

Flu Campaign

Insight Report

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Flu Campaign Insight Report

Introduction

City & Hackney GP Confederation has commissioned LBH to deliver a major communications campaign to encourage those eligible for the flu jab to get one this year, with a focus on the most vulnerable, NHS and care staff and children up to the age 12.

Background/ Context

Flu vaccination is particularly important this winter to ensure that the NHS does not have to cope with the twin pressures of rising Covid-19 cases, alongside a national flu outbreak. Flu vaccination will also aid with easier identification of Covid-19, as the symptoms of the two viruses can be difficult to differentiate. Patients will help to protect themselves too, as the flu weakens the immune system and could make patients more vulnerable to a severe Covid-19 infection.

The Government has widened criteria for flu jab eligibility for the first time to include all those between 50-64. Children at primary school, and now those in the 1st year of secondary school, are offered a flu vaccine to be administered in school via a nasal spray. Parental consent is needed and take up is generally low.

Research aims

To inform the development of the campaign, we'd like to gather some insight from local residents that are eligible to receive the Flu jab. We are keen to understand the barrier to and attitudes about flu vaccination. This will help to shape the campaign messages and adapt materials as the campaign develops.

Audience:

Those eligible to receive a flu jab. Also targeting carers and parents of children eligible for the vaccine. All over 65s, People with existing conditions that make them eligible for a flu jab and Parents/guardians of children up to and including year 7. All Age 50-64(now eligible for the first time), Families of older people/clinically eligible patients and Health and social care staff

Methodology:

Short poll, with questions inviting attendance of a focus group. Using existing channels to gather insight:

- AgeUK East London
- CCG Patient Groups
- Hackney Matters panel
- Adult social Care

- Parent Groups via Hackney Learning Trust
- Windrush Elders
- Citizenspace
- Soraya Hahid and contacts through Older Persons Strategy
- Staff Headlines - targeting parents of children up to 12 years old

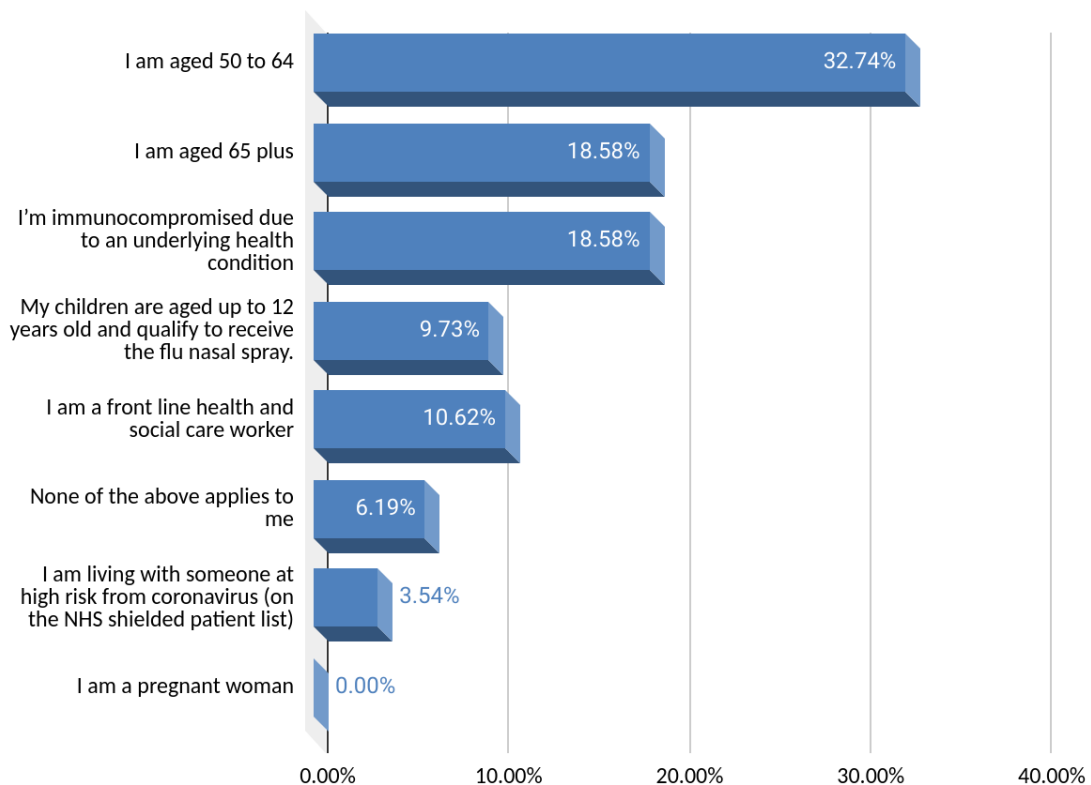
Running three focus groups to further gather insight from residents. The sessions took place on:

- Thursday 3rd September, 2pm to 3.30pm
- Tuesday 8th September, 2pm to 3.30pm
- Thursday 10th September, 2pm to 3.30pm

Summary Results

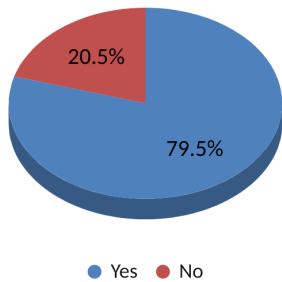
Respondent Profile:

As the graph shows, the majority of respondents indicated that they're aged 50 to 64 years old, followed by those aged 65 plus.



Base (226)

Are you planning to get a flu vaccine/ Jab this Autumn/ Winter?



Eight out of ten respondents indicated that they're planning to get the Flu vaccine/ Jab this Autumn/ Winter.

Base (164)

Please tell us why you won't be getting a flu vaccine?

Recurring themes:

One of the recurring themes in the comments received relates to the side effects of the Flu vaccine. Fear that the Flu vaccine impairs immunity, thus not giving the thebody the chance to fight off the virus naturally. There is also the view that the flu vaccine makes people sick, causing them to get Flu. Also some comments relating to the ingredients in the vaccine - with come parents querying whether the ingredients are 'halal' and another indicating that it's 'haram' (forbidden by Allah/ Islamic Law)

Verbatim responses:

Scared of needles and never had flu, but will do it, if it will help.
I don't need one
Ingredients
Don't know where to get one or how much they cost.
I am still very young
I don't feel I need it.
I've never had the need to get one. Always review this annually in case the need arises
I've never had one.
I do not have any underline health issues. I consider myself healthy with a healthy diet (vegetarian/vegan) doing regular exercises, 30 mins daily yoga, cycling 5-10 miles a day, in my immune system is not bad at all.
As its a live vaccine and every year its a different strain . I think if you encourage people who don't have any underlying health issues to build a good immune system then most of the time, there is no need for mass vaccination. How is the body meant to fight off viruses if we keep vaccinating the masses . We are genetically made up but given one vaccine to treat all. Hmmm
I'm worried that it might impair my immunity

I am less at risk than most other groups. I've never had complications due to the flu (have cared for self at home). I am a home-maker so not in contact with many other people - as in don't take public transport a lot, not in an office environment etc.
It gives a nasty reaction to my immune system , it makes me extremely unwell. I eat healthy and look after myself in the key winter months. Basically prevention, I know that the vaccine only guess works at the virus it covers usually 2 out of the numerous strains out here. The one year I did take it, i was in my bed for a month unable to walk. No thank you
I had a great many Tetanus vaccinations aged 5, after an injury, and had always anticipated I'd get problems with my nervous system, at least partly as a result of these vaccinations, when I got older. I have had Parkinson's disease since I was 60. Also, I know of several other people who've had the flu vaccination and developed very severe respiratory illnesses which they had never had previously. One had Covid quite badly. I also read that some researchers think that people who get Covid get it worse if they've had flu vaccinations.
Because I have one when I was pregnant with recently
I'm sceptical about medical treatments these days. I'm wary of the COVID19 vaccine being part of this year's vaccine with my knowledge of it.
I'm not sure I want to go into public to get it
I feel let down by local authority and government during the past lockdown
I am not eligible as I am only 60
I am too nervous about having the vaccine as on two previous occasions I have fainted and this made me nervous so last year didn't get one. I get flu every year and I am not sure why.
Me nor my son are vulnerable. I think it is good to build up his immune system
I am scared of the side effects of the flu jab
I am 49 years old. I have mild asthma. It was severe during my childhood, but has been manageable for years. My last asthma attack was in 1993 following labour, this resulted in my only use of a nebuliser.
I have never had flu and have not had the flu jab to date. I have thought about it more this year due to COVID-19, but am unlikely to have the jab, as on previous years.
I'm really anxious about it doing other things to me than protecting me from flu
When my daughter was 2 years old, she almost died because of the flu vaccine, after her survival I never allow her to get the flu vaccine, again. 3 years has passed she never had it and she's fine and healthy.
I don't think I need one
I'm worried I will be taking a vaccine which won't be necessary due to flu virus mutation.'

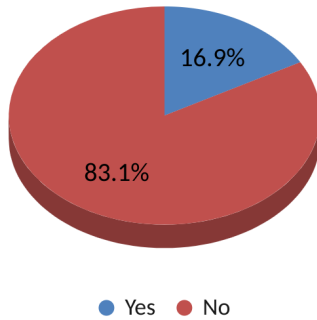
What would encourage you to get a flu vaccine this year?

Verbatim responses:

If it would help support NHS and Hackney
nothing , and would not consider getting one in the future
Make it halal
If they were done free at doctor
Not too sure
Unsure
change in my health
If it was deemed necessary
fear of getting Covid 19
Nothing
If i was assured about it's safety and efficacy
A better campaign and to know the benefits.
If I knew it protected against multiple strains (as in 5 or more).
Nothing!
Nothing would. I am also a homeopath and homeopathic remedies are a much better protection against flu.
I have one already
I'm not sure there would be anything to convince me to get vaccinated with my scepticism of the medical world at the moment.
Knowing its safe and will help
More help from local authority
Being alliable
I am not sure
If I was 100% sure it will protect me from the flu. It is normally for few strains
Better information
If there were extremely vulnerable individuals within my family home, I would possibly be more inclined to have the vaccine this year.
Some CBT probably
Nothing, is not good to everyone. With my children's experience I can say is not for them. They are more healthy without the flu vaccine. I make sure they had their fruits & vegetables daily, take their multivitamin, when is sunny 20 minutes under the sun for vitamin D and daily fresh squeezed orange juice for vitamin c.
The added threat of covid'19. A second wave.
Better info from a non private source

PARENTS

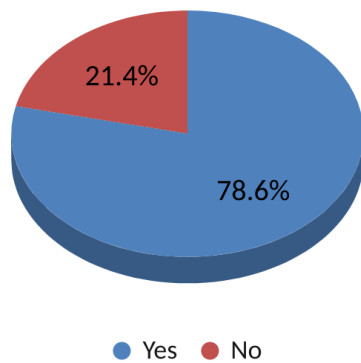
Are you a parent of a child(ren) aged up to 12 years?



17% of respondents indicated that they're a parent of a child(ren) aged up to 12 years old.

Base (164)

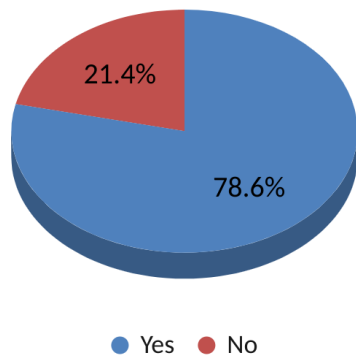
Did you know they can get a nasal spray vaccination in school?



More than 78% of the parents that responded are aware that their children can get a nasal spray vaccine at school.

Base (24)

Are you planning to get your child vaccinated against flu this Autumn?



Of those that indicated that they're a parent of a child(ren) aged up to 12, 79% indicated that they're planning to get their child vaccinated against flu this Autumn.

Those that said 'NO' were asked why, and some of their responses included:

If its halal then yes
As it is haram against my religious beliefs.
we have been fighting common colds for years the old fashioned way. Plus keeping health with good food and exercise helps. My remedy cupboard is always well stocked up.
I want him to build his immune system. He is in good health so no Other major riskA are taken
My answer is actually yes/no, if i can the vaccine for my 5 year old who is asthmatic and my 11 year old who has glaucoma i will get them vaccinated, if they cant get the vaccinations but the spray then i wont as it has ingredients not suitable for a Muslim
When my daughter was 2 years old, she almost died because of the flu vaccine, after her survival I never allow her to get the flu vaccine again. 3 years has passed she never had it again. she's 5 years old she's fine and healthy. With my daughters experience I never allow my son to get the flu vaccine and he's 4 years old never been sick, he's always healthy . Is not good for my children.

Please refer to the following statements about the FLU vaccine and indicate whether you think they're TRUE or FALSE

Focus groups

The aim of the focus groups is to inform the development of the Flu campaign, by gathering some insight from local residents that are eligible to receive the Flu jab. We were keen to understand the barriers to and attitudes about flu vaccination. This will help to shape the campaign messages and adapt materials as the campaign develops.

Focus group 1 - Thursday 3 September 2020 - 16 participants

At the start of the focus group we asked participants by a raise of hands, how many were planning to get a Flu vaccine/jab this Autumn/Winter. A total of 9 participants raised their hands or used the chat function to say yes.

For those who said no, or did not raise their hand, we wanted to find out their reasons why they would not. The following points were raised:

- Good immune system
- Never had the flu, only a cold
- Feel healthy and fit
- Side-effects of being sick for a period of time, some mild and some more extreme cases, whether affected directly or know of others being affected
- Advised by a nutritionist not to get it
- Lack of knowledge regarding the ingredients used in the vaccine
- Not everyone can have the same flu vaccine due to underlying health conditions. Not knowing how it may affect you.

We then asked what would encourage them to get a Flu vaccine/jab this year. The following points were raised:

- A greater understanding and more information regarding the ingredients used in the vaccine - (this was mentioned by the majority of participants)
- Covid-19 - Protection against coronavirus
- First time the flu jab has been offered to the over 50's age group
- If it would help protect myself and others - family, vulnerable people when working front-line services,
- Conspiracy theory that the flu jab is connected to the government, and that they can get your information to use
- Various strains of the flu, so how can they guarantee that the flu vaccine protects you from them all?
- More information on why some people get a reaction and others do not. What is the cause of the side-effects?

The next question was to test some messages that we have developed for the Flu Campaign to see how they resonate. There were five options to choose from, with the following number of responses to each:

- A. Protecting the NHS (2)
- B. Protecting yourself (0)
- C. Protecting your family (2)
- D. Protect Hackney/ your neighbours (2)
- E. All or a combination of the above - (15)

We then asked participants to elaborate on their choices, what the messages mean to them and how they would encourage them to act. The following quotes were made:

- *“We are very lucky to have the NHS. At the start of Covid-19 they struggled a lot, and the NHS is massively underfunded, so anything that we can do to help and make the NHS job easier is a strong motivator.”*
- *“I think the strongest message is to protect your family, your community and the NHS. From what I've seen in previous flu jab campaigns 'protect yourself' is often the key message and I think wouldn't necessarily make a difference to people who already wouldn't take it.”*
- *“If you protect yourself and family, then you are protecting the NHS”*
- *“I am quite sceptical of a lot of government info given how contradictory the government has been about the pandemic”*
- *“Are there case studies of people who had Covid 9 and the flu at the same time?”*
- *“I think the protection of the NHS message was clear and we got that - it's since they dropped it that things have got really confusing.”*

The last question was regarding the location of where you could get a Flu vaccine, so we wanted to know if a location closer to home would be better and suggestions on location. The following points were made:

- Walk-in centre - Boots, GP surgery
- Pharmacy
- Libraries, schools, community centres - larger open spaces, good for social distancing
- Pop-up centres outdoors - somewhere in an open space rather than a more enclosed area
- Covid secure locations - GP surgery waiting area would be small, so larger space would be better for everyone
- Concerns:
 - Waiting areas at GP surgery, for example, are small and not Covid-19 friendly in terms of social distancing.
 - *“The problem I see is that not everyone has the same access to EHR (hospital, Pharmacist, etc ...) and medication to check the contraindications or underlying conditions that you may have.”*

In relation to the quote above regarding access to EHR, we received an email after the focus group from this participant giving more detail behind their concern:

“Thank you very much for the opportunity to attend this focus group.

I just wanted to clarify further the question I raised and a personal opinion regarding the flu campaign.

The electronic healthcare records (EHR) that are provided to us by the GP practice online or by paper have a section for medication. These include records of 'acute, repeat or automatic drugs.'

Suppose a drug is only prescribed directly by a hospital for an underlying condition. In that case, my understanding is that a local chemist (outside the ones supporting the hospital) do not sell or provide these medications and pharmacists may not necessarily see some of these medication records online.

I have noticed this when collecting a repeat prescription from my local chemist, when the pharmacist asks you about any other medications that you may be taking. My perception is that the local pharmacist may not recognise, have knowledge or understanding of an automatic medication provided by a hospital to check a drug to drug interaction with the restricted selection of medications they provide. This may also apply when providing flu jabs and other vaccinations.

Suppose we consider a flu jab or any other vaccination as a drug medication, why patients are not given or communicated automatically with a patient information leaflet for the specific vaccine being offered based on risks each patient may have (that includes the ingredients and the company developing the vaccine). Also, the flu jab information is not currently displayed in the EHR to us as a dated record like any other medications or conditions.

Currently, if people outside the GP practice administer a flu jab e.g. an office or a library, my understanding is that they may not have enough information on the vulnerable patient to check any drug to drug interactions or advise appropriately any questions the patients may have. They may also be unaware of the risks that administering the wrong flu jab may cause them as well. There is lots of evidence in medicine of people being administered the wrong medications and an increase of patient safety risks.

In my opinion. These drug to drug interactions risk may increase now with Covid-19, if specialists do not have access, people get correctly informed, carefully monitor and record all the underlying conditions and medications (including vaccination details) that people are taking."

Focus group 2 - Tuesday 8 September 2020 - 10 participants

At the start of the focus group we asked participants by a raise of hands, how many were planning to get a Flu vaccine/jab this Autumn/Winter. A total of 7 participants raised their hands or used the chat function to say yes.

For those who said no, or did not raise their hand, we wanted to find out their reasons why they would not. The following points were raised:

- Still young and not vulnerable, nor children in the family.
- Do not work in an environment where they meet people, so do not see it necessary to have to get.
- Flu vaccine does not cover all strains of the flu.
- Awful reaction to the flu jab years ago, which has caused reluctance over getting it.
- Advice from the GP about the flu vaccine sounds like it is being “read off a script”, and is not being considered properly in terms of how it may affect someone after having it.

For those who said yes, we asked them why they have decided to get a flu vaccine this year. The following points were made:

- The main reason being that it is now offered to the over 50's, which is something that many of the participants were unaware of.
- One participant has been having the flu jab every year for the last 10 or so years, so will continue to do so as long as they remain eligible.
- Being pregnant means that they now qualify based on that criteria alone.
- Work for the NHS, so have had the flu jab for 15 or more years in a row and will continue to do so.
- Duty as a parent to get it and make sure the family are safe.

We then asked what would encourage them to get a Flu vaccine/jab this year. The following points were raised:

- Getting objective advice from someone other than a GP, as there is pressure on them to get people to take the flu vaccine.
- A greater explanation regarding the benefits of having a flu vaccine, in regards to benefits for the family, friends and the wider community. Simple statements to get this message out rather than long messages as it currently is.
- Public Health England, or another organisation, to pose a Q&A session for people who are genuinely worried and concerned about the flu vaccine.
- Emphasising the message to give confidence, especially with Covid-19 and a lot of uncertainty with not knowing which way things may go.

The next question was to test some messages that we have developed for the Flu Campaign to see how they resonate. There were five options to choose from, with the following number of responses to each:

- A. Protecting the NHS (0)
- B. Protecting yourself (1)
- C. Protecting your family (0)
- D. Protect Hackney/ your neighbours (3)
- E. All or a combination of the above - (9)

We then asked participants to elaborate on their choices, what the messages mean to them and how they would encourage them to act. The following quotes were made:

- *“A: mixed message, as the government protected the NHS and didn't protect those in care. B- somewhat resonant, but I'm not at huge risk C- no one in the family at more risk than me, D- more resonant as I have neighbours who are older.”*
- One participant chose “Protecting yourself”. They stated that although this may seem selfish, by protecting yourself you are then protecting others, especially those in your family and community. So, overall, this links to options C and D.

The last question was regarding the location of where you could get a Flu vaccine, so we wanted to know if a location closer to home would be better and suggestions on location. The following points were made:

- Pharmacy - being able to walk-in without an appointment.
- Tesco in Hackney - maybe people will spontaneously get a flu jab after doing their shopping as it would be available on-site.
- Outdoor spaces, i.e. parks
- Community halls
- Mobile stations
- High Streets

Focus group 3 - Thursday 10 September 2020 - 11 participants

At the start of the focus group we asked participants by a raise of hands, how many were planning to get a Flu vaccine/jab this Autumn/Winter. All 11 participants raised their hands or used the chat function to say yes.

As everyone responded yes to this question, we were unable to ask the next question to those who would not be getting one and their reasons behind it. Instead we asked why they chose to get a flu jab. The following points were made:

- Always get a flu jab every year
 - One participant stated they have been having the flu jab for over 25 years
- Long term/underlying health conditions
- Covid-19 is another reason to ensure they get it
- Work with vulnerable adults so is necessary

Many participants stated that their GP surgery is already sending out letters and text messages to book an appointment.

The next question was to test some messages that we have developed for the Flu Campaign to see how they resonate. There were five options to choose from, with the following number of responses to each:

- F. Protecting the NHS (0)
- G. Protecting yourself (1)
- H. Protecting your family (1)
- I. Protect Hackney/ your neighbours (1)
- J. All or a combination of the above - (9)

The last question was regarding the location of where you could get a Flu vaccine, so we wanted to know if a location closer to home would be better and suggestions on location. The following points were made:

- Pharmacy - Walk-in option, no queues or waiting rooms like GP surgery
- GP walk-in service
- Car Park setting
- Community Halls
- Church Halls
- Mobile units
- Covid secure locations
- Workplace