

'Vaccines for all' Campaign

Coalition of
370+
organisations

Overview

Reference: 33

Location: UK-wide

Target Group: Migrants
and asylum seekers

Initiative type: Petition

Contact

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Top Tip

Engage with the real concerns that people have around the Hostile Environment, and ensure your messaging comes from trusted organisations.

Why is this important to us?

The Hostile Environment policies limit access to public services for migrants in the UK. Concerns around NHS charges and data sharing with the Home Office, which is used for immigration enforcement, has resulted in fear and distrust of accessing healthcare. This has resulted in lower uptake of the vaccine by migrants, as opposed to concerns around vaccine safety. Migrants are at greater risk of contracting COVID-19, due to frequently living in overcrowded accommodation or working in unsafe places. Reports suggest that people are being turned away from vaccination centres for not having ID or an NHS number, and are afraid of or do not know how to register with a GP. We have collaborated with migrant advocacy organisations to lobby the government to make it clear to migrants that they can access the COVID-19 vaccine for free, regardless of their immigration status.

What are we doing?

We launched the 'Vaccines for all' campaign to promote equitable access to the vaccine, and to put pressure on the Department of Health to scrap the Hostile Environment. The campaign wants to tackle the root causes of the mistrust felt by communities, challenge the Hostile Environment, and promote a public information campaign to reassure people. This requires more information for healthcare staff, to understand how and what information is shared with the Home Office, as well as challenge the administration processes involved in the vaccine roll-out which may disproportionately affect migrant communities.

Who is involved?

The petition has been coordinated by fifteen grassroots organisations in the Patients Not Passports network, and has been signed by more than 370 organisations, including eight local authorities, the Royal College of Midwives, the Faculty of Public Health, migrant and homelessness charities, community groups, and several PCNs. The shared aim of making vaccine access more equitable has been a key factor for this initiative to be successful.

What works for us?

Our work has shown that frontline workers recognise that migrants have limited access to the COVID-19 vaccine and are unsure of what they can do to help mitigate the issue. The organisations involved in this initiative engage with people organising the vaccine roll-out, to suggest how they can make vaccination clinics more accessible, for example by using pop-up sites and paper records, and considering how ID requests and data sharing may impact access.