

How does it feel for me during COVID-19?

Week Commencing 23rd November 2020

Public Voices: Getting Your COVID-19 Vaccination in Leeds

As plans to roll out a vaccination programme have stepped up a gear, it's more important than ever that we find out what people in Leeds think about getting their COVID-19 jabs.

As such, on 20th November we launched our latest survey. What follows is an initial snapshot of the responses we've had up to midday on 26th November, as the survey is still live and can be accessed via this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/covid19vax>

We will follow up in the next Check In with a more comprehensive summary of findings.

We're extremely grateful to all our partners across the city for spreading the word about this survey. Please share it far and wide so that we can capture as many voices as possible! Thank you!

Q1: Are you planning to have the COVID vaccine when it is made available to you?

1571 people answered this question.

- 78% (1233) said they plan to get vaccinated
- 14% (221) are unsure
- 7% (117) said they don't plan to get vaccinated

Q2: Why is it important for you to have the vaccine?

We asked those people who plan to get the vaccine why this was. 1046 told us their reasons. The two common themes so far are protecting oneself and others and getting back to normal.

Protecting myself and others

Protecting oneself and/or others was the most common reason for wanting the vaccine. 603 people gave one or both of these answers.

399 people told us about wanting to protect themselves from the virus, while an additional 244 told us that they felt particularly in need of protection due to their age or health condition.

Of the 455 people who spoke about wishing to protect others, some referred to their concern for elderly or vulnerable loved ones, or vulnerable members of the community more widely. For example:

- *“Protect my elderly parents”*
- *“To keep me alive and all those others who have it - and to keep the very vulnerable safe”*

Getting back to normal

217 people told us the vaccine would help life to “get back to normal”. For some, an important part of this is seeing family and friends again without restrictions.

121 people spoke more generally about how the vaccine would help bring the pandemic under control (or to an end) and slow the virus’ spread. For example:

- *“So that we can contain the virus and prevent it from spreading”*

Question 3: Where would you prefer to get your vaccinations?

This week, 1322 people told us their preferred location for getting vaccinated. The majority (68% or 905 people) said they would attend whichever venue was closest to them.

The second most popular option (21% or 279) was GP practices.

Question 4: When would be the most convenient time to have your vaccinations?

So far, the majority of our respondents have told us they have no preference about when they get their vaccine. This was the answer of 69% of the 1322 people who answered this question.

Among those who expressed a preference, evenings were more popular than mornings or afternoons, and weekends were more popular than weekdays.

Question 5: Once you’ve had the vaccine, you will be asked to keep following advice about social distancing, hand-washing and so on afterwards. Would you be willing to do this?

The vast majority of the 1320 respondents who answered this question indicated that they would keep following advice (95% or 1250 people).

Only 1% (14) said they wouldn’t.

Question 6: What might stop you having the vaccine?

This question was posed to all our respondents, whether or not they said they planned to get the vaccine. 1186 shared their thoughts with us.

Among the 947 respondents to this question who told us they plan to get the vaccine, the most popular answer was **“nothing”**: 35% or 330 said they have no reservations whatsoever about getting vaccinated.

25% (241 people) said that if it emerged (during testing or rollout) that the vaccine caused side effects, this would stop them having it. 12% (107 people) also mentioned how more general safety issues might stand in the way of them getting vaccinated.

155 people who said they weren’t sure about getting the vaccine told us what might stop them. The most common reason given was the potential for side effects. This was mentioned by 43% (64 people). More general safety concerns were also mentioned by 24 people.

The group’s second most commonly mentioned fear was that the vaccine had been developed too quickly, with 20% or 31 people referring to this. There were clear links between this belief and their safety concerns. For example:

- *“Trials have not been going on long enough to view long term side effects. For example what if a side effect is that it makes you lose your vision within 5 years, but we dont know that yet as it's so new”*

Similar reasoning was given by the 84 respondents to this question who had indicated they won't get the vaccine.

36% (30 people) said they worried the vaccine hadn't been tested for long enough or sufficiently rigorously to make it safe.

25% (20 people) talked about their fears of side effects, and 11% (9 people) expressed general concerns around the vaccine's safety.

Further to this, 12% (10 people) said they didn't believe the vaccine was necessary for them personally, and they wouldn't agree to get it as a result.

Sometimes this was because they had already recovered from COVID so were not worried about its effects. For example:

- *“I don't need a vaccine, I've never had the flu vaccine and I don't plan on having this one. Because I'm not at risk so it's completely unnecessary”*
- *“Don't need to vaccinate against something with a 99% survival rate”*
- *“Want my own immune system to protect me and as I have been exposed without having symptoms I feel my immune system is strong”*

We will look at these questions in more depth in next week's Weekly Check In, as well as:

- Answers to the question “Is there anything you would like to know about the vaccine?”
- Variations in responses between different demographics

What have we been hearing about the vaccine from communities?

Over the next few weeks, we will be working with [Leeds Voices](#) and [Forum Central's Communities of Interest network](#) to hear different communities' thoughts and approaches to the vaccine.

At the most recent Communities of Interest network meeting, there was general agreement that community organisations would be willing to help inform the people they work with about the vaccine - but it is essential they have the information and support they need to do this effectively.

For instance, it was clear to attendees that myths and rumours about the vaccine were already in circulation. One example related to substances it allegedly contained, a rumour which was, at first glance, seemingly “backed up” by an article in the New York Times. Rumours are already out there, fuelled at times by stories in media outlets that are generally considered credible.

One of the issues discussed at the meeting was how to strike the right balance between inadvertently amplifying myths through repetition, on the one hand, and countering myths with reliable, honest information on the other. There were concerns that community members might be “driven underground” if the myths they have heard aren't explicitly debunked. During a discussion about good practice, one member spoke about how a social care forum organised by [Leeds](#)

[Involving People](#) had recently provided an excellent setting for community members to ask their questions about the vaccine to a well-informed Leeds City Council employee.

Members also talked about how digital exclusion might prevent some particularly vulnerable people from getting trustworthy, reliable information about the vaccine.

The People's Voices Group's latest digital inclusion report is out!

Following on from the [Digitising Leeds report](#) published back in July this year, the Leeds [People's Voices Group](#) digital inclusion subgroup has now published its second briefing. It is available to read [here](#).

As well as sharing some of the engagement done by local organisations around digital inclusion over the past few months, this new issue takes an in-depth look at how the city's different [Communities of Interest](#) have experienced the shift to phone and online services. Each community shines a light on the barriers it has faced, but also tells us about its vital work to overcome the digital divide and what it needs from us as a city to make sure no one is excluded from services.

The report goes some way to capturing the huge diversity of experience in our city, with features from organisations representing people with learning disabilities; people with sensory impairments; people with mental health conditions; autistic people; men; women; people experiencing domestic violence and abuse; homeless people; young people; older people; carers; and many more besides. By hearing these voices, we hope to support Leeds' aim of being a city where people who are the poorest improve their health the fastest.

The report also feeds back on some of the progress made by Leeds' health and care services over summer 2020.

These reports are designed to support decision makers during this time. If you find them useful, we would love to hear from you! Please do drop us a line at info@healthwatchleeds.co.uk to tell us what you have found most useful.