

# Bridging the Uptake Gap

**COVID-19 vaccination toolkit for Black African and Black African Caribbean communities**  
**(June 2021)**



**Evidence-based good practice for increasing vaccination confidence and uptake among Black African and Black African Caribbean populations**

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This toolkit is made up of six components. These have been developed based on good practice examples from within the vaccine deployment programme and the Connect and Exchange Hub.

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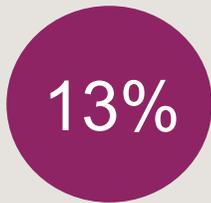
Data shows the highest proportion of people saying they will not take the vaccine, or are not sure, are



Black African Caribbean



Black African



UK average

Reference: [British Red Cross Poll, published February 2021 online:](#)

## Resources are available on the

[Public Health England Coronavirus Resource Centre](#)

[COVID Vaccine Equalities](#)

[Connect and Exchange Hub Comms Link](#)



Whilst another study suggests there might have been some improvement in Black people aged 18-44, with

**38%** saying they would definitely have it,  
**30%** unsure but leaning towards yes,  
**16%** are unsure but leaning towards no and  
**16%** said definitely no.

Reference: [ORB The vaccine confidence tracker, June 2021](#)

**Black African and Black African Caribbean people experience different social and cultural barriers despite the commonalities of poverty and deprivation shared with other ethnic groups. It is important to understand the different cultural, historical and structural backdrop of this experience, as this has a direct impact on how communications and the delivery of services are perceived.**

## **Key barriers/issues**

- **Low confidence in vaccine efficacy and safety**
- **Inconvenience and access barriers (including location of vaccine delivery, relative cost, time and distance to access vaccine, religious, cultural and linguistic)**

**Effective engagement with Black African and Black African Caribbean people is built on trust. There is a tension between the fast pace of the vaccination programme and the time needed to build trusted relationships using existing trusted networks. People report concerns at how quickly the COVID-19 vaccines were developed compared to the ongoing search for a vaccine for conditions such as HIV.**



## **Component 1**

### **Data insights**

**Data and population behavioural insights will help you to gain a detailed understanding of your local Black African and Black African Caribbean populations and identify gaps in uptake and facilitate targeting of initiatives**

#### **When using data**

- 1. Segment the population**
- 2. Identify the regions/places/local areas with the greatest uptake gap, or showing a negative trend**
- 3. Use data sources such as the Vaccine Equalities Mapping Tool, alongside local data and intelligence from established networks and connections**

#### **Challenges to be aware of**

- 1. This is not a homogeneous group**
- 2. In some locations it's a very dispersed population**
- 3. Availability and accessibility of complete data (under-registration with GP, increase in people without an NHS number)**
- 4. Some undocumented individuals living 'off the radar'**

## Component 2

### Collaborative working

Encourage vaccine uptake in these communities by removing structural/ system barriers

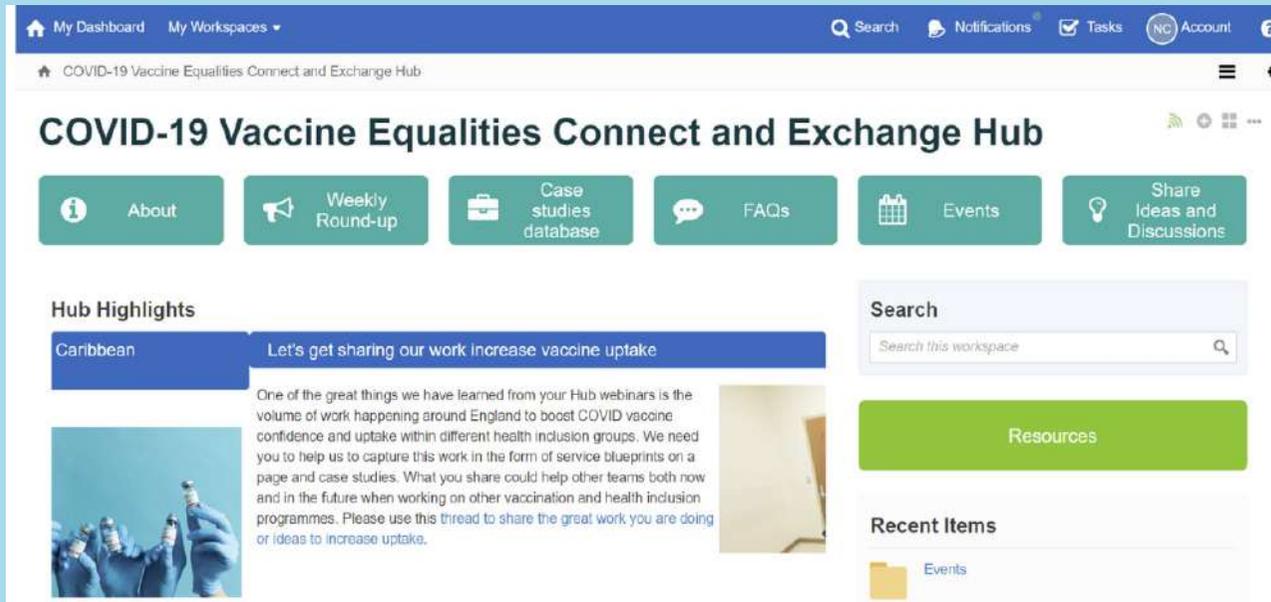
1. Collaborate and work across organisations to pool knowledge, resources and build an authentic partnership approach to increase trust.
2. Ensure delivery on the ground matches user expectations
3. Support Black African and Black African Caribbean staff to promote key messages; Our workforce is our community
4. Set up regular checkpoint calls with areas with lowest uptake and share knowledge
5. Lead open discussion with stakeholders and local networks (including clinicians and local pharmacists) about vaccine uptake. Explore what is working and what more you can do together
6. Use engagement to highlight any barriers, risks and opportunities for different delivery models



[Read the Vaxi Taxi case study](#)

# Component 3

## Use the Connect and Exchange Hub to find and share what works



Shared service delivery models, blueprints and case studies help to quickly spread learning across systems. By applying experience and learning from around the country, you can do more of what has been shown to work

**Additional information to support this toolkit is available on the Hub**

Interact regularly on the [Connect and Exchange Hub](#)

Reciprocity means if YOU share others share too!

- Access the 'Lunch and Learn' webinar series
- Suggest future webinar topics
- Share learning, tips and case studies with other users
- Present your learnings through a range of channels i.e. blog, video, discussion board, infographic, presenting at 'Lunch and Learn' events

## Component 4

### Use high-profile and trusted voices to support vaccine uptake

Engage high-profile and trusted voices (both national and local) to share positive COVID-19 vaccine messaging and support wider communications



- Local partners, networks, your staff and community can help you to identify trusted voices and channels to use
- Engage local partners and the community to develop messages that address current and specific concerns in the local Black African and Black African Caribbean population (vaccine efficacy and the lack of trust arising from historical disadvantage and structural racism)
- A and B testing can help you to identify which messaging works for which cohorts across different platforms

- In your communications use clear and plain language (avoid NHS jargon) and appropriate and diverse images, across a wide range of trusted channels; not everyone will have access to smartphones and digital technology.
- Use trusted community resources such as pharmacies, dentists, libraries, community and faith centres.
- Use national team connections, i.e vaccine equalities team, health inequalities improvement team and central government departments



## Component 5

**Use targeted conversations to boost vaccination confidence, and amplify using social media channels**



**Hosting a series of clinically-led online dialogues using voices trusted by the community can help to engage black communities. It is important to use an experienced facilitator with knowledge of NHS systems and relationships with Black African and Black African Caribbean NHS workforce and communities**

**[Read CAHN report](#)**

**Use targeted conversations based on a set of key questions that cover important areas of concern for Black African and Black African Caribbean people**

**Recruit trusted messengers and influencers to participate or lead these discussions - local individuals from the medical, clinical, health and social care workforce**

**Understand links to people's countries of origin – messages from high commissioners can support engagement**

**Produce bespoke radio adverts, social media graphics and press releases to promote access to these conversations**

**Use trusted networks to access multiple networks within Black African and Black African Caribbean populations and diaspora organisations - places of worship, community and sports/leisure organisations, social media networks, community TV and radio**



**[Read NICE report](#)**

## Component 6

### Use culturally appropriate venues to support vaccine delivery and uptake



It's important that culturally diverse staff (clinical and volunteers) are part of your vaccination team. Use venues for mobile and pop-up vaccination centres that population feel comfortable and frequently visit, such as places of worship, community organisations and schools

- Be flexible when considering venues
- Publish your venue criteria and expectations, to enable local communities to understand what they need to do to offer their venues as a vaccination centre or pop-up site
- Work with partners who are already supporting mobile vaccination delivery e.g. Fire and Rescue Service, Red Cross

#### Benefits:

1. Improved accessibility and convenience
2. Improved attendance and vaccine uptake numbers
3. Demonstrates a commitment to delivering a bespoke service for the community
4. Helps build trust, confidence and relationships

# Events

- Think about location and building trust. [Use the Hub](#) to tell us about your event and we can help you to promote it

## Remember to

- Use clear key messages
- Partner with spokespeople that the community trust and respect
- Use partner comms channels
- Provide access to documents and comms messaging in a range of languages

## If creating new resources

- Consider co-creation to increase trust and build relationships
- Use graphics that are sensitive to, and reflect the diversity of the community
- Consider font sizes required for different media and accessibility
- [Follow NHS branding guidance particularly when using logos](#)

# The COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective and gives you the best protection against Coronavirus.

Research shows that the vaccines are highly effective in reducing COVID-19 infections.

These vaccines have been tested on tens of thousands of people around the world, both men and women and people from different ethnic backgrounds, representative of the UK population and of all ages between 18-84.

Most side-effects of the COVID-19 vaccine are mild and should not last longer than a week, such as: a sore arm where the needle went in, feeling tired, a headache, feeling achy, feeling or being sick. You can take painkillers, such as paracetamol, if you need to.

