

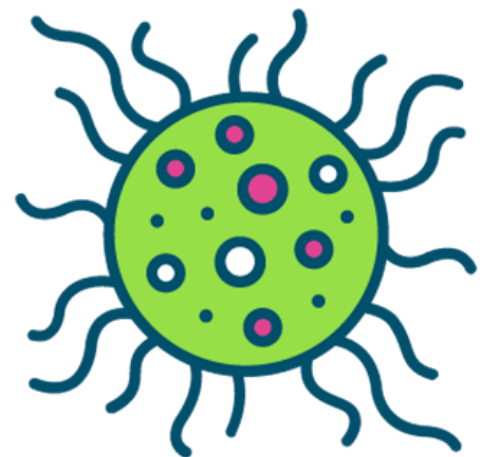
What people are telling us about Covid-19 vaccination in Oxfordshire:

Key messages from our evidence.

Report to commissioners and services
providing COVID-19 vaccinations.

July 2021

TALK TO US!



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Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Oxfordshire would like to express our sincere gratitude to everyone who took the time to tell us about their views and experiences of the Covid vaccination programme. We are also grateful to the staff and volunteers at Kassam Stadium for facilitating our visit.

Executive Summary

Studies have demonstrated that being vaccinated against coronavirus (Covid-19) significantly reduces the risk of infection, serious illness, and the need for hospitalisation.¹ Although acceptance of the Covid-19 vaccination programme in the England is high overall, distrust and misinformation may cause hesitancy and refusal.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire carried out two surveys to hear about local people's attitudes towards and experiences of the Covid-19 vaccination programme. Both surveys were available in English and Arabic. The aim was to share what we heard so that local services and policymakers can improve the vaccination programme. This report provides a brief summary of the results and recommendations for action.

Key recommendations for action

- Communicate clear, understandable information about the safety of the vaccines and any potential effects on people's health to all communities in Oxfordshire.
 - A dedicated Helpline or contact for specific questions or concerns would be especially helpful for people who are hesitant about the vaccine or have underlying health conditions or serious allergies.
- Provide clear, unambiguous messaging about risk reduction practices and ensure that policy decisions are transparent and applied across the board.
- Ensure that vaccine centres are accessible to all communities, with a focus on rural areas and reducing travel times, especially on public transport.
- Address concerns of 'overcrowding' at some vaccination centres.

One survey asked people about their opinions of the vaccination programme, factors behind their decision whether or not to have the vaccine, and potential barriers to accessing a vaccination centre. The other survey focused on people who had attended the vaccination hub at the Kassam Stadium. We heard from more than 600 people in both surveys between 26 January and 30 March 2021:

- 512 people who shared their views and experiences of the Covid-19 vaccination programme.
- 104 people who had attended the vaccination hub at the Kassam Stadium.

Results

Overall, respondents were very positive about the benefits of vaccines in general and were in favour of the Covid-19 vaccine. It is important to note that most people who took part in the surveys were older, white British, a demographic generally known to be supportive of the vaccination programme. These respondents perceived vaccines to be an effective and necessary intervention to

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/one-dose-of-covid-19-vaccine-can-cut-household-transmission-by-up-to-half>

protect against the pandemic. They wanted to have the vaccine to protect themselves, those around them, and the NHS and to return to some level of normality.

Despite overall support for the Covid-19 vaccination programme, some people refused or were hesitant to accept the vaccine. The main reasons for this included distrust in the vaccine or the process of approving it, uncertainty about safety or efficacy, and fear of the possible side-effects. These concerns persisted when people could not find adequate information or answers. Other barriers included potential difficulties in reaching a vaccination centre often because of long distances, poor transport links, or a reluctance to use public transport. It is imperative that people from all socio-economic groups and geographical locations have equitable access to a vaccination centre.

People generally found the information and communication about Covid-19 vaccines clear, understandable, and effective. Most said they were able to distinguish between negative messaging on social media platforms and more science-based information provided by news and television media. Some people, however, felt that misinformation as well as mixed messaging and Government policy U-turns confusing and unhelpful. Accurate, understandable information and clear, consistent messaging help people to make informed decisions. Given that people from ethnic minority communities are at increased risk of severe Covid-19 symptoms yet many have concerns about vaccine safety, the availability of accessible and culturally acceptable media and communication in multiple languages is especially important.

Feedback from people who had already received a vaccine at a vaccination centre was overwhelmingly positive. Comments focussed on the outstanding staff and volunteers who were friendly, helpful, organised, and behaved in ways that made attendees feel safe and assured. Centres provided adequate information and instructions so that people knew where to go and what to do. However, several respondents were concerned about the number people inside the vaccination centres, making it impossible to maintain social distancing. This should be addressed so that concerned people are not discouraged from attending for second doses.

What next?

We will distribute this summary report to Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust, Oxford Health NHS Foundations Trust, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG, including OCCG vaccine group) for their response. We will also make copies available to all GPs and Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) in Oxfordshire.

Responses to the report

Response from Oxford Health

On behalf of Dr Nick Broughton, Chief Executive, Oxford Health

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the second Healthwatch report on the Oxfordshire Covid Vaccination Programme.

We are delighted to hear that the vast majority of people attending the Kassam Stadium for their vaccination were so positive about their experience in relation to the staff, the organisation of the centre and the information provided. We have communicated this to the staff working at the Centre. We note the comments about the number of people on the site and can confirm that we have reorganised the Centre to improve social distancing arrangements and manage the flow through the building.

Oxford Health works with local authority, health and third sector partners to ensure we maximise the opportunities for people to access the vaccine. This week we have opened two pop up/walk in vaccination centres to target areas in Oxford with a lower uptake of the vaccine. Our primary care colleagues have opened similar sites in Blackbird Leys, East Oxford and Didcot, where we have seen a slight increase on covid infection rates. We review the offer across Oxfordshire continuously, and have this week introduced two Health on the Move vans which are able to take vaccines to local communities. We look forward to welcoming you to visit one of our vans in action.

Communication and information continue to be a priority for the Oxfordshire partnership, and we work closely with our local authority and health colleagues to maximise opportunities for creating good local information about the vaccination programme. The communications team have developed some excellent myth-busting videos alongside a broader campaign to increase vaccination uptake.

Thank you for the valuable insight and feedback in your report and your ongoing support for this important programme.

Response from Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Julie Dandridge, Deputy Director, Head of Primary care, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group

The Oxfordshire Vaccination Programme Board would like to thank Healthwatch for presenting this survey to their meeting on 22 June 21. It was encouraging to see the public's positive perceptions of the vaccination programme which has also been reported to us from individual vaccination site feedback.

The roll out of the COVID vaccination programme has been led by the national team and this has been particularly relevant to the communication and nationally messaging. The fast pace nature of the roll out meant that sometimes messages changed as the course of the pandemic changed and the risks and benefits of various scenarios were better known. We do however appreciate the need for clear and understandable messages and did look to supplement the national messages with local reinforcement wherever possible.

The Oxfordshire roll out started with the Churchill hospital hub clinic in early December and then over a 5 week period more sites went live including 21 Local GP sites and the mass vaccination centre at the Kassam stadium. To add to that we also now have 7 community pharmacies located mainly in Oxfordshire market towns to ensure people have a choice and more opportunities to access the vaccine. The Kassam Stadium, community pharmacy sites and some of our GP sites can all be booked through the national booking system which can be found [here](#). We are now considering walk in clinics and from early July will be using the 'Health on the Move' resource – a mobile unit which can take the vaccine to the hard to reach communities.

The report also identified that there was some concern re overcrowding at the vaccination centres. For many individuals, especially in the early weeks of the programme, attending for a vaccination will have been the first time that some had ventured out of the house. Marshalls were in place to reassure these individuals. Each vaccination centre followed clear national procedures to maintain social distancing and we have continued to remind sites of this as the programme has progressed.

Our focus now is to ensure that we can offer all adults (over 18) a first dose vaccination before 19 July and that as many as possible of our over 40 cohorts can receive both doses of the vaccine.

1 Data sources

1. Survey on Covid-19 vaccination with questions on opinions of the vaccination programme, factors behind decisions whether or not to have the vaccine, and potential barriers to access (26 January to 30 March 2021: n=512).
 2. Survey of people who received the Covid-19 vaccine at the Kassam Stadium in Oxford (02 February to 30 March 2021: n=104).
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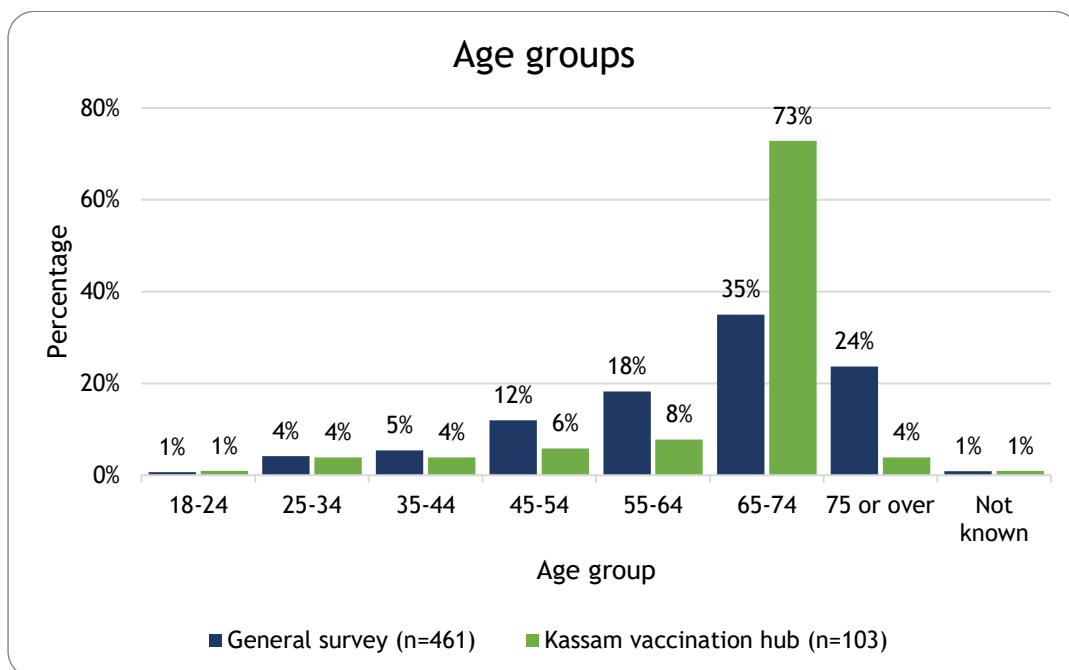
2 Results

2.1 Respondent profiles

Age groups (Chart 1)

- General vaccination survey: greater spread of ages in although, overall, more respondents were aged 55 and older.
- Kassam Stadium vaccination centre: respondents were mostly 65-74 as most questionnaires were completed in February, when older age groups were the the priority groups invited for vaccination.

Chart 1. Age groups of respondents from both surveys



Ethnic background

- Vaccination programme: 83% white British; 8% other white background, and 2% black, Asian, or mixed background.
- Kassam vaccination centre: 84% white British; 9% other white background, and 2% Asian.

Gender

- Vaccination programme: 71% female; 29% male - more women possibly chose to respond to the survey compared with men.
- Kassam vaccination centre: 49% female; 51% male - equal participation in survey possibly due to targeting of survey to all attendees.

Religion or beliefs

- Vaccination programme: 47% Christian; 39% no religion.
- Kassam vaccination centre: 53% Christian; 37% no religion.

Marital status

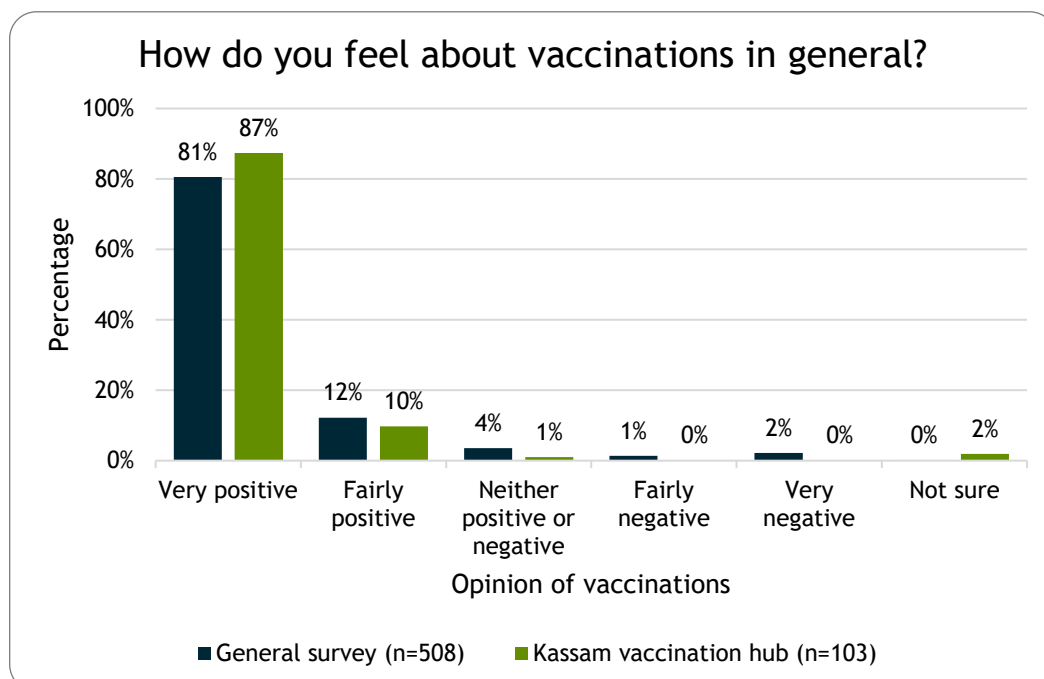
- Vaccination programme: 63% married; 12% single; 9% divorced/separated
- Kassam vaccination centre: 73% married; 12% divorced/separated; 5% widowed

Carer or disability/long-term health condition

- Vaccination programme: 13% identified as carers; 9% had a disability; 31% had a long-term health condition.
- Kassam vaccination centre: 9% identified as carers; 3% had a disability; 18% had a long-term health condition.

2.2 General opinion about vaccines (Chart 2)

Chart 2. General opinion about vaccines



- Overall, very positive general perceptions of vaccines
- More than 80% of people in both Kassam centre and Covid-19 vaccination programme surveys felt “very positive” about vaccines; 10-12% felt “fairly positive”
- Only 3% of people in the general survey had any negativity towards vaccines
- “Tell us more” comments focused on perceptions of vaccines as effective prevention against disease and to save lives:

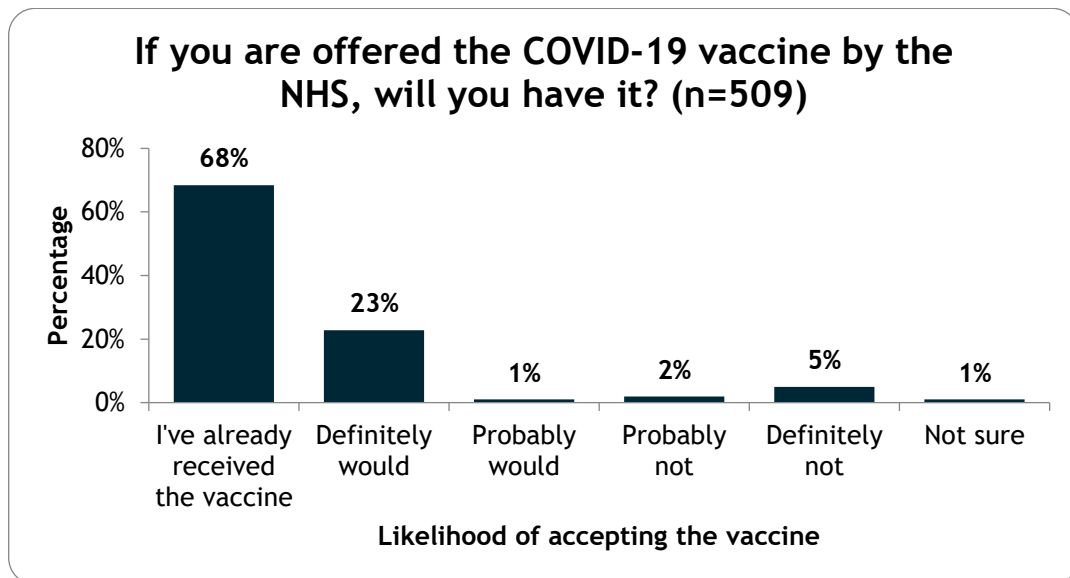
“Because of vaccinations and inoculations, we no longer have outbreaks of smallpox, polio and less tuberculosis.”

“All vaccines are worth having both to save lives and to protect the NHS and keep the need for hospitalisation to a minimum.”

“Vaccines are the only way to stop the spread of diseases and they are safe.”

2.3 Likelihood of accepting the Covid-19 vaccine (online vaccination programme survey only; Chart 3)

Chart 3. Likelihood of accepting the Covid-19 vaccine



- High acceptance of the Covid-19 vaccine
- 348/509 (68%) respondents in the general survey had already had the vaccine
- Of the remaining 161 people still to be offered the vaccine 116 (72%) said they would “definitely” accept it
- 25/161 (16%) said they would “definitely not” have the vaccine and 10 (6%) probably not.” The main reasons for this were:
 - Distrust in the vaccine or the process of approving it
 - Uncertainty about the safety or efficacy of the vaccine

- Fear of possible side-effects
- Perception that the vaccine is unnecessary or provides no more protection than natural immunity
- Recommended to avoid the vaccine due to allergies

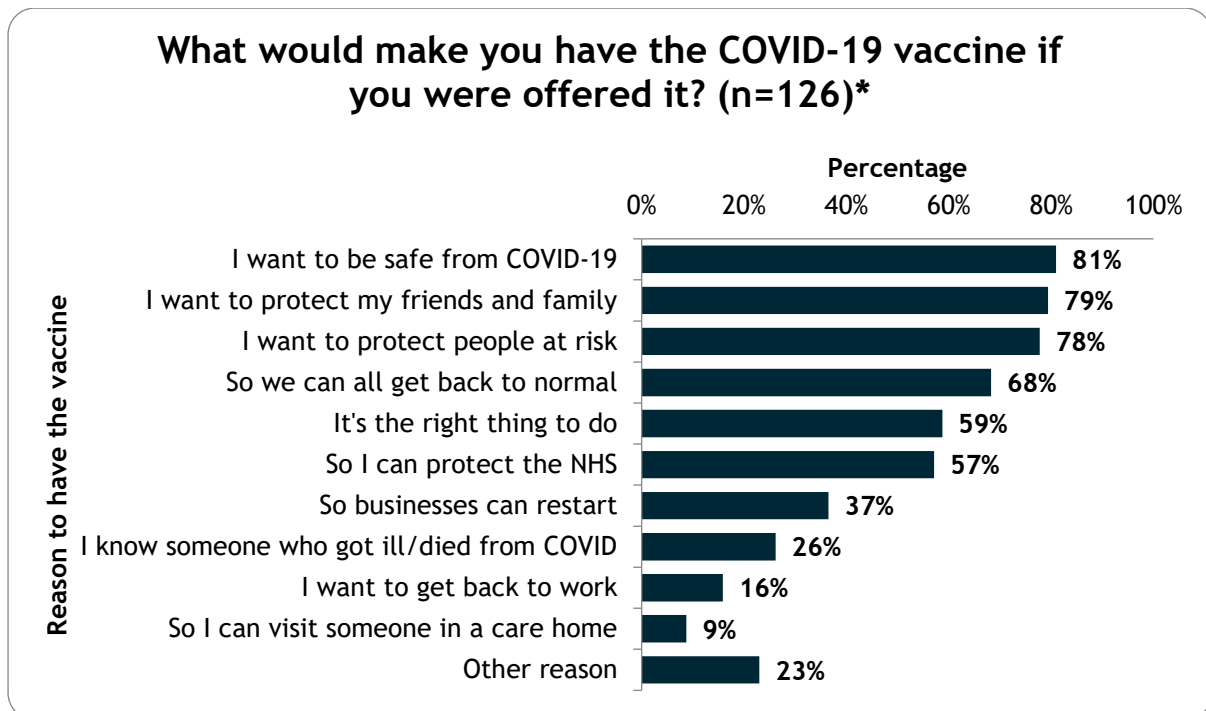
2.4 Potential barriers to having the Covid-19 vaccine once offered (vaccination programme survey only)

Of 125 people who told us about possible factors that might prevent them from getting the vaccine:

- 92 (74%) said that nothing would stop them getting it
- 17 (14%) said having to travel far would stop them
- 10 (8%) did not want to take public transport or a taxi
- 16 (13%) gave other reasons, mainly concern about side-effects and vaccine safety

2.5 Reasons why people will have the Covid-19 vaccine (vaccination programme survey only; Chart 4)

Chart 4. Reasons given for wanting to have the Covid-19 vaccine



* Survey respondents could select more than one answer.

People gave many reasons that would make them have the Covid-19 vaccine, mainly focusing on protecting themselves and others from the virus, and protecting the NHS. Of 126 who responded, the main reasons were:

- 102 (81%) wanted to be safe from the virus

- 100 (79%) wanted to protect friends and family
- 98 (78%) wanted to protect people at risk
- 86 (68%) wanted to return to normality
- 74 (59%) said it is the right thing to do
- 72 (58%) wanted to protect the NHS
- Other reasons included wanting to visit family and friends, travel and to feel safer in general

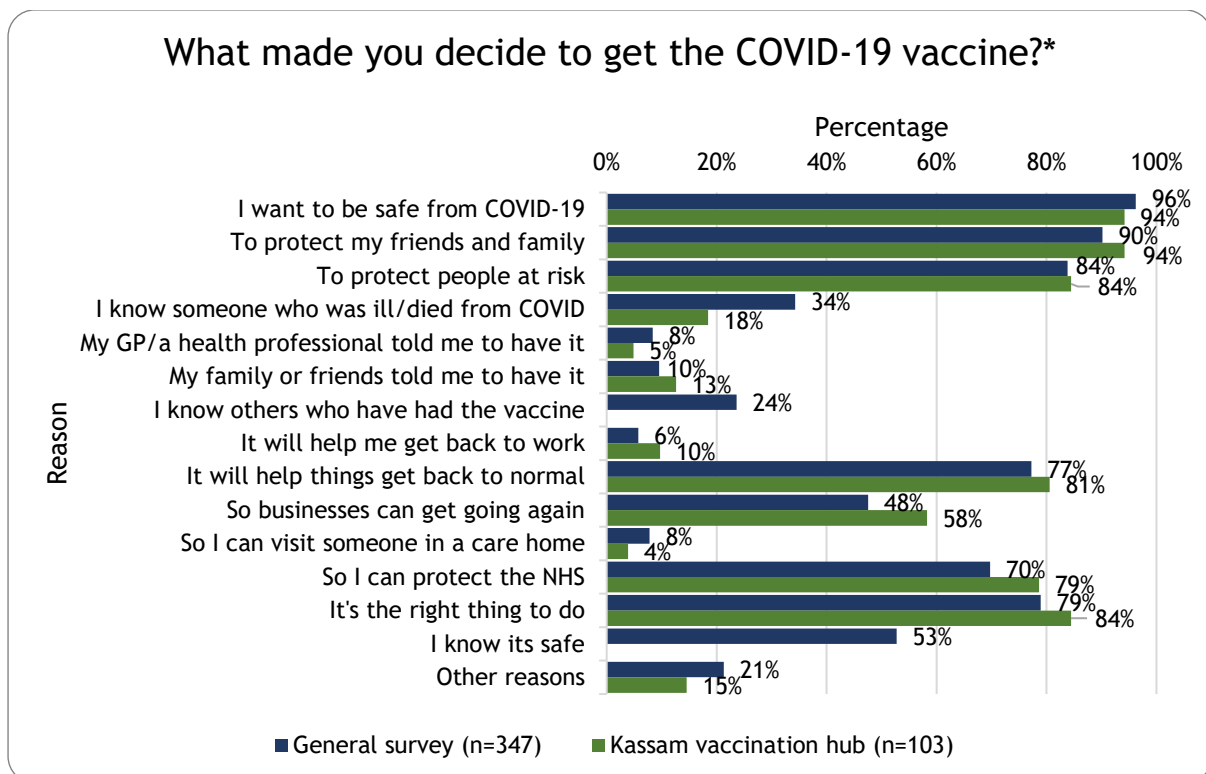
2.6 Reasons for not having the Covid-19 vaccination (vaccination programme survey only)

Of 31/512 people who gave a reason for not getting the Covid-19 vaccine, the main reasons were:

- 21 (68%) do not trust the vaccine
- 15 (49%) do not know what's in the vaccine
- 15 (49%) do not know if the vaccine will cause sickness
- 12 (39%) do not believe the vaccine is effective

2.7 Reasons for deciding to have the Covid-19 vaccination (Chart 5)

Chart 5. Reasons for the decision to have the Covid-19 vaccine



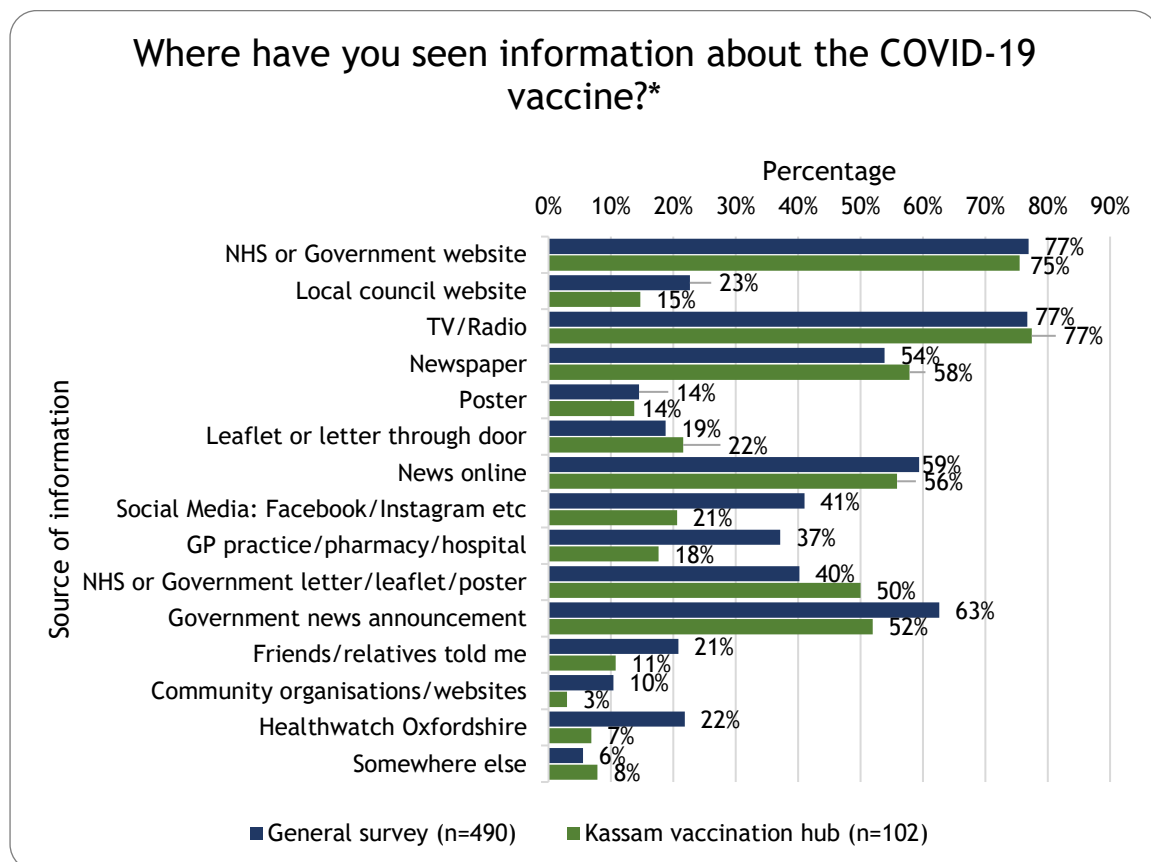
* Survey respondents could select more than one answer.

As in 2.5 above, the main reasons behind decisions to have the vaccine centred on:

- Self-protection and the protection of friends, family, and the vulnerable
- Moral obligation to be vaccinated (“it’s the right thing to do”)
- Protecting the NHS
- Wanting to return to ‘normality’
- “Other reasons” included having an underlying health condition, a desire to socialise and travel, being clinically vulnerable, and a sense of optimism towards the vaccine.

2.8 Sources of information about the Covid-19 vaccine (Chart 6)

Chart 6. Sources of information about the Covid-19 vaccine



* Survey respondents could select more than one answer.

The main sources of information about the vaccine included:

- NHS or Government website
- Television or radio
- Online news and newspapers
- Government news announcements

2.9 Clarity of information about the Covid-19 vaccine (Table 1)

- Most respondents found the information about the vaccine easy to understand and easy to read.
- This was more so for respondents of the Kassam vaccination hub survey

Table 1. Clarity of information about the Covid-19 vaccine*

Was the information you received about the COVID-19 vaccine...	General survey (n=473)	Kassam vaccination hub (n=102)
Easy to understand	89%	96%
Easy to read	55%	81%
Difficult to understand	2%	1%
Not in a language I understand	<1%	1%
Confusing	4%	1%
I needed a different format	<1%	1%

* Survey respondents could select more than one answer.

2.10 Perceptions about the information on the Covid-19 vaccine (Table 2)

As with Table 1:

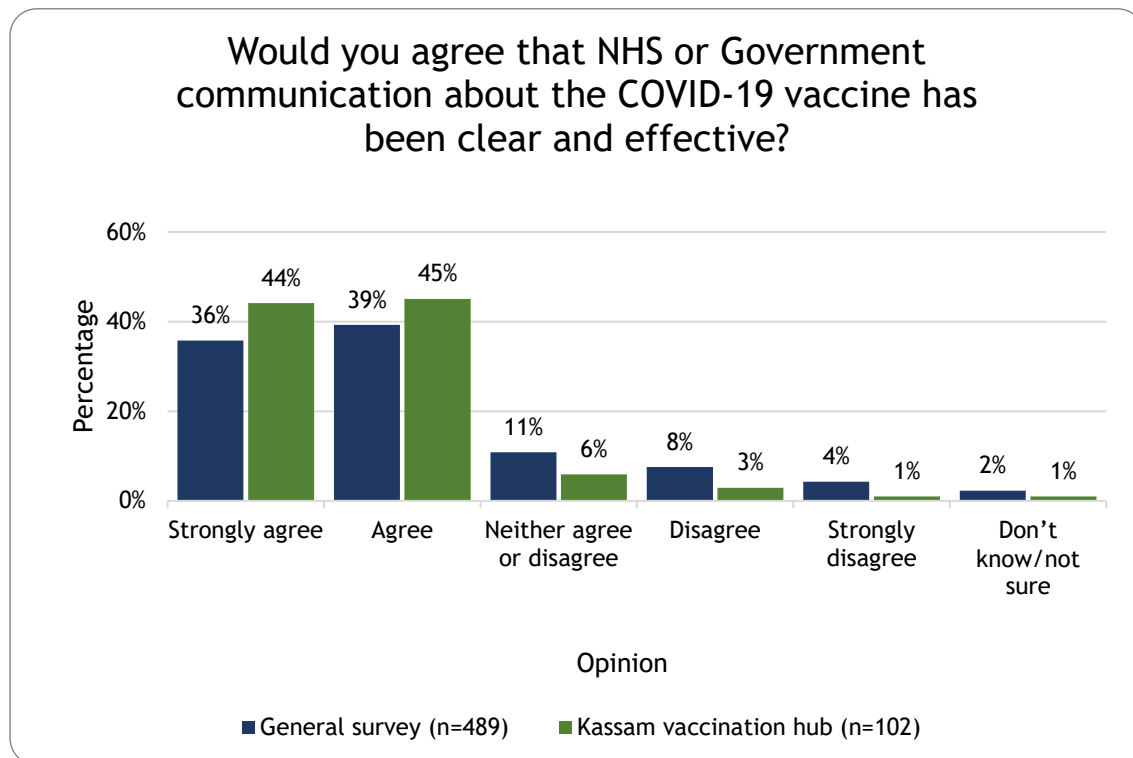
- Most people reported that the information they had read or heard about the vaccine was positive. Reports of positive information were higher than in previous summaries.
- Compared with previous summaries, relatively fewer people reported that the information was a mixture of positive and negative.

Table 2. Perceptions about the information on the Covid-19 vaccine

Was the information you have seen or heard recently about the COVID-19 vaccine mainly...	General survey (n=489)	Kassam vaccination hub (n=102)
Positive about the vaccine	77%	84%
Negative about the vaccine	2%	0%
Neither positive nor negative	3%	2%
A mixture of positive and negative information	18%	14%
Don't know/not sure	<1%	0%

2.11 Perceptions of NHS and Government communication about the Covid-19 vaccine (Chart 7)

Chart 7. Quality of communication about the Covid-19 vaccine



- Most people agreed that the communication that the NHS and government provided about the Covid-19 vaccine was clear and effective.
- Comments focused on the hierarchy of information, where people tended to ignore popular, negative messaging on social media platforms in favour of more science-based information on news and television.
- Some people reported hearing mixed messaging from Government, misinformation about the vaccines, and felt that aspects of the vaccination program implementation had been confusing. Examples included incorrect reporting by media, differences in efficacy between vaccines, and changes in the delay between doses:

“A lot of people have been confused by information about the different vaccines available and their relative effectiveness and the clear impression given by the Government that it has no idea what it is actually trying to achieve. I have seen nothing that approximates to a strategy.”

“There is some uncertainty about the differences between the vaccines that have been developed and passed and there are different theories about the length of time that elapses between the first and second vaccination. More information needs to be

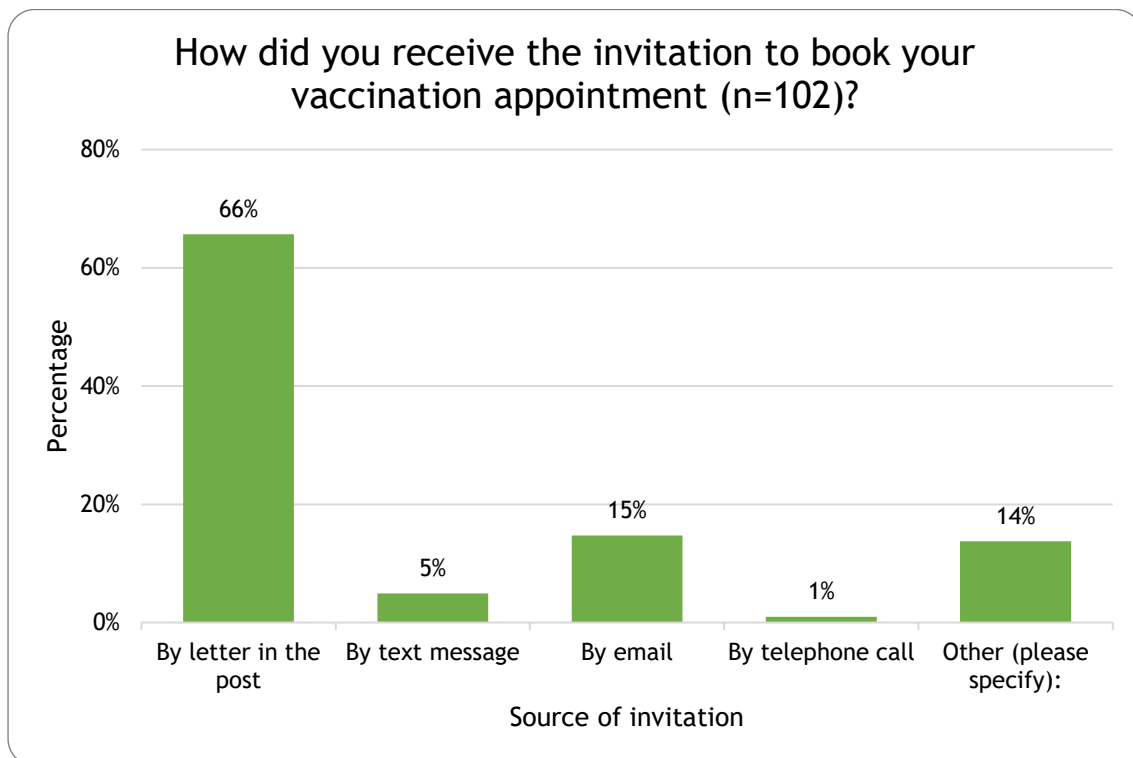
promulgated about the imperative to continue with safety measures after being vaccinated.”

“To me, this does not inspire confidence, and neither does it convince me either of the Government's wisdom or of its honesty. A medical decision made for political expediency is shameful.”

2.12 Accessing the vaccine at the Kassam Stadium hub

Method of invite for vaccination (Chart 8)

Chart 8. Method of invitation for vaccination



- Two-thirds of people received an invite by post
- Other methods included a news bulletin, word of mouth, and via the workplace (i.e. healthcare)

Clarity of information in the invitation for vaccination

- 95% felt the information in the invite was “extremely” or “very clear”

Booking the appointment

- 95% booked their appointment online
- 94% found the booking process very easy or easy

Visiting the Kassam Stadium vaccination hub

Of 103 people who told us about their visit:

- Almost everyone said they felt safe and informed during their visit to the vaccination hub and understood what they were expected to do and where to go.
- Around 10% of attendees felt that there were too many people at the centre.
- Above 98% said that staff and volunteers were friendly, helpful, informative, organised, socially distanced, and wore appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Comments were overwhelmingly positive about the organisation, safe environment and efficiency of the programme, and the attitudes of staff and volunteers.

2.13 Other themes from the Covid-19 vaccination programme survey

- Need for information to answer concerns and questions, including:
 - Vaccine effectiveness and when protection starts
 - Known side effects - what to expect and what to do/take
 - Dates when different priority groups will receive their vaccination
 - Reporting of rates of vaccine hesitancy, 'no-shows', unused vaccines
 - Vaccine availability and date for the second dose
 - People with allergies and underlying health conditions need to know that vaccines are safe:

“I suspect many are like me, wanting accurate information and unable to find it. So, we are marked down as 'anti-vaxxers'. I am not, but I don't fancy losing the sight of my other eye, nor more heart surgery.”

“For those of us (probably only one in a million) with genuine health worries, there is nowhere one can obtain accurate and honest information.”

- Greater equity of access, and transparency and explanation of rationale for defining certain groups as priority and not others:

“My colleagues have all had the vaccine (or have appointments booked). My surgery are aware of my circumstances but have not offered, or confirmed I will receive the vaccine. Why are surgeries responding differently? Is it a postcode lottery?”

“...as an asthmatic secondary school teacher I would like the vaccine before returning to teach 150 different teenagers every day. Before lockdown we had several cases in school, students and staff. It is not safe to be anywhere there is social mixing.”

- Easier booking of both appointments together:

“I am very grateful to all concerned, professional and volunteer. The only thing I would modify is - give the second appointment at the time of the first (unless this is not sensible for logistic reasons). I have friends to whom this has happened.”

“I had the Astra Zeneca-Oxford vaccine. I have had the first dose. I cannot get information about the timing of the second jab which I need to know for personal reasons. Some places it appears you could book your first and second jab at the same time, but my surgery just called me and can't/won't give me any idea re the second!”

“...having had the first vaccine on 10th January I am anxious to know how soon I can have the second vaccine, given my age (84).”

- Better understanding of ethnic minority groups and digitally excluded:

“Better communication needed for ethnic minorities and people without access to online resources.”

“I feel that there has been a lot of talk about vaccine hesitancy within the BAME community. I feel this grouping is not useful and more granular data about different groups and vaccine uptake would be more useful in helping those people to have more confidence in the vaccine.”

- Confusion and lack of coordination around arranging vaccinations:

“There doesn't seem to be a joined-up approach to organising the vaccinations.”

“Let primary care do it - stop confusing people with appointments coming from 2 sources (own GP and NHS vaccine centres). Allow GPs to have more control over vaccine deliveries so that they can plan ahead and not just get told a couple of days ahead of time.”

2.14 Other comments from the Kassam vaccination hub survey

“Congratulations to those at Kassam Stadium who were responsible for organising the roll out of the distribution of the COVID19 vaccines. I experienced a well-oiled operation. THANK YOU to all the VOLUNTEERS and all others involved in this operation.”

“It was a totally positive experience and a tribute to our ability to organise a nationwide programme. Well done everyone who has contributed in any capacity. It reminded me of the spirit engendered by the London Olympics!”
