

Vaccinations evidence review

Findings and recommendations

“Vaccination is the most important thing we can do to protect ourselves and our families against ill-health. They prevent up to 3 million deaths worldwide each year. However, if people stop having vaccines, it’s possible for infectious diseases to quickly spread again” - NHS, 2019

Based on scientific evidence from the UK and around the world, we have a good understanding of why people are reluctant to be vaccinated, and what helps to overcome this.

The most common reasons include:

- Low levels of trust (such as in authorities, government and healthcare etc.)
- Concerns or lack of understanding about vaccine safety, potential side effects, effectiveness, eligibility and the speed of development
- Lack of information and misinformation
- Perceptions of being at low risk of infection
- Fear of needles

The strategies that are most likely to help encourage uptake include:

Increasing people’s motivation

Build timely trust in vaccines

Respectfully highlight the consequences of inaction (such as increased risk of becoming ill)

Emphasise the social benefits of vaccination

Help people to understand the risk of getting and spreading the illness

Develop environments that encourage take up

Provide effective and sufficient information

Use health regulations or mandates

Make vaccination the default position

Offer the vaccination in a timely manner

Remind people to get vaccinated and help them plan to do this

Administer the vaccine in safe and accessible locations

Ensure people have a positive experience when being vaccinated

Using social influences to shape behaviour

Publicise that the majority of people are being vaccinated or are intending to get vaccinated

Publicise that people are increasingly engaged with vaccination as roll-out progresses, including within specific groups

Use health professionals and management to model uptake by vaccinating them early on

Support health professionals to promote vaccination (making sure they have the right information to share and promote)

Amplify support from trusted community members

Practical recommendations for HMPPS

Communication



- Offer multiple methods and means of delivering critical vaccination information (such as using notices, tannoy announcements, Inside Times, TV, Prison radio, *in addition to in-person conversations*).
- Provide translated materials (for non-English speakers) and support for those with reading, writing and comprehension difficulties.
- Identify and involve trusted messengers/respected others early on to create or deliver briefings and encourage others (this might include health reps, residents, staff, and families).
- Communicate regularly about uptake rates and progress, focussing on numbers completed rather than refusals.
- Use the principles of [procedural justice](#) in all communications.
- Liken vaccine practice to something familiar, like the flu vaccine which is routine and repeated each year.
- Communicate stories from trusted/respected messengers (such as council members, chaplaincy, healthcare, Governors) about their endorsement of vaccination.
- Accurately promote the benefits of vaccination for residents (but be careful to manage expectations).
- Create specific communications and actions about second vaccination doses (due to lower uptake trends for second jabs).

Management



- Have a coordinated and clear leadership message (such as joint support from heads of Healthcare and Governing Governors).
- Encourage a culture where people's concerns are treated with respect, empathised with, and given time for discussion.
- Provide question boxes (or something similar) and named contact(s) for questions and concerns (ideally encouraging in-person conversations).
- Clearly, sensitively and consistently explain the potential health consequences for opting-out of vaccination.
- Coordinate and facilitate security clearances for additional health staff if needed – streamline and make this as straightforward as possible.
- Create plans for post-transfer/release vaccination completion.

Training & staffing



- Create staff briefing materials so they can provide confident, accurate and consistent information (such as written guidance, myth buster and Q&A sheets, videos on intranet, etc.).
- Make sure there are enough staff to provide briefings and answer questions (such as healthcare staff, contact tracing leads and, keyworkers).
- Target special attention on younger people, women, and people from minority ethnic groups who tend to be more hesitant to be vaccinated.
- Have staff issue reminders to individuals about the date and time of 1st and 2nd doses.