circulating.

Residents of Hertfordshire rose to the challenge of COVID-19 by adhering to the key measures that would stop the spread of the virus: social distancing, regular hand washing, cleaning surfaces which could be contaminated, self-isolating if they had symptoms and more. Without our residents doing this, many more people would have been infected and many more deaths would have happened.

We need you to do this vital work in order for our outbreak plan to be effective. We can do this by working together.

Cllr Lewis Cocking,
Leader of Broxbourne Borough Council

Cllr Andrew Williams,
Leader of Dacorum Borough Council

Cllr Linda Haysey,
Leader of East Herts Council

Cllr Morris Bright,
Leader of Hertsmere Borough Council

Cllr Martin Stears-Handscorn,
Leader of North Herts District Council

Cllr Chris White,
Leader of St Albans City and District Council

Cllr Sharon Taylor,
Leader of Stevenage Borough Council

Cllr Sara Bedford,
Leader of Three Rivers District Council

Peter Taylor,
Elected Mayor of Watford

Cllr Tony Kingsbury,
Leader of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Cllr David Williams,
Leader of Hertfordshire County Council

David Lloyd,
Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire

What our plan is aiming to achieve

Through our local plan, and working with local communities, we aim:

1. To protect the health of the population of Hertfordshire from COVID-19, preventing the spread of COVID-19 and associated diseases by:

- Preventing the spread of Covid-19 across workplaces and communities;
- Identifying outbreaks as early as possible;
- Containing and suppressing outbreaks by proactively using the best current tools and evidence;
- Co-ordinating the capabilities of all relevant partners by agreeing roles and responsibilities and escalation routes, defining governance structures and command & control arrangements;
- Where possible supporting the incorporation of the COVID-19 response into existing structures and ways of working; and
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to prevent and manage non COVID-19 seasonal communicable diseases, such as the 'flu, which may also impact adversely on public service capacity.

2. To assure the public and stakeholders these measures are being delivered effectively by:

- Publishing this Local Outbreak Plan;
- Establishing a Member-Led Governance Board;
- Setting out communications and engagement arrangements with partner organisations and residents;
- Delivering proactive and reactive communications campaigns and resources to support residents and stakeholders, such businesses and schools, to take appropriate action;
- Producing epidemiological surveillance and modelling to support the actions taken;
- Communicating clearly to residents when action is being taken and why; and
- Using programme management principles and capabilities.

Outbreak levels

Health Protection arrangements already exist for managing outbreaks of infection in Hertfordshire.

What is different about COVID-19 is the scale, which was so significant in the period between March 2020 and June 2020 that it required the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) of the county's Local Resilience Forum to co-ordinate activity.

In developing this Outbreak Plan we have identified levels of Outbreak alerts for the system from 1 to 4. This plan is designed to cope with Level 1 and 2 Outbreaks. Level 3 would essentially be a second wave of the pandemic which would require the SCG to be fully operational.

Table 1: Levels of Outbreak Alert

Level	What does this look like?	Recent Examples
01	Outbreaks within existing capacity, even if in multiple settings simultaneously. The Health Protection Board would manage these.	COVID 19 in care homes and schools.
02	Outbreaks which would exceed existing outbreak management capacity and need additional resource or capacity. The Health Protection Board and SCG would work together to manage these.	Lookback exercises and screening on over 1500 people (multi agency response).
03	Outbreaks which would exceed existing capacity and require the SCG and/or one or more partners to declare a Major Incident.	'Flu Season 2017
04 (Second Wave)	A second wave of infection as bad or worse than the first. This would require full scale SCG co-ordination and a national response and would result in many people needing hospital treatment, and possibly many more deaths.	COVID-19 first wave

National and local responsibilities

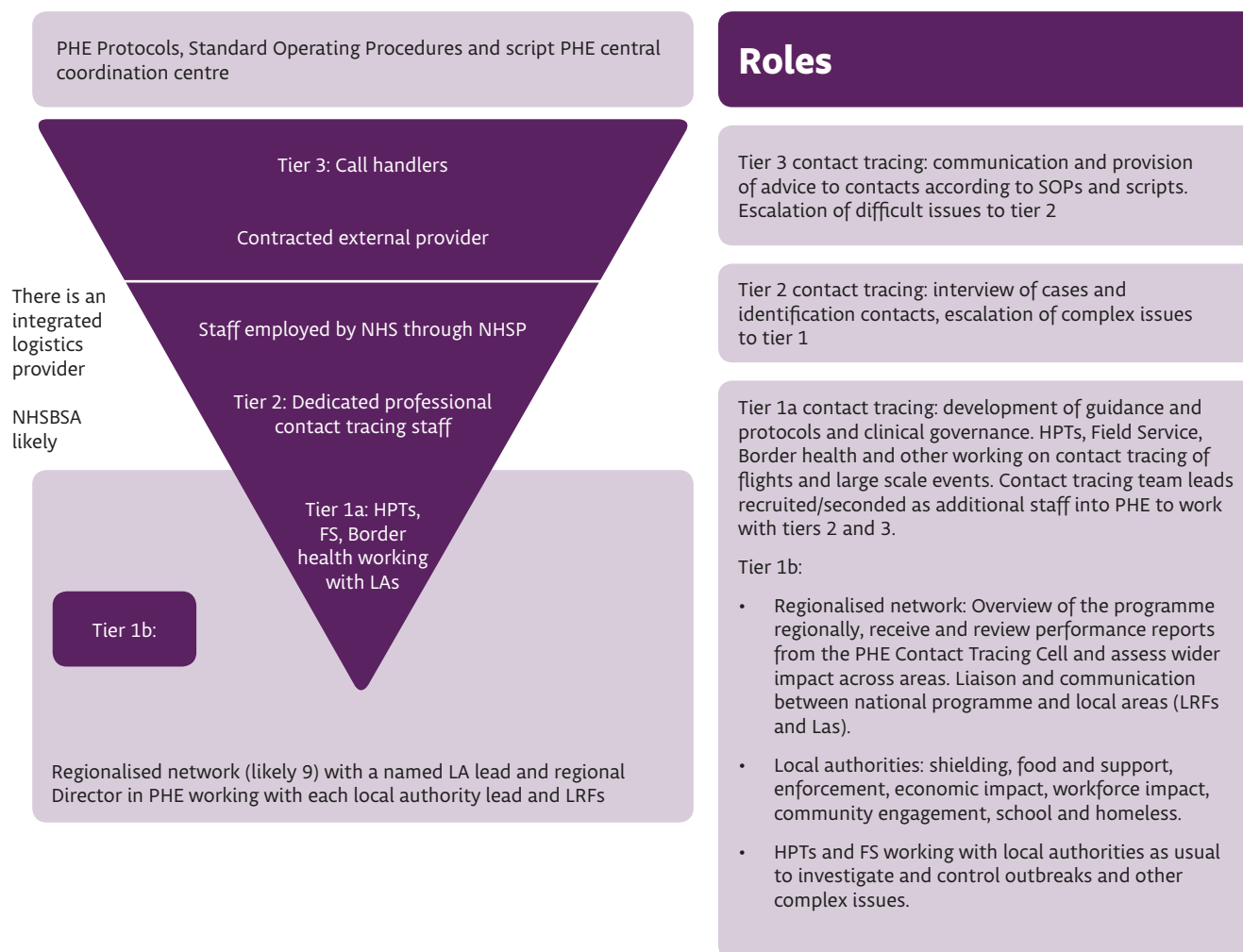
The UK Government has set out four key strands to the national approach to tackling COVID-19: test; trace; contain; and enable. These have distinct but complementary roles at national and local level.

The purpose of this system is to control the COVID-19 rate of reproduction (R), reduce the spread of infection and save lives.

To control the rate of reproduction the National Test and Trace system (see Figure 1) has three tiers of operation which have been implemented nationally.

Local planning and response is an essential part of this operation and forms part of level 1b, a Local Outbreak Control Plan is required to document these local plans.

Figure 1: National Test and Trace System



Priorities for Hertfordshire's Local Outbreak Plan

Programme 1: Prevent and Respond

National Government has set seven priorities for Local Outbreak Plans. There are also additional priorities outlined in guidance, additional requests from government or developing best practice.

We have grouped these priorities together to form mutually inter-dependent five programmes for the Hertfordshire Plan.

This will co-ordinate existing and new arrangements to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and proactively manage outbreaks.

Prevention is the first and most important part of managing outbreaks of COVID-19. Measures like social distancing, cleaning, good and frequent hand washing and self-isolating and getting tested if you have symptoms are crucial, and we need the public and employers and all partner agencies to work with us to make sure we prevent significant rises in numbers of people infected.

NHS Commissioners and Providers are working to ensure that they prevent and manage outbreaks of COVID-19 in NHS settings. This ranges from infection control in Hospitals and Primary Care to putting in place measures to providing covid free sites, identifying patient cohorts at higher risk in the event of a second wave and identifying preventive action. The NHS also supports infection control across care and NHS settings and testing of staff and patients.

As part of this programme we will make sure we engage proactively with key workplaces and with residents to ask them to keep these preventive measures going.

The programme will consist of the following workstreams:

1. Prevention Hub - resourcing and enabling preventive activity and communication. Responsible for the forecasting and future casting of preventive

and response action by monitoring when new technologies (such as a vaccine) will become available and ensuring the system puts in place arrangements to deliver these or make them available.

- 2. Care Homes** - ensuring outbreaks are prevented and managed effectively in care homes.
- 3. Schools** - ensuring schools can operate safely and outbreaks are managed effectively.
- 4. High Risk Settings (Non-NHS)** - systematic identification and risk assessment of settings, and co-ordination of action.
- 5. High Risk NHS Settings** - due to the particular nature of NHS settings and risk of transmission, the NHS will have a dedicated workstream on preventing and managing outbreaks in hospitals and other NHS settings.
- 6. Vulnerable People and Communities** - systematic identification of populations at higher risk of getting COVID-19 or higher risk of serious disease or outcomes if they do become infected; and the provision of support to those people who are self-isolating.
- 7. Highways and Urban/Town Centre Safety** - ensuring town centres and businesses operate safely for residents.
- 8. Enforcement Powers** - ensuring enforcement powers are used quickly, sensitively and appropriately.

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Programme 2: Testing and Contact Tracing

Rapid and easily accessible testing is key to any pandemic management in order to establish and monitor levels of infection and immunity in the system, plan for service demand, prevent asymptomatic spread of infection to vulnerable cohorts, identify who needs treatment and care, and keep the workforce and services resilient.

This programme will co-ordinate existing and new arrangements to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and proactively manage outbreaks through the following workstreams:

- 1. Testing Co-ordination and Deployment** - the development of local testing capabilities (including mobile reactive testing for outbreaks) to support the objectives of this plan.
- 2. Contact Tracing Local Capabilities** - the development of local contact tracing capabilities to support the objectives of this plan.
- 3. Co-ordination** - working with Public Health England and all other partners across the East of England to ensure consistent pathways between national, regional and local aspects of the NHS Track and Trace System.

It consists of a number of workstreams which have significant inter-relationships and grouping them together in one programme will enable workstreams to avoid duplication of effort. A detailed strategy for testing has been developed. A new regional testing site and mobile testing unit has also already been secured as part of this work.



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Programme 3: Surveillance, Intelligence and Data

This will ensure the Outbreak Board is provided with good intelligence and data. Monitoring and forecasting the spread of disease in Hertfordshire is crucial to enabling effective action, as well as providing other workstreams with information they need to deliver their functions.

The programme will consist of the workstreams listed below:

- 1. Daily Surveillance Meetings** - daily monitoring, as in any ongoing outbreak, and identification of actions and information flows to workstreams.
- 2. Analytical, Forecasting and Modelling** - providing epidemiological intelligence and modelling possible trends.
- 3. Information Sharing** - ensuring information sharing can be undertaken proactively and effectively.



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Programme 4: Engaging Communities

Effective communication with local communities is essential in managing outbreaks.

This programme will co-ordinate existing and new arrangements to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and proactively manage outbreaks. It will consist of two elements:

- 1. An Elected Member Board** - key in ensuring elected members can communicate across the county, and within districts/boroughs and localities.
- 2. A Communications Cell** - a dedicated cell to co-ordinate communication capabilities across Hertfordshire's partner agencies. Its key purpose will be engaging with the public in order to maintain public trust in measures taken to prevent and control outbreaks.

The Communications Cell will liaise with multiple workstreams from other programmes, a number of workstreams will play key ongoing supportive roles in enabling communication and engagement:

- **Prevention Hub** - the behavioural sciences and advice functions of the Prevention Hub enable messaging and create resourcing to be used in communications.
- **Surveillance and Analytical Programme** - this workstream's outputs will inform the work of the Communications and the Member Board.
- **Governance and Programme Co-ordination** - will ensure communications and the Member Board is effectively resourced.

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Priorities for Hertfordshire's Local Outbreak Plan

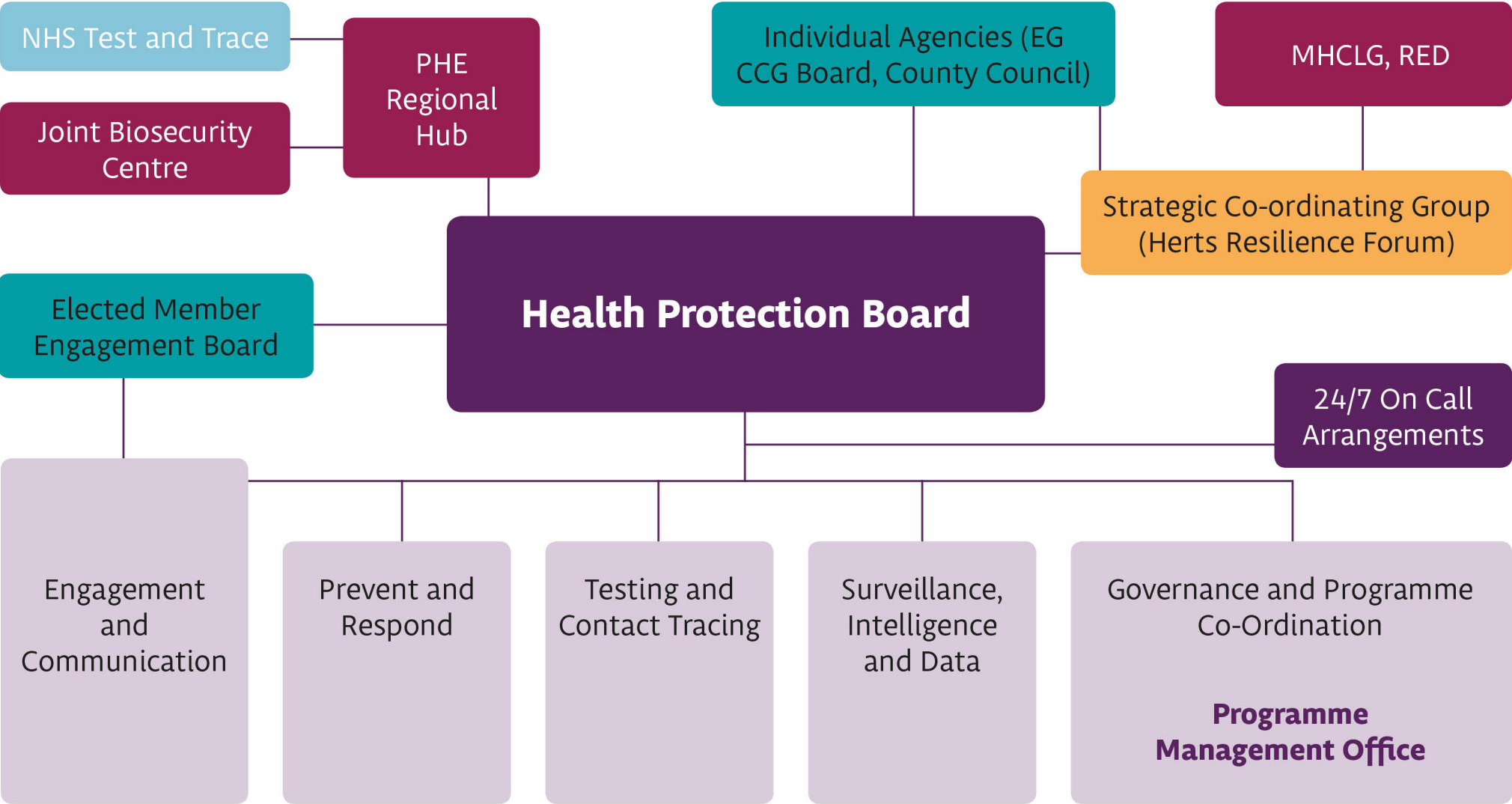
Programme 5: Governance and Programme Co-Ordination

This programme will consist of the arrangements to ensure that the Plan is well co-ordinated and governed. These arrangements are:

- **Elected Member Engagement Board** - convened by the Leader of the County Council, has met in shadow form and will provide assurance to the public as well as ensuring all eleven councils work together. This Board will sign off the Local Outbreak Plan.
- **Health Protection Board** - will lead on actions to co-ordinate and deliver actions to prevent and manage outbreaks of COVID-19 in Hertfordshire. It will be multi-agency and will use both existing and new structures and systems. This Board will own, deliver and develop this plan. This Board will be a cell of the Strategic Co-ordinating Group of the Local Resilience Forum.
- **Programme Management Office** - A dedicated team of programme management capabilities which will ensure delivery of the Board's objectives.
- **Internal Hertfordshire County Council** - responsible for reporting and co-ordinating and providing finance assurance. The county council will lead on this since it is in receipt of the grant for outbreak management.



Figure 2: Governance and Reporting Arrangements



Where do I go for more information?

You can get more information on COVID-19 from the following sources:

[HCC website](#) - containing coronavirus guidance and service updates

[gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) - for the government's latest updates and guidance

[NHS](#) website for information on the virus and how to prevent it spreading.

[Herts Help](#) contactable on 0300 123 4044 – support for all Hertfordshire residents



What do I do if I think I have symptoms?

If you have a high temperature or a new, continuous cough, or have lost your sense of taste or smell, firstly get a test for coronavirus done by going to <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/> or by dialling 119 if you do not have internet access.

Live alone? Stay home for 7 days

Live with others? They will have to stay home for 14 days if you have symptoms.

Don't go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital.

[Read NHS advice about staying at home.](#)

Use the [111 coronavirus online service](#) if:

- you feel you can't cope with your symptoms at home
- your condition gets worse
- your symptoms don't get better after 7 days.

Only call 111 if you can't get help online. You don't need to contact 111 to tell them you're staying at home.