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Parkway
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Hertfordshire
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4 April 2023

<https://hertsandwestessex.icb.nhs.uk>

Stakeholder update – April 2023

Dear stakeholder,

The last month was a busy one as we came to the end of one financial year while gearing up for our first full year ahead as an Integrated Care Board.

On the subject of planning ahead, we'd like to extend our thanks to everyone who helped us to promote the engagement survey we shared in the last update, through which we sought the views of stakeholders, residents and staff on our developing Joint Forward Plan. The plan details how we will commission and provide NHS services to meet the changing physical and mental health needs of the population of Hertfordshire and west Essex over the next five years.

We received more than 1,100 responses to the survey and are working with Healthwatch to analyse the comprehensive feedback we received. We will share more information on the survey's findings, and on the plan those findings have informed, in future updates.

This month's letter includes important information about upcoming NHS industrial action, the integration of dentistry, optometry and community pharmacy into our ICB and moves towards devolution in Essex.

Pharmacy, optometry and dentistry services now under ICB management

On 1 April, our ICB, in common with others across the country, took over from our NHS England regional colleagues the responsibility for managing community pharmacy, dentistry and optometry services.

These services will now be managed locally, with staff integrating into our ICB.

Pharmacies, optometrists and dentists are based in the heart of our local communities and play a vital role in supporting the wellbeing of their residents. Integrating these services into the ICB will open up opportunities for closer working with other local health services, for the benefit of the people they serve.

We have been working closely with the providers affected by this change, and NHS England, to ensure a smooth transition of these services.

Dr Jane Halpin, Chief Executive

Rt. Hon. Paul Burstow, Chair



Industrial action and the Easter bank holiday period

This week we are appealing for the public's support as we prepare for the Easter bank holiday weekend, followed by a four-day junior doctors' strike, which will affect local services. Significant disruption is expected, particularly during the strike period (beginning 7am on Tuesday 11 April and ending at 7am on Saturday 15 April) which comes straight after a bank holiday weekend, when health services will be working at full stretch to meet demand.

With only around one third of all hospital-based doctors expected to be working during the strike period, hospitals will not be able to run as normal and services will be working under immense pressure for several days. Some hospitals have decided to postpone some non-urgent operations, treatments and routine appointments, which is really unfortunate for those whose treatment is delayed, but necessary in order to enable senior doctors to cover essential roles for their junior colleagues. This includes providing life-saving emergency treatment for people who need it.

Anyone with a pre-booked appointment should attend as normal, unless they have been contacted by their hospital or clinic to say that it has been cancelled or postponed.

During the last strike action earlier this month, many people came to accident and emergency (A&E) with symptoms that should have been seen and treated elsewhere. A&E is always just for serious injuries and life-threatening emergencies only, so in a genuine medical emergency always call 999. Those who come to A&E with a minor condition or illness during the strike are likely to face a very long wait. If people call 999 for an ambulance when they don't need one, they could endanger the life of another person in desperate need of emergency care.

There are many sources of advice about when to call 999, including on the [NHS website](#).

Please remind your friends, family members and networks that NHS 111 is there 24 hours a day if they are unwell and need urgent medical help or advice on where to go. We have more staff in the NHS 111 service to cover the challenging week ahead, so please remember to use 111 online or call for help if you cannot manage symptoms yourself at home. You can find a list of pharmacies open on Good Friday and Easter Monday by visiting www.nhs.uk and using the 'Find a Pharmacy' tool.

GP practices will be closed over the bank holiday weekend and will reopen on Tuesday 11 April. We are asking the public to be patient with practice teams as they work through a large volume of calls. Some practices will also be without their junior doctors, who will be joining the strike action.

For more information and tips on preparing for the bank holiday weekend, [visit the NHS Hertfordshire and West Essex ICB website](#).

Dr Jane Halpin, Chief Executive

Rt. Hon. Paul Burstow, Chair



Lloyds Pharmacy closures

We have been made aware that from Saturday 22 April, Lloyds Pharmacy will no longer provide pharmacy services within Sainsbury's supermarkets. This is a national decision which will affect these seven Lloyds pharmacies currently operating from Sainsbury's supermarkets in Hertfordshire and west Essex:

- Hitchin Road, Coreys Mill, Stevenage
- Barnett Road, London Colney, St Albans
- Everard Close, St Albans
- Church Road, Welwyn Garden City
- Dome Roundabout, Nth Western Avenue, Watford
- Third Avenue Business Park, Letchworth
- Fifth Avenue, Harlow

NHS England has been involved in planning for these closures, which will be a sad loss to those residents who currently use these branches. Please do share this information with your networks, so they can make alternative arrangements for medication if they usually use those particular outlets.

ICB's clinical priorities

On Friday 24 March the ICB Board agreed a set of [clinical priorities](#) we will be working on for the coming 2023-24 year. The priorities were identified as part of a needs analysis and focus on five areas that will support the ICB to reduce health inequalities and improve outcomes for our population: children and young people, prevention and health inequalities, long term conditions and frailty, mental health and maternity.

The priorities include reducing attendance and admission to hospital for falls, reducing childhood obesity, developing neonatal urgent care pathways and developing more practice and preventative care models for people with long term conditions.

To support the delivery of the priorities we will be collaborating with system partners and leaders at each of our 'place' areas – west Essex, east and north Hertfordshire and south and west Hertfordshire.

Spring COVID booster vaccinations

Our teams are now preparing to deliver the spring COVID booster programme. All those aged over 75, residents in care homes for older adults, and those with weakened immune systems will be invited to have this top up booster.

The jobs will be offered through GP practices, pharmacies and some 'pop up' vaccination clinics across Hertfordshire and west Essex.

Please remind people not to call their GP practice to book their COVID job - the NHS will invite eligible people for their job when it is their turn.

Dr Jane Halpin, Chief Executive

Rt. Hon. Paul Burstow, Chair



For more information about who is eligible, what is being offered and the dates the job becomes available, please [visit the Hertfordshire and West Essex ICB website](#).

[More information about the COVID spring booster programme can be found on gov.uk](#).

Plans for devolution in Greater Essex

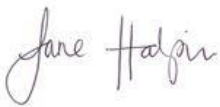
Our ICB has recently formally supported proposals to devolve central powers relating to Essex, to Essex County Council.

Devolution would mean the county would have the powers and funding to control and invest in fundamental issues of local concern, including health.

Essex County Council, Southend-on-Sea City Council, Thurrock Council and the district and borough councils in Essex, in collaboration with the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner, have now developed an Expression of Interest for devolution.

Further details about these plans can be found on the [Essex County Council website](#).

Yours faithfully,



Dr Jane Halpin
Chief Executive Officer

Hertfordshire and West Essex ICS
Hertfordshire and West Essex
Integrated Care Board



Rt Hon Paul Burstow
Independent Chair

Hertfordshire and West Essex ICS
Chair, Hertfordshire and West Essex
Integrated Care Board

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