

Utilising opportunities to support people and address concerns about Covid-19 Vaccines

BACKGROUND

Social Prescribing Link Workers (SPLWs) have played a big part in their Primary Care Networks (PCN) vaccination programme.

Some patients have preconceptions and misconceptions about the vaccines which have been challenging to break through.

The SPLWs have received Covid-19 vaccinator training and have attended various trainings offered to voluntary sector organisations and SPLWs by the Social Welfare Alliance (SWA), focusing on community engagement and support initiatives.

The SPLWs have linked in with Newham's Vaccine Peer Support Champions (VPSC), they are volunteers from the community that have signed up to support their peers, sharing up to date and factual information to help people make well informed decisions.

THE APPROACH

The PCNs Vaccination Centre is based in the same practice as the SPLWs; the Clinical Lead and Head of the centre fully supported all SPLWs to become vaccinators and allowed them to take time to do this role in addition to their Social Prescribing duties.



The SPLWs attended training opportunities offered by the SWA to gain a deeper understanding of what the barriers and concerns were in the community, having this information meant that the SPLWs could have more considerate conversations with patients.

Ninian has built a good relationship with the VPSCs following training and signposts people who want more time and information to local pop-up sites where champions would be based, or to their website where they could book a call with a champion.

Ninian shares the knowledge she has gained as a vaccinator to help reassure and answer patients' questions.

As part of Ninian's role she uses EMIS and can identify people who are eligible for the Covid-19 vaccine but may not have had it yet. When contacting patients, Ninian uses motivational

TOP TIPS

- Connect with local **Vaccine Peer Support Champions**.
- **Provide options** for where patients may be able to access their vaccine that works for them.
- **Use EMIS to identify opportunities** to provide further support to patients if needed.
- **Signpost patients** to Covid-19 vaccine information from trusted sources.

interviewing to help explore the reasons why they may not have had their Covid-19 vaccine and want to wait.

THE OUTCOME

Talking through patients' perspectives of the benefits and disbenefits of having the Covid-19 vaccine and sharing her own experiences has enabled more open conversations.

SPLWs develop trusted relationships with their patients and understand them on an individual level. Training as a vaccinator has meant that some of their patients have preferred to have their Covid-19 vaccine administered by their SPLW, when they feel ready.

Having in-depth knowledge about the community, barriers and perceptions provides a useful background before approaching conversations with patients.

Knowing there is dedicated support in the community to answer further questions and access opportunities to other vaccination sites has meant patients are provided a choice that may work better for them.

Using EMIS to identify patients who may need further conversations highlights the need to explore what additional support may be needed.

Final thoughts from Ninian...

"Take the time to ask your patients how they feel about the vaccine and give them the opportunity to question their own thoughts, motivations and biases – you'll be surprised, they often already know the answers".

Ninian Schmeising-Barnes, SPLW

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ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This case study has been produced by Healthy London Partnership in support of the development of social prescribing in London and National Covid-19 vaccination programme. For more information about this case study or to put forward your scheme as a potential case study, please contact hlp.socialprescribing@nhs.net