



Views and experiences of COVID-19 vaccinations among people with experience of homelessness in London

Video project summary report

March 2022

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Project overview

Expert Focus was commissioned by Healthy London Partnership's (HLP) Homeless Health programme to co-produce a set of videos with a group of Experts by Experience (EbEs) of homelessness, sharing their views and experiences on COVID-19 vaccinations.

- Seven short videos have been produced for partners and frontline staff in homelessness settings to help encourage clients and residents to get vaccinated.
- A 35-minute group discussion video was also produced where the participants share their individual experiences of life during the COVID-19 pandemic, why they chose to get vaccinated, and why they would encourage peers to get vaccinated to keep themselves and others in the community safe.

Why this project was commissioned

Due to the clinical and social vulnerability of this population, there is a clinical need for ongoing local work to encourage people experiencing homelessness to get their first and

second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, and return for a booster vaccination to help prevent serious illness.

Current figures for London based on local intelligence indicate that 70% of the target population have received dose 1 of a COVID vaccine, 46% received dose 2, and 12% received a booster dose.

As England continues to adapt to living with COVID and guidance replaces legal coronavirus restrictions, it is important to continue encouraging COVID vaccine uptake from this population to protect themselves and others from more serious illness and the risk of new variants of the virus.

Key messages

- There is still a lot of COVID in the community.
- It's not too late to get vaccinated and it can be easily arranged.
- There is an open offer for people experiencing homelessness to get a COVID vaccine.
- Vaccines will reduce risk of serious illness.
- Vaccines will keep individuals and their loved ones safe.
- It is important to get your first dose and return for your second and booster dose.
- Individuals can help keep the community safe by sharing their experiences and reasons for getting vaccinated with their peers.

Video content

The final videos can be watched on [HLP's Homeless Health COVID-19 vaccination toolkit](#).

- Partners including local vaccine delivery teams are encouraged to watch and share learnings from the group discussion video.
- Frontline and outreach staff are welcome to share the short talking heads videos with clients and residents who have not yet chosen to get their first dose, or returned for a second or booster dose.

Group discussion video

The group were asked to share their reasons for choosing to get vaccinated.

The discussion has been split into six topics which can be watched in full here: https://youtu.be/3ZF5u_sDOC8. Viewers can also jump to specific sections using the below timestamps:

Discussion	Video section
Understanding vaccination reluctance	1.05-11.07
Experiencing side effects	11.08-15.06
Approaching conversations around vaccinations	15.07-22.50
Building trust with the homeless population	22.51-25.50
Practical ways to support vaccine engagement and uptake	25.51-30.42

How COVID impacted people's lives	30.43-36.10
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At the time of filming, each participant had received their first and second doses, with those eligible for a booster dose also having received it. Members of the group shared their motivations for getting vaccinated, including:

- Recognising that getting vaccinated would the reduce risk of more serious illness from COVID-19
- Wanting to protect themselves and their friends and families by minimising community infections
- Feeling encouraged knowing friends and family were also choosing to get vaccinated
- Concerns that not getting vaccinated would restrict their daily lives
- Concerns around long-COVID impacts on their health
- Being immunosuppressed and advised to get vaccinated by GPs

The discussion also highlighted a range of insights into individuals concerns around getting vaccinated, including:

- Personal concerns such as;
 - feeling pressured to get vaccinated
 - concerns around side effects following vaccination
 - confusion around frequently changing guidance
 - it is not a simple decision and is influenced by a range of factors including uncertainty around vaccine, political influences and mistrust, the influence of media, clinical vulnerability, autonomy, personal freedom
- Conflicting or lack of information including;
 - lack of clear and simple messages
 - concerns around mixing of vaccines
 - uncertainty around reports on the effectiveness of different types of vaccine
 - the prevalence of false information
 - a lack of information (or accessible information) being available to people on the street and/or accessing homelessness services
- Attitudes within the community;
 - conflicting opinions within their communities
 - hesitancy and reduced trust among BAME communities

Asked to shared their thoughts about ways to build trust and engage with homeless and socially disadvantaged communities, discussions included:

- Being more compassionate and understanding of the person's concerns and experiences
- Not to force one's opinion on others but trying to educate one another and being respectful of personal choice
- Sharing real life examples of people experiencing homelessness who have gotten vaccinated to help prepare them for possible side effects and also counter false information
- Welcoming open conversations to understand a person's concerns around vaccinations and taking time to answer questions
- Instilling a sense of empowerment in choosing to get vaccinated to keep themselves and others safe
- Local vaccination schemes to offer information and convenient vaccination support

Longer-term engagement with the community:

- Utilising peer advocates to bridge gaps and build trust with health professionals and the wider healthcare system
- Recognising the value of individuals with lived experience of homelessness to inform wider system change
- Beyond vaccinations, the discussion also highlighted the mental health impact of coronavirus restrictions, disruption of daily routines and limited social interactions at the height of the pandemic – particularly for those with limited or no access to technology.

Two-minute talking heads videos

Each member of the group filmed an additional video, taking two minutes to share their reasons for getting vaccinated, or why they would encourage others to get theirs.

Courtney – staying protected from the dangers of COVID

<https://youtu.be/k5asggR9wC8>

Christine – dispelling the myths

<https://youtu.be/O7m3g13txNY>

Derryn – the benefits of being vaccinated

<https://youtu.be/Yk7GVgMunKQ>

Jo – improving access to information

https://youtu.be/77qV_ZI3spU

Luka – encouraging COVID and flu vaccinations

<https://youtu.be/n7x4B-G5zbn>

Tuesday – protecting friends and family

<https://youtu.be/1LLzb7jSt4g>

Vincent – worth it despite the side effects

https://youtu.be/yzt1tLnr_QA

How and where to share these videos

Partners can share HLP's video links or download the video files to upload to your own websites, newsletters or social media channels. You can:

1. Copy and embed HLP's video links from our [webpage](#).
2. Or download the files [here](#).

Suggested wording to share these videos on your social media channels or websites:

Suggested wording 1:

It's never too late to get your COVID-19 vaccine. [NAME] talks about why they got vaccinated and would encourage you to get yours: [\[insert link to individual video\]](#)

Suggested wording 2:

Hear why people chose to get vaccinated against COVID-19, to keep themselves and others in the community safe: <https://bit.ly/3uMSyMZ>

Additional resources

This [1-page poster](#) can also be adapted by providers and shared digitally or by printing out and displaying in communal settings.

For NHS information on how and where to get vaccinated see:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-vaccine/>

Project delivery

Planning

A project brief was produced by members of the London Homeless Health COVID Advisory Group, with input from representatives from the London Coronavirus Response Cell, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, and Groundswell.

An external provider, Expert Focus, was commissioned to plan and deliver this project in consultation with the HLP Homeless Health Programme team.

A group of seven individuals with experience of homelessness and social disadvantage in London were recruited by Expert Focus to participate in this project.

The group were briefed and provided insight into the issues and perceived risks of COVID-19, as well as concerns which are representative of the wider homeless population regarding vaccinations.

Participants

Across the group, three individuals identify as female and four as male. Participants came from a range of ethnic backgrounds, including *White British, White Irish, White other, Black Caribbean, British Asian*. The average age of the group was 48.1.

It is acknowledged that there are sample limitations as only individuals who were willing to get vaccinated were invited to participate. Likewise that a number of participants referenced underlying health conditions as a factor in choosing to be vaccinated.

Additional views and motivations may have been shared by younger participants, whilst the voice of BAME women would have offered additional insights.

COVID-secure production

Expert Focus visited each participant ahead of filming, with follow-up phone calls to offer the participants time to ask any questions, go through the consent forms and have an understanding of the need to limit their level of contact prior to the event in light of the omicron COVID-19 variant.

Due to changes in coronavirus restrictions in December 2021, there was a challenge around identifying a suitable location to safely assemble the participants and film the group to adhere to social distancing measures. A venue with outdoor space was sourced by Expert Focus and catering and refreshments were provided on the day. Private transport was arranged for each participant to and from the filming location.

Upon arrival, individuals were separated in a large tented area and were provided with a lateral flow test, hand sanitiser and facemasks. A supply of facemasks and sanitiser gels were also distributed to the group to take away. The film crew were also required to take lateral flow tests on the day. Following all results returning negative, the group were able to convene and be briefed on the agenda and timings of the day.

Each participant was given the opportunity to view the edited videos (both the group discussion and their own individual talking head videos with all members confirming their approval. HLP provided final sign-off of the content prior to launching.

About HLP

Healthy London Partnership delivers work on behalf of regional partners including the NHS, Mayor of London, London Councils and UKHSA/OHID. We lead on programmes and other transformation work, reflecting our ambition to make London the world's healthiest major city.

HLP's Homeless Health programme delivers transformational projects and workstreams to help improve access and quality of care for people experiencing homelessness in London. We work with colleagues and partners in health, housing and the third-sector.

About Expert Focus

Expert Focus provides a platform for the voices of lived experience of homelessness and other forms of disadvantage. We continually aim to work towards influencing real, sustainable change across the health and social care sectors to improve outcomes.

Expert Focus prides itself on being able to bring together diverse groups of individuals to work as a team, and through sharing knowledge and thought aims to address some of the inequalities which exist. An average Expert Focus team of 5 people will have combined lived experience of homelessness and social disadvantage of more than 100 years.

Contact information

If you have any questions or feedback on this project, please contact HLP's Homeless Health programme team on: hlp.homelesshealthcovid19team@nhs.net