
Re: Update from Sarah Perman, August 2026.

From Eve Coletta <eve.coletta@cpherts.org.uk>

Date Tue 08/09/2026 11:27

To Eve Coletta <eve.coletta@cpherts.org.uk>



Welcome

Welcome to my latest update.

I'm very proud of the work that my colleagues in Hertfordshire County Council's Trading Standards team carried out earlier this month during a **week of action to tackle underage tobacco and vape sales**. They visited 140 retailers to provide advice on age verification, legal responsibilities and identifying illegal products. The operation comes ahead of the **recent news that councils are to get more powers to stop vape and betting shops** and the new **Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026**, which will come into force later this year. It also reinforced awareness of our **Vape Brain campaign**, that highlights the impact nicotine vape addiction can have on young people's concentration, wellbeing and mental health. Anyone can report suspected illegal vape sales via an **anonymous reporting form**.

Sarah Perman, Director of Public Health, Hertfordshire County Council

Highlights

- The NHS has opened its **national booking system for flu vaccinations** earlier than ever as part of its preparations for winter. Eligible groups, including pregnant women and children, can now pre-book their flu jab ahead of vaccinations starting on 1 September. Other cohorts will begin receiving the jab from 1 October. The move comes after an exceptionally busy summer for the NHS, with record A&E attendances and sustained pressure on services. Last year, around 19 million people in England received a flu jab, helping to prevent over 100,000 hospitalisations.

- A new **Ageing Better 10 Year Impact Report** highlights the progress being made nationally to create better later lives, including improving employment opportunities for people in their 50s and 60s and tackling ageism. These priorities align closely with our own **Age Friendly: Live Better** initiative, a three-year programme funded by Public Health to help create more inclusive communities for older residents.
- Just a reminder that the **new Beezee programmes** start after the summer holidays, running in locations across the county as well as online, to help families, children and teenagers develop and sustain healthy weight and active lives. If you work with families who might benefit from support, **visit the BeeZee Hertfordshire website** to find out more. Beezee is also running two **free online** masterclasses for parents/carers - **Healthy eating on a budget** (24 September 12:30-1:30pm) and **Supporting children with a limited diet** (28 September 5:30-6:30pm). Sign up on the **events page of the website**.
- Our annual **World Suicide Prevention Day Conference** takes place on Wednesday 9 September in Welwyn Garden City. The theme this year is 'Children and young people: mental wellbeing, suicide prevention and safer digital lives' and we will be launching our 'Bricks for '26' initiative, which supports smartphone free schools. There are limited spaces still available, please sign up by Tuesday 1 September (in-person attendance for whole day event) or Monday 7 September (online attendance – morning only) by contacting **publicmentalhealth@hertfordshire.gov.uk**.
- We are running an **anonymous survey** to gather feedback from women who have used the **emergency contraceptive pill** ('morning after pill') within the last six months. The findings will help us understand experiences and improve local contraception services commissioned by Public Health. Please do share the link with your networks: **Emergency Contraceptive Pill Experience Survey**.
- UKHSA has published the **respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) annual report** which shows around 50% fewer infants under 6 months being admitted to intensive care with RSV disease in England. Analyses of the older adult programme indicates a cut in hospitalisation rates by more than 40% among eligible adults aged 75 to 80. These are excellent outcomes from the RSV vaccination programme. Since September 2024, the RSV vaccine has been offered to pregnant women and older adults. On 1 September 2026, the programme will be expanded again to include adults aged 65 to 74 years in clinical at-risk groups.

News from our partners

- A new **NHS-commissioned crisis text support service** launches in Hertfordshire this September. The free and confidential service will provide immediate mental health support to people of all ages via SMS, WhatsApp and online chat, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Trained mental health professionals will offer support, assess risk and help connect people with appropriate services. A communications toolkit will be shared ahead of launch to help partners promote the service through local networks and channels. For more information, contact **Owais.Ahmed@hertfordshire.gov.uk** or **Hana.Midgley@hertfordshire.gov.uk**.
- Recent findings show that **children and young people from Asian backgrounds are under-represented in Hertfordshire's mental health services**. Hertfordshire's Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (CYPMHS) has launched a survey to understand why this is, so that targeted action can be taken to reduce inequalities. Please do share the **survey for young people and their parents/carers** to help us improve services.

Opportunities

- Local VCFSE organisations are invited to express their interest in delivering a **fully funded in-house Stop Smoking Service** for Hertfordshire residents, to help reduce smoking rates among communities with higher levels of smoking who may not engage with mainstream services. If you are interested, please contact Eleanor.Catchpole1@hertfordshire.gov.uk by 12 noon on Friday 11 September 2026.
- Professionals who support people whose health may be affected by poor-quality housing are invited to attend a **free Healthy Homes for Healthier Lives training** session, to learn more about how housing conditions impact both physical and mental wellbeing. [Book your session on the Public Health Training webpage](#). Upcoming sessions are available on 3 September (11.00am-12.30pm), 6 October (2.00-3.30pm), 4 November (10.00-11.30am) or 8 December (3.00-4.30pm).
- Since January 2026, **Hertfordshire Health Walks volunteers** have delivered over 2,500 free walks and welcomed almost 600 new people along, more than half of whom are living with a long-term health condition. Volunteering is a vital and rewarding role, where you can help people get active, improve their wellbeing and connect with others. If you want to make a difference in your community, [find out more about taking part](#). The next **health walk volunteer training session is in Stevenage on 4 September 2026**.

And finally...

Recent reports from the Public Health Evidence and Intelligence team:

- [New unitary authorities for Hertfordshire: a Public Health overview](#) - A comparative overview of the demographics, health outcomes, wider determinants of health and future priorities for each of the four proposed unitary authorities in Hertfordshire.
- [Briefing note on healthy weight in adults](#) - Risk factors, barriers and enablers for achieving healthy weight. The findings show that the relationship between higher deprivation and higher risk of excess weight is complex and may challenge existing assumptions.

Recent UK Health Security Agency campaign toolkits available in the [Campaign Resource Centre](#):

- Hot weather
 - University student vaccinations
 - MenB vaccination
 - Childhood immunisations
 - Staying well during the 2026 festival season
 - Be 'tick aware'
-

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