

Government report shows improving vaccine confidence among ethnic minority groups

- As Government publishes third report on COVID-19 disparities, the Minister for Equalities and hero GP, Dr Farzana Hussain, issue a joint call for everyone to take the vaccine when they are offered it.
- Evidence shows vaccine confidence has steadily increased among ethnic minorities.
- This follows flexible vaccine delivery, and targeted communications from government and medical professionals, and partnerships with broadcasters.

The call comes as data shows vaccine confidence has steadily increased following government action, with 93% of adults reporting positive sentiment towards the vaccine. However, some groups are still less likely to get the jab. 30% of Black or Black British adults reported vaccine hesitancy, the highest compared with all ethnic groups.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has prioritised people based on age, with older people being offered the vaccination first. As the UK's White population makes up a greater number of those in the older age categories, the percentage of those who have already received vaccinations is higher when compared with ethnic minority groups. As the vaccine is rolled out to younger age groups the Government will continue its targeted action to ensure that ethnic minority people are willing to take the jab.

Minister for Equalities, Kemi Badenoch, said:

"We are taking the vital action necessary to protect our families, communities and the country from the scourge of COVID-19. Our positive progress deploying the vaccine and promoting confidence in it has been a tireless, collective effort, from faith leaders, voluntary groups and the NHS all working together in every community to turn back the tide of COVID-19.

"We are not complacent and we will continue to tackle dangerous disinformation and work with trusted partners to promote confidence in the vaccine so everyone takes up their jab when they are offered it.

"Vaccines are the key to unlocking a return to normal life, and this Government will continue to do everything it can to ensure everyone is confident to take them."

Hero GP, Dr Farzana Hussain, whose tireless efforts during the pandemic – including online campaigning and debunking of misinformation, and personally calling scores of patients who have yet to take the jab – have been key to fighting the virus, said:

"It is really important that everyone takes the vaccine – unless all of us

are protected, none of us are protected.

“The vaccines are very safe – they have been trialled on hundreds of thousands of volunteers by world-leading scientists, and now millions of doses have been given, just in the UK alone. I urge everyone to take the jab when they are offered it.”

Alongside this the Minister for Equalities will today publish the third quarterly report to the Prime Minister and Health and Social Care Secretary on progress to understand and tackle COVID-19 disparities experienced by individuals from ethnic minority groups.

The report sets out the swift and flexible action Government has taken to protect people, adapting the vaccine programme as it has rolled out to ensure everyone feels safe and able to get the vaccine, without being stigmatised.

Dr Masood Ahmed, Chief Medical Officer for the Black Country and West Birmingham CCG said:

“We have strong, resilient communities and have been able to address vaccine hesitancy by connecting with people, listening to fears, and having meaningful conversations in order to reduce barriers, which is key for longer term sustainable solutions to address wider health inequalities.

“It’s so important that we share learnings to understand and address the health inequalities that COVID-19 has highlighted, and whilst we have had some success in reaching people and communities, there is still opportunity to do more.”

Dr Rohini Mathur, Assistant Professor of Epidemiology, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, said:

“This report highlights the positive impact of increasing vaccine confidence in minority ethnic groups across England and points towards the importance of understanding the complex interaction between socio-economic, geographic, and health related factors in explaining disparities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Further Information:

The report sets out the following next steps:

- The Minister for Equalities to share the findings of her third quarterly report with the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.
- Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to consider how to apply the findings of the review of experiences of frontline healthcare workers and the UK-REACH study.
- NHS England’s published data on vaccination uptake by ethnicity should be further disaggregated to provide percentage uptake by vaccine priority group cohorts and sex. This should include levels of unknown ethnicity and an assessment of how this might affect the interpretation of vaccination uptake for different ethnic groups.
- NHS England and Improvement (NHSEI) should publish data about the use of

the NHS COVID-19 app by different ethnic groups. This will inform activity to increase the uptake and continued use of the app.

- DHSC and NHS should further investigate practical barriers to vaccine uptake by ethnicity to assess and address any intention-action gap.
- DHSC should ensure that NHS organisations and GPs are provided with clear guidance and protocols about how ethnicity should be requested and recorded in health records.
- RDU should engage with the Office for Statistics Regulation about priorities for improving the quality (including harmonisation, robustness and reliability) of ethnicity data on health records, drawing on others' expertise as appropriate, and report back in the final quarterly report.
- The Minister for Equalities and the Minister for COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment will continue a programme of engagement in the next 3 months, focusing on promoting vaccine uptake and encouraging asymptomatic testing, particularly for those within higher risk occupations, as sectors reopen.
- As the COVID-19 vaccine rollout continues, the government's Vaccine Confidence campaign will aim to inform, educate and empower those aged 18 to 50 to take up their vaccine. Using the tagline 'Every Vaccination Gives Us Hope' content will take an optimistic tone, aiming to reach and persuade younger audiences, including ethnic minority groups.
- At each step of the government's roadmap out of lockdown, tailored guidance and communications will continue to be shared through community and media channels to maximise reach and impact.

Communications

- To drive forward uptake of the vaccine, the government has prioritised communications with ethnic minority people across the UK, that includes:
- A partnership with 12 community radio stations, which has delivered key messages about vaccines in 13 different languages to 1.5 million people.
- Television partnerships with 21 multicultural TV networks, delivering 30 second adverts on 43 TV stations in 9 languages, reaching approximately 3 million people each week.
- A Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport social media campaign to tackle false vaccine information, which has been shared with more than 4 million people through community and local networks, reaching people from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Ethnic minority medical professionals promoting facts and dispelling myths about the vaccines online, including a series of videos with Dr Amir Khan, a GP from Yorkshire, whose video on the vaccine being halal reached more than 330,000 people.
- A programme of Ministerial engagement, including a roundtable with Black African and Black Caribbean Faith Leaders and GPs, recognising the important role that churches play in promoting vaccine uptake amongst their congregations.
- Celebrities and influencers, including Great British Bake Off star Nadiya Hussain, backing the NHS COVID-19 vaccine drive.
- A short film backed by the NHS based on an open letter signed by Sir Lenny Henry and a range of high-profile celebrities encouraging Black

adults in the UK to make informed decisions about the vaccine.