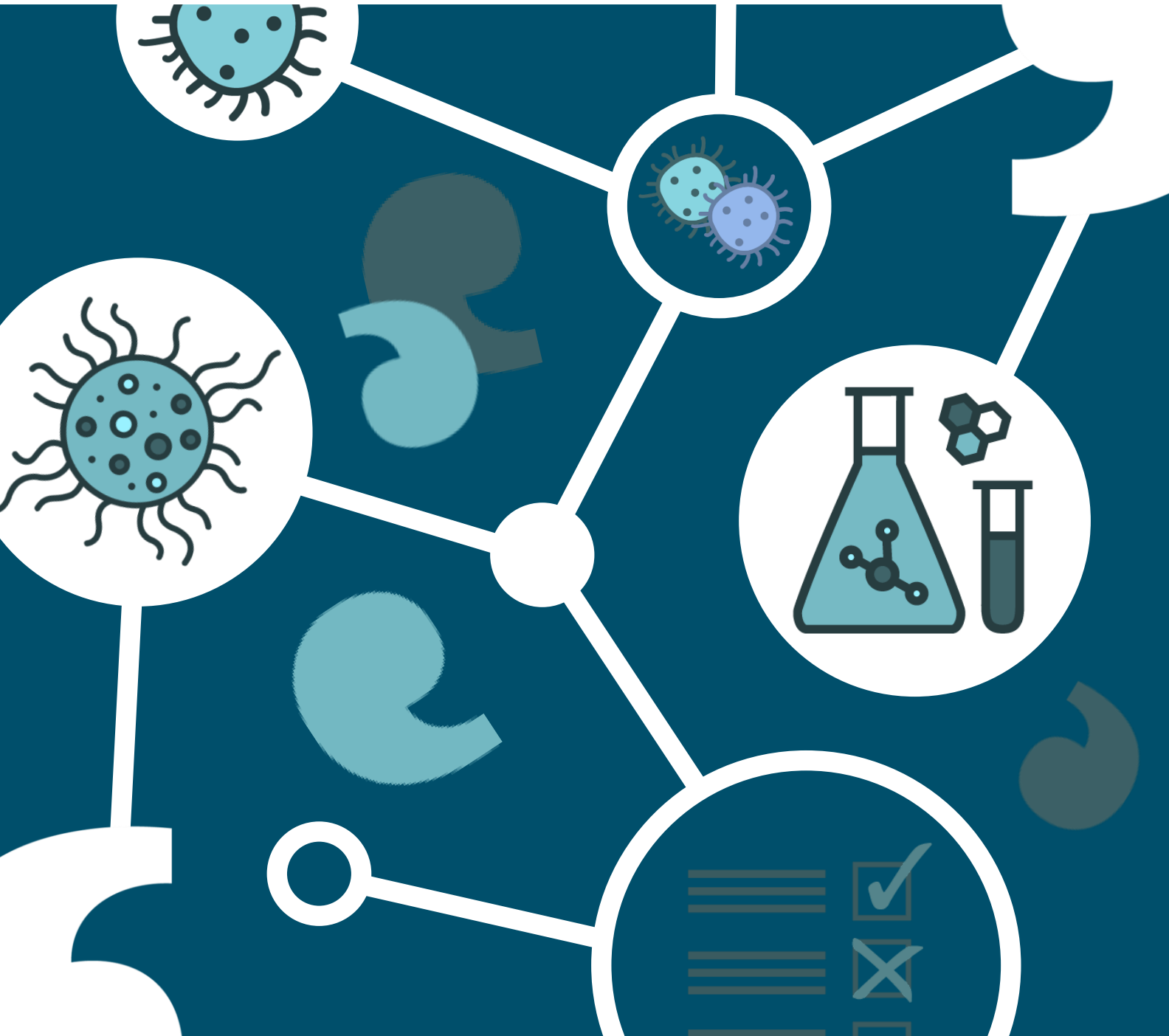


# COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence in Hillingdon

Findings of Healthwatch Hillingdon and NWL CCG's **'COVID-19 Vaccines - Tell us your thoughts'** campaign



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# Introduction



# Introduction

## About Healthwatch Hillingdon

**Healthwatch Hillingdon (HwH) is a health and social care watchdog. We are here to help our residents get the best out of their health and care services and give them a voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided throughout Hillingdon.**

Healthwatch Hillingdon has very strong operational relationships with the local NHS, Local Council and Voluntary Sector organisations. We are an independent partner and a valued “critical friend” within health and social care.





As a local partner, we are kept well-informed, can challenge and seek assurances on behalf of our residents, ensure that the lived experience of patients and the public are heard, and are influencing decisions and improving health and social care in Hillingdon.

## Reports and Recommendations

Healthwatch Hillingdon produces evidence-based reports for commissioners and providers, to inform them of the views and experiences of people who use health and social care services in the London Borough of Hillingdon.

Commissioners and providers must have regard for our views, reports and any recommendations made and respond in writing to explain what actions they will take, or why they have decided not to act. Healthwatch Hillingdon has a duty to publish reports they share with commissioners and providers, and their responses, in public.

Our reports and recommendations are also shared with:

-  Hillingdon Health and Wellbeing Board
-  Hillingdon External Services Scrutiny Committee
-  Healthwatch England
-  The Care Quality Commission

## Background

With the Pfizer/BioNtech COVID-19 Vaccine data received by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) on the 23rd November 2020, and later approved on the 2nd December 2020, Healthwatch Hillingdon (HwH) began to receive direct enquiries from the public, and observed emerging concerns on public platforms regarding the vaccines.

In order to better understand the local opinion of the vaccines, and gauge the potential level of uptake, HwH began to develop a survey to ask these key questions. Communications & Engagement contacts from within NWL CCG were brought into this development to ensure the data gathered could be best utilised, and to share intelligence. Consequently, the draft questions were shared at a NWL level, with both the CCG, Healthwatch partners and the 8 Local Councils, in order to gain further input and support.

The survey went live on the 25th March and was shared by stakeholders across the 8 boroughs. As of early February 2021, the survey has gained over 5,600 responses, with more than 1,000 from Hillingdon residents.



Promotional image used in the campaign

# Methodology

## Development and launch

**To gather the data and feedback required to understand the level of confidence in COVID-19 vaccines, a survey was decided to be the best method from the outset, due to the scope of the upcoming vaccination programme from the NHS.**

Initially, the main aim of the project was to ask whether the respondent would accept a vaccine if offered, and their rationale for choosing Yes, No, or Unsure in order to understand the level of confidence locally. Once the project had been raised with NWL CCG and subsequently agreed to be a joint endeavour, the needs of health partners were taken into account and further refinements were made. Following on from the two main questions gauging uptake and confidence of the patient themselves, the question was asked again, this time addressing their feelings about loved ones receiving the vaccine (specifically for those with loved ones in care settings, or that they care for) - as respondents may not be eligible for the vaccine at the time of answering.

Due to growing concerns about misinformation regarding COVID-19 and the upcoming vaccines, particularly through social media, questions were also added to address this, as well as the channels information is distributed from.

Finally, optional demographic questions were added to understand the views and concerns of residents in different communities.

In order to give context to the survey, an article was also published on the HwH website to give information about the MHRA's approval of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, including details of the approval process itself, and an introduction to the survey itself with an explanation of the aims of the project. The article and survey were published on the 25<sup>th</sup> March.

The survey was promoted on social media in local interest groups, and shared by stakeholders across NWL. A paid advertisement was also created by HwH on the Facebook platform.

## Survey Questions & Article

The article can be found here:

<https://healthwatchhillingdon.org.uk/news/20-11-25/covid-19-vaccines-tells-us-your-thoughts>

Below is a summary of the survey questions; the full survey can be found here:

<https://healthwatchhillingdon.org.uk/COVID19VaccineSurvey>

**1. If a COVID-19 vaccine is made available through the NHS, would you consider being vaccinated?**

[Choice of answer: Yes / No / Unsure]

**1a. Please explain your reasons for your above answer.**

[Free text answer]

**2. If you care for someone vulnerable, or have a loved one in a care setting, would you encourage them to receive a COVID-19 vaccine?**

[Choice of answer: Yes / No / Unsure / Not Applicable]

**3. What information would you like to receive about the COVID-19 vaccine?**

[Free text answer]

**3a. What are your preferred channels for receiving information about the vaccine?**

[Choice of answer (multiple): Direct website links / Social media / By Email / By post / By Text / WhatsApp etc. / Other]

[Demographics section - optional questions to identify issues specific to gender, ethnicity and age]

Finally, we asked if the respondents would like to leave contact details in order to be contacted further in the event of follow-up work.

**Name**

[Free text answer]

**Contact number/email address**

[Free text answer]

# Key Findings



# Response

## Summary

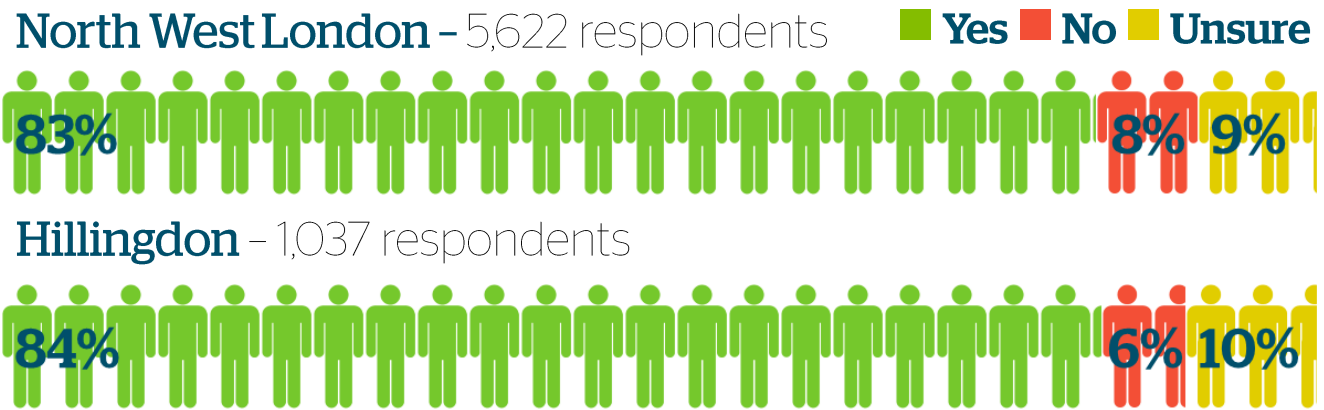
As of March 2021, the survey gained 5,622 responses, with 1,087 from Hillingdon residents (accounting for 19.3% of the total responses).

The survey was primarily promoted through social media, and direct emails, and was shared by local authorities, NWL CCG, partner Healthwatch teams, and other voluntary sector organisations. Data from the survey was shared with NWL CCG, Healthwatch partners, Local Councils and Public Health representatives periodically

throughout December 2020, January and February 2021.

## Total response

Overall, the majority of respondents said Yes (83%) to the initial question of 'If a COVID-19 vaccine is made available through the NHS, would you consider being vaccinated?'. In Hillingdon, the response was very similar, with a slightly higher number of Yes and Unsure answers, and a reduction in No responses.



## Social media response

HwH also promoted the survey through a paid advertisement on the Facebook and Instagram platforms. The advert reached 8,850 people, was engaged by 4,971, and resulted in 311 people accessing the survey itself. An unpaid post on the Instagram Facebook platform also performed well, with a reach of 7,006 people, 555 engagements, with 167 people accessing the survey as a result. This post was also shared 27 times to various pages and community groups.

Despite the overall results of the survey itself, comments made on the Facebook page post and advertisement were generally not in favour of accepting a vaccine. Of the 90 comments received, 46% showed a negative view of the vaccine, compared to 8% in the survey results. 19% of comments did not demonstrate the commenters confidence in the vaccine, instead being replies to other comments, or referring to the political

implications of the vaccine rollout.

	Count	%
Positive	23	26%
Negative	41	46%
Unsure	9	10%
N/A	17	19%

Comment themes on Facebook post & advertisement

Due to the discrepancies between the comments and the results of the survey, and the prevalence of 'conspiracy theories' and misinformation about the vaccines, warning was given to partners throughout the course of this project on the wording of communications around vaccination to address these reactions, and the incongruence of social media reaction vs survey data.



# Results in detail





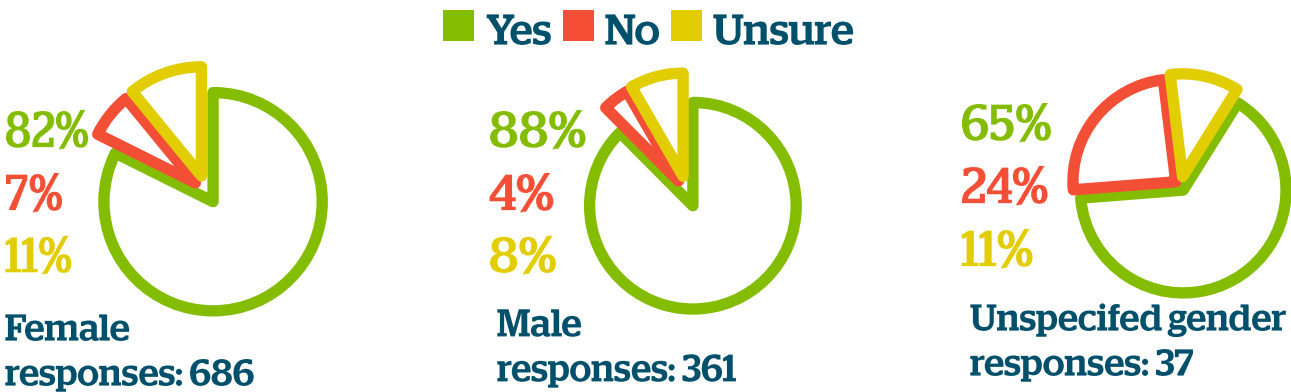
# Demographics Breakdown

**Question 1:** If a COVID-19 vaccine is made available through the NHS, would you consider being vaccinated?

## Gender | Sample size: 1087

Results by gender for Hillingdon on whether the respondent would accept the vaccine if offered show an increased confidence level among males, however the majority (63%) of responses were from females. For those

declining to answer the gender identity question, there was a markedly higher level of hesitancy. For those choosing Other gender we received 3 responses, all of which answered Yes to this question.



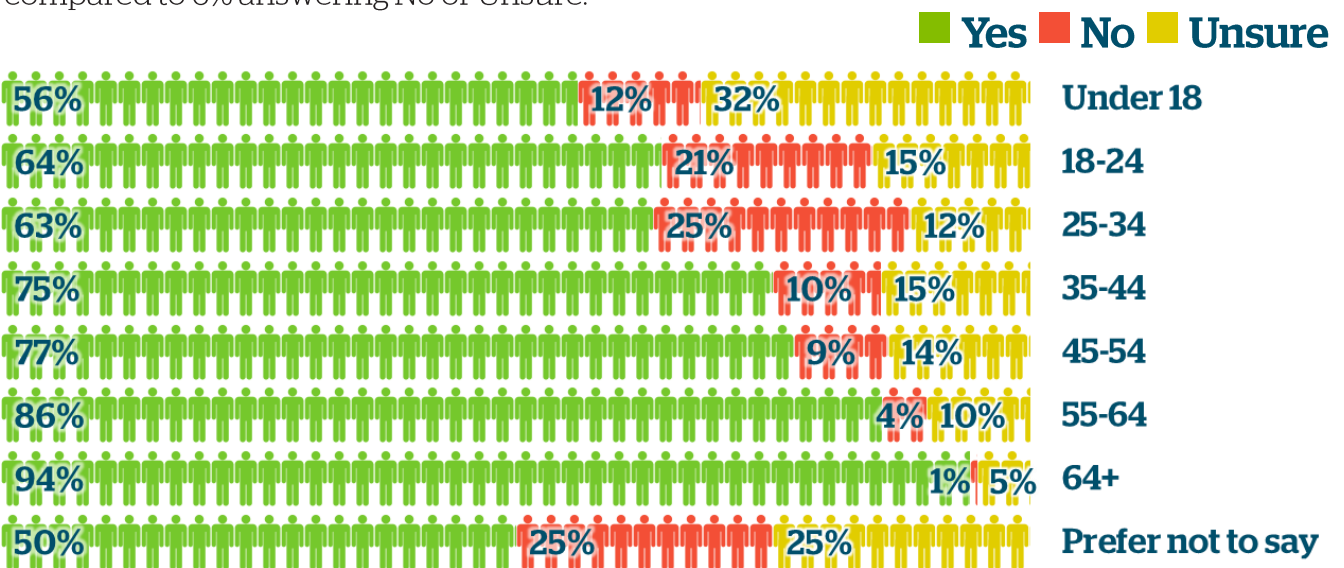
## Age | Sample size: 1078

'I'm 77 years old and I feel extremely vulnerable.'  
Hillingdon Resident

Results by age indicate a higher level of confidence correlating with age; with the 64+ age group answering Yes at a rate of 94%, compared to 6% answering No or Unsure.

This group was also the highest number of responses, accounting for 41% of the data.

Younger age groups showed a lower confidence level, but also a lower number of responses overall. Age groups from Under 18 to 25-34 accounted for 11.5% of all responses, with an average of 62% answering Yes.



'I'm 73 years old with asthma. I want to be able to live again instead of being stuck in on my own'

Hillingdon Resident

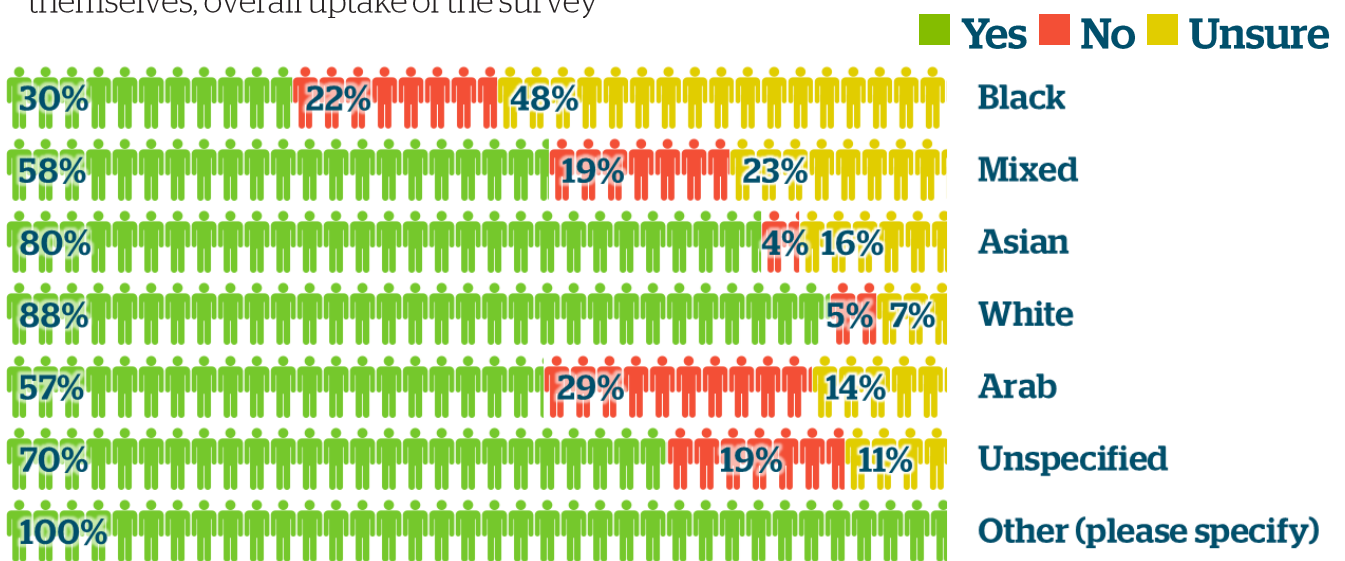
# Demographics Breakdown

**Question 1:** If a COVID-19 vaccine is made available through the NHS, would you consider being vaccinated?

## Ethnicity | Sample size: 1078

Early on in the project, it became clear to HwH that confidence levels in local communities were markedly different, with concerns being more prevalent in the BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) community. As well as the answers themselves, overall uptake of the survey

was monitored to assess the engagement across all ethnicities. The below results demonstrate the lower confidence levels in COVID-19 vaccines from the Black, Asian, Arab and Mixed ethnicity groups.



## BAME Representation

In Hillingdon, total responses from residents by ethnicity group were as follows; those who identified as White accounted for 77% of responses, those who identified as Asian accounted for 14%, and those who identified as either Black, Mixed, or Arab accounted for 2% or less each.

This uptake was not representative of the borough makeup, with an estimated 15% difference between responses, and 2018 figures of the Black, Asian and Mixed population<sup>1</sup>.

Ethnicity	Survey response proportion	2018 Population
Black	2%	9%
Mixed	2%	5%
Asian	14%	20%

Survey representation of ethnicity vs 2018 population

This demonstrated, with the overall lower confidence levels - Particularly in Black and Mixed ethnicity responses - that a more in depth look into the concerns of the BAME community groups was needed to understand how this hesitancy could be addressed.

The feedback was raised with partners throughout the course of the survey, and informed communications and engagement from multiple organisations across NWL.

Although discussions were held around trying to increase BAME engagement with the survey, it was generally agreed that future work be tailored to address communities directly to improved equitable engagement.

<sup>1</sup> JOINT STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT (JSNA) ETHNIC GROUPS AND TRENDS IN ETHNICITY 2018 - [https://archive.hillingdon.gov.uk/media/32837/Ethnic-Groups-in-Hillingdon-2018/pdf/Ethnic\\_groups\\_in\\_Hillingdon\\_2018.pdf](https://archive.hillingdon.gov.uk/media/32837/Ethnic-Groups-in-Hillingdon-2018/pdf/Ethnic_groups_in_Hillingdon_2018.pdf)





# Demographics Breakdown

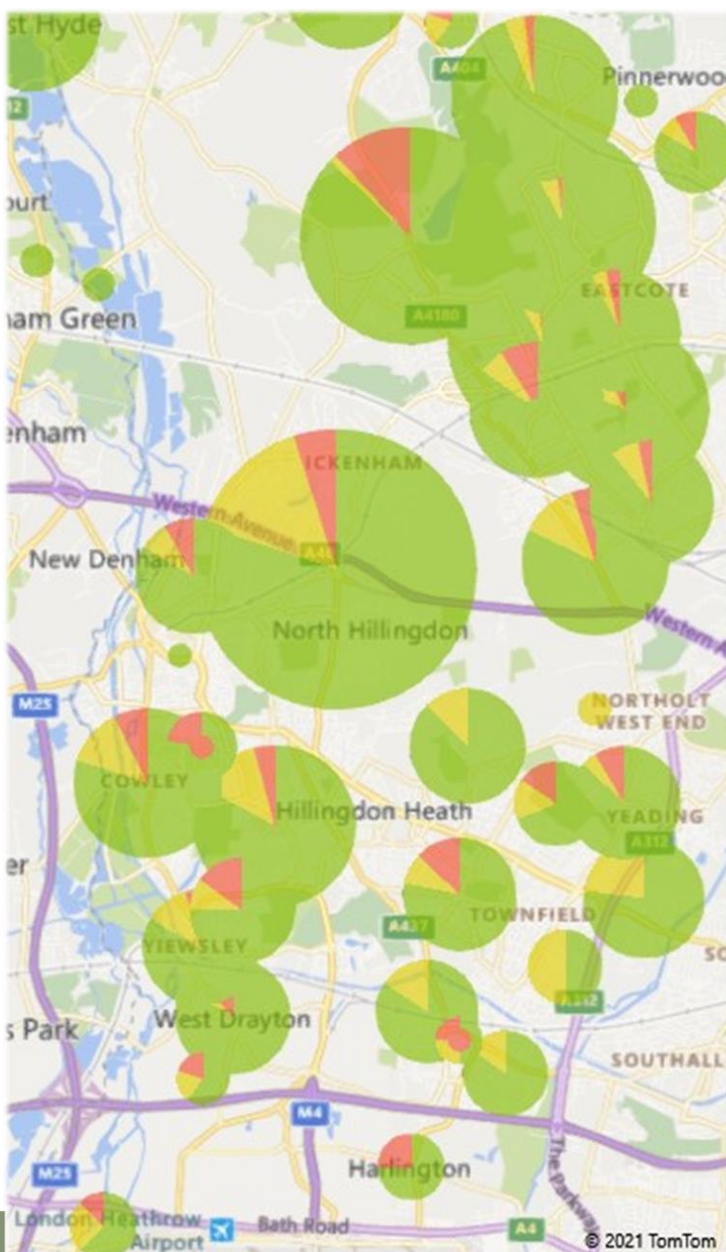
**Question 1:** If a COVID-19 vaccine is made available through the NHS, would you consider being vaccinated?

## Geography | Sample size: 1075

The borough was well represented in terms of geography, with the proportion of north and south Hillingdon making up responses by 48% and 52% respectively. The south of the borough showed a lower level of confidence overall at 80%, versus the 88% in the north.

	Yes	No	Unsure
North	88%	6%	7%
South	80%	7%	13%

Answer to question 1, North & South Hillingdon



Answer to question 1: heatmap of Hillingdon

Postcode area	Yes	No	Unsure
HA04	100%	0%	0%
HA24	100%	0%	0%
HA27	100%	0%	0%
HA4	85%	9%	6%
HA40	89%	4%	7%
HA41	100%	0%	0%
HA45	0%	0%	100%
HA46	82%	5%	13%
HA47	87%	12%	1%
HA48	92%	2%	6%
HA49	80%	8%	12%
HA4L	100%	0%	0%
HA4S	100%	0%	0%
HA5	83%	8%	8%
HA51	93%	4%	4%
HA52	92%	2%	6%
HA53	100%	0%	0%
HA5W	100%	0%	0%
HA6	60%	20%	20%
HA61	94%	2%	4%
HA62	93%	7%	0%
HA63	74%	5%	21%
TW19	100%	0%	0%
UB10	80%	5%	15%
UB3	40%	40%	20%
UB31	84%	0%	16%
UB32	78%	13%	9%
UB33	50%	0%	50%
UB34	85%	0%	15%
UB35	75%	25%	0%
UB38	0%	50%	50%
UB4	69%	15%	15%
UB40	77%	0%	23%
UB41	100%	0%	0%
UB43	100%	0%	0%
UB48	88%	0%	13%
UB49	87%	9%	4%
UB40	100%	0%	0%
UB56	0%	0%	100%
UB7	60%	20%	20%
UB70	63%	13%	25%
UB74	0%	0%	100%
UB77	83%	4%	13%
UB78	75%	15%	10%
UB79	83%	13%	4%
UB8	70%	30%	0%
UB81	83%	8%	8%
UB82	80%	8%	13%
UB83	83%	4%	13%
UB86	100%	0%	0%
UB89	100%	0%	0%
UB8X	0%	100%	0%
UB9	100%	0%	0%
UB95	100%	0%	0%
UB96	94%	3%	3%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>10%</b>

Answer to question 1: by postcode area



# Results Breakdown

## Question 3

What information would you like to receive about the COVID-19 vaccine?

This question was posed in order to identify gaps in information available to residents.

The results below summarise answers into the emerging themes, with the most mentioned theme being **Side Effects** (referenced in 24% of all comments).

'Is it safe? Are there any known side-effects? If so, what and how serious are they?'

Hillingdon resident

Respondents wanted to know more about the long and short-term side effects, with many wanting to know more about the effects on those in older age groups specifically. Other concerns raised related to how side effects may differ with respect to those with allergies or underlying conditions, and long-term effects on health, particularly fertility.

'When will it be available for our age group and would my husband be on the priority list? Would he receive his before me? Which vaccine would we receive?'

Hillingdon resident

**Availability and Eligibility** for the vaccines became far more frequent in the later answers to the survey as the rollout progressed, with most wanting to know more about where they would be able to receive

the vaccine, when their group would be eligible, and a sizeable number of comments surrounding the speed of the rollout compared to other regions.

'How effective it is and what this % actually means. If I have it how soon can I return to "acting normal"?'

Hillingdon resident

The third most common theme (mentioned in 18% of comments) was **Efficacy**, with questions raised about the level of protection afforded by each vaccine type, when the second dose would be required, whether vaccinated patients can still pass on the virus, and whether future yearly 'boosters' would be needed.

Other common themes were overall **Safety** - similar to side effects, concerns were raised about the overall impact of the vaccine on a patient's health, requests for more **Research and Data** on the vaccines to be made available, questions on whether or not patients would have a **Choice** in the vaccine they receive, or for more information in the difference between each vaccine. Several comments about **Ingredients** were recorded as well, with focus on animal products and allergens. Finally, **Underlying Conditions** were raised, most notably the effect of the vaccines on those with diabetes.

Theme	Frequency of comments	% of Total
Side effects - Both short and long term	282	24%
Availability/Eligibility - When and where would the vaccine be available.	252	22%
Efficacy - Overall protection, and length of the protection	214	18%
Safety - Impact on a person's health	125	11%
Research/Data - From scientific journals / clinical publications	103	9%
Vaccine Choice - Information specific to Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford/Astrazeneca	79	7%
Other	44	4%
Ingredients - Allergens, animal products.	30	3%
Underlying conditions - How the vaccine interacts with existing conditions.	31	3%

'What is it? How is it given? Where and when do I get it? Are there any side-effects or dangers? Once I have it will I be immune to the disease?'

Hillingdon resident

# Recommendations and Acknowledgements





# Recommendations

## How we used the data

During the course of the survey, the data was summarised and shared on a weekly basis with our partner organisations in North West London (this included Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), local authorities, and Healthwatch colleagues). All data was anonymised prior to sharing to protect the respondents.

In Hillingdon, we were able to raise the emerging themes with NHS organisations directly in COVID-19-specific meetings through our membership of the Hillingdon Health & Care Partners (HHCP). The focus group held with the organisation REAP (*page 11*) was arranged by Hillingdon CCG as a result of the findings in the survey data.

## Recommendations

As the results were shared comprehensively as the survey progressed, recommendations to health partners were made throughout the course of this time period, with many communications and engagement activities informed by the findings, some of which are currently ongoing at the time of writing, in partnership with Healthwatch organisations in North West London.

The key points from this project are the driving factors behind vaccine hesitancy, with a specific focus on the barriers facing individual demographics.

As such, the recommendations below are for all health and social care partners throughout the course of COVID-19 vaccinations. Healthwatch Hillingdon will also follow up from this work to better understand the issues raised.

- 
- Communications, and engagement must be tailored to address the concerns of communities within Hillingdon, in order to better inform residents. Of note are the differences seen in the responses in the following characteristics;
    - Age - Younger age groups are showing a lower level of confidence and potential uptake, which will not only affect themselves directly, but potentially residents that they care for.
    - Ethnicity - Lower vaccine confidence has been identified in response from BAME community members; reassurance on specific the concerns raised must be given, and greater inclusion for those with English as a second language (communications to be translated as widely as possible). Concerted efforts to increase engagement from minority ethnic groups must be made as well to ensure feedback is representative of the population.
    - Geography - Targeted communications and engagement are needed to improve confidence in areas showing potential low uptake.
  - Further information desired by residents should be made available if not already, and promoted widely. Of note are the subjects of side effects (long and short-term), availability and eligibility of the vaccine for both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> doses, and the efficacy of the vaccines themselves in terms of explaining the level of protection, length of protection provided, and post-vaccination safety.
  - Vaccine/COVID-19 related Social Media content is invaluable for reaching the widest audience, but this must be curated and moderated to ensure incorrect information and damaging responses are not propagated.

# Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Hillingdon would like to thank the following for their help and support in the production of this report:

- North West London Clinical Commissioning Group
- London Borough of Hillingdon Council, and the local authorities of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster
- Public Health England
- Our Healthwatch Colleagues ;
  - Healthwatch Brent
  - Healthwatch Central West London
  - Healthwatch Ealing
  - Healthwatch Hammersmith and Fulham
  - Healthwatch Harrow
  - Healthwatch Hillingdon
  - Healthwatch Hounslow
- REAP (Refugees in Effective & Active Partnership), its members and facilitators.
- All residents who gave their time to answer our questionnaire.





## Distribution and Comment

This report is available to the general public, and is shared with our statutory and community partners. If you have any comments on this report or wish to share your views and experiences, please contact us:  
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