

Supporting trusted professionals in London to increase uptake through conversation



Overview

Reference: 24

Location: London

Target Group: Parents and carers

Initiative type: Information and training

Contact

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<https://www.england.nhs.uk/london/our-work/immunis-team/>

Top Tip

We need to adapt, be more innovative and bring vaccinations to where people are. I'm a firm believer in opportunistic vaccinations!

Why is this important to us?

London has the lowest vaccine uptake rates in the UK, driven by a wide range of factors including vaccine hesitancy (confidence, convenience and complacency). Vaccine hesitancy, is one part of the puzzle that we are working to address. Generally, this just means that people have questions about vaccines, which is entirely normal and something that can be worked with. COVID-19 meant that vaccines suddenly had to be given differently, with the addition of a pre-appointment stage that involved calling up patients to talk through the process. We saw this as being a great opportunity to support the healthcare professionals making these calls to promote vaccine acceptance.

What are we doing?

Whilst our work focuses on childhood vaccinations, we quickly realised that it is generally the same healthcare professionals administering COVID-19 vaccinations and the same principles applied, with very similar questions being asked about all types of vaccine by all types of people, not only parents. We decided to run an online training event for Practice Nurses, GPs and Health Visitors, with the aim of equipping healthcare professionals with the information and knowledge they need to be able to answer difficult questions about vaccines, including the COVID-19 vaccine. Attendees were then offered the opportunity to participate in motivational interviewing training to support their confidence and skills in having these conversations in a way that promotes vaccine acceptance. Separately, after finding that the majority of parents and teenagers got their information about vaccines from schools, Healthy Schools Coordinators and Healthy Settings Coordinators were trained up to train school staff to better support and understand vaccination programmes.

Who is involved?

We are an integrated Immunisation and Screening team, with staff from Public Health England and NHS England coming together to improve vaccine uptake and coverage in London. To deliver this work, we collaborate with a range of partners including local universities, local authorities, Greater London Authority, charities, and the British Society of Immunology. A Trainee Health Psychologist from a local university has played an essential role in designing and delivering the motivational interviewing training.

What works for us?

The response to the training has been very positive so far. **Our initial event was attended by over 1000 healthcare professionals – the email system crashed from the demand!** People have told us that they now feel empowered to have these conversations and have requested that we share or replicate the training for their colleagues.