

Leeds Voices Covid Vaccine Engagement February - April 2021

1. Background

Between October 2020 and January 2021, as part of the Winter Prep engagement, Leeds Voices asked participants from a range of different communities, if they would be willing to take the Covid vaccine. The response showed that over 50% of people were either against taking it or unsure. This rose to 70% amongst those with English as a second language and correlates with [national research](#) indicating that uptake is likely to lower in this group and minority ethnic groups in general.

We know that of the participants who had doubts about the vaccine, about two thirds, were 'unsure', meaning that reassurance and facts from a trusted source could be the key to them deciding take up the vaccine offer. These finding informed and shaped the proactive engagement that followed using community leaders and organisations who work closely with different Leeds communities.

2. Description of the Engagement

Following the Winter Prep engagement, Leeds Voices have been asked to re-engage with partners and communities around information about the Covid Vaccine to:

- To further understand which communities are experiencing vaccine hesitancy and concerns,
- Understand what those concerns are,
- Find out what information partners need and in what format to make an informed choice about having the vaccine.
- Direct partners to existing information, via the [CCG website](#) as well as identify whether different formats of information are required.
- Follow up with partners to confirm that information is getting through to communities and whether there are any gaps
- To share this information with CCG and comms teams if there are any gaps.

This engagement is designed to tap into the vast knowledge and experience that community leaders, community organisers and trusted third sector organisations have from working with communities over Leeds.

3. Who was involved?

The Leeds Voices Team contacted nineteen Engaging Voices partners¹ to understand what gaps there might be with information partners required to support their communities with covid vaccine information and find out what concerns communities had. Five Leeds Health Ambassadors (LHA) volunteers² worked with partners completing surveys and sending out relevant information to them.

¹ Please refer to Appendix C for details of partners involved

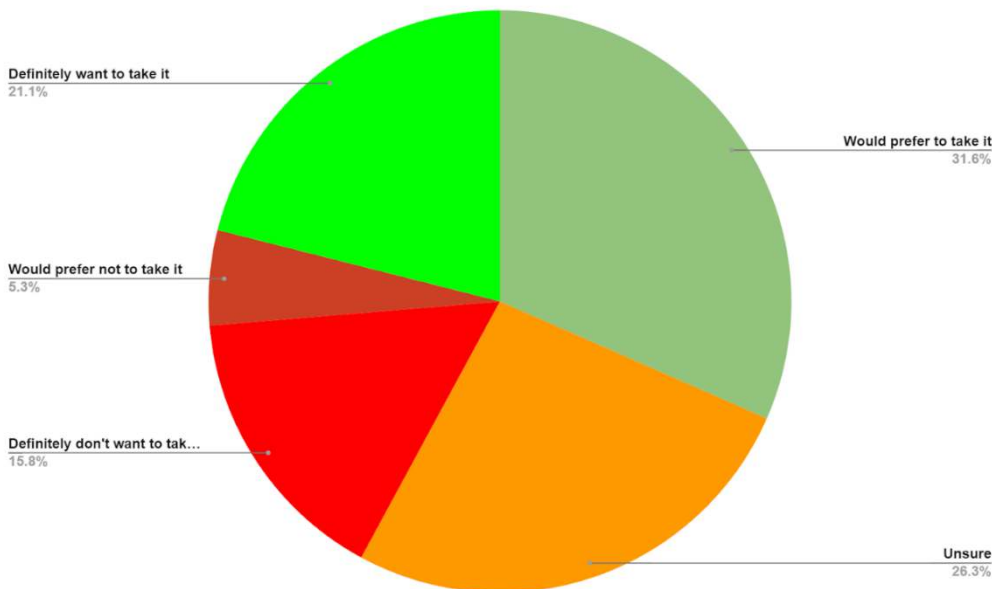
² Please refer to Appendix A for process map

As the work was more intensive, than previous engagements, for our partners we agreed to offer a £40 incentive payment as they were being asked to feedback and comment on information we were sending to them.

4. What partners told us³:

All organisations who stated that their members were either unsure or didn't want to take the vaccine worked predominantly with African, South Asian or Roma communities or asylum seekers and refugees.

Over a quarter of the people surveyed were unsure about getting their job



Information requested included:

- Details about the vaccine:
- Who made it and how (including why it was created so quickly)
- When it will be available to different groups of people
- Information about side effects

The following ways of getting the message out were suggested:

- Videos/photos showing medical professionals, or community leaders from diverse communities having the vaccine and dispelling myths
- Leaflets with brief facts about the vaccine in community languages
- One-minute-long 'mythbusting' videos shared on platforms such as TikTok, Youtube, Facebook or WhatsApp
- Places of worship – make it clear that the vaccine is sanctioned by religious organisations

³ Appendix B for further details

- Community radio stations

Myth busting

As well as the myths which have been circulating for some time around the vaccine's ingredients, the potential for side effects and so on, communities are reporting the following misinformation:

- People's existing health conditions won't be taken into account
- The vaccine is only for people who are ill or unhealthy

5. What work we have done in response

a. People's Voices Group (PVG) ⁴

The information gathered by Leeds Voices contributed to the intelligence being collected by the People's Voices Group. This was collated by Health Watch each week and compiled into weekly reports and shared with the Vaccine Inequalities group to support decision making in the city.

b. Shared useful resources with partners

1. We shared resources from the CCG website with partners.
2. We shared <https://covid19graphics.info/> with partners and received this feedback:
 - explains what is a vaccine
 - clear and to the point
 - Not too much information ie not overwhelming
 - suitable to be distributed with meals/activity packs etc
 - print maybe too small for older people?
 - good its available in other languages

c. Networking between partners

Through Leeds Voices Monthly drop-in, we linked partners with each other and subsequently two Covid conversations Q&A's were organised for local communities. Positive feedback was given by participants saying that they were reassured by the information and were confident to receive the jab.

Discussions at March's monthly drop-in informed discussions around adapting the Community Champions training for people with learning disabilities.

Migration Yorkshire were invited to April's Monthly drop-in and talked partners through [a resource](#) that has been developed with relevant information to migrant communities. As well as giving details on the [Translators without Borders project](#).

⁴ The Leeds People's Voices Group (PVG) brings together involvement leads from across health and care organisations in Leeds to work together as one team. It was set up by the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Board to help improve involvement across the city and avoid duplication. The shared aim is to put people's voices at the centre of health and care decision making in Leeds, and in particular the voice of people living with the greatest health inequalities: 'We believe that we can only achieve our citywide ambition to improve the health of the poorest fastest by involving all our communities directly in decision making in Leeds'.



d. **Linked resources to communities' concerns**

We have drawn up comprehensive list of links to information based on the concerns shared by partners for use to distribute to communities.

6. **What happens next?**

The information gathered by Leeds Voices has contributed to the overall city effort, coordinated by partners Leeds City Council, Hamara, Forum Central, Leeds CCG and VAL, to ensure that communities are reassured that they have enough information to make an informed decision on taking the vaccine.

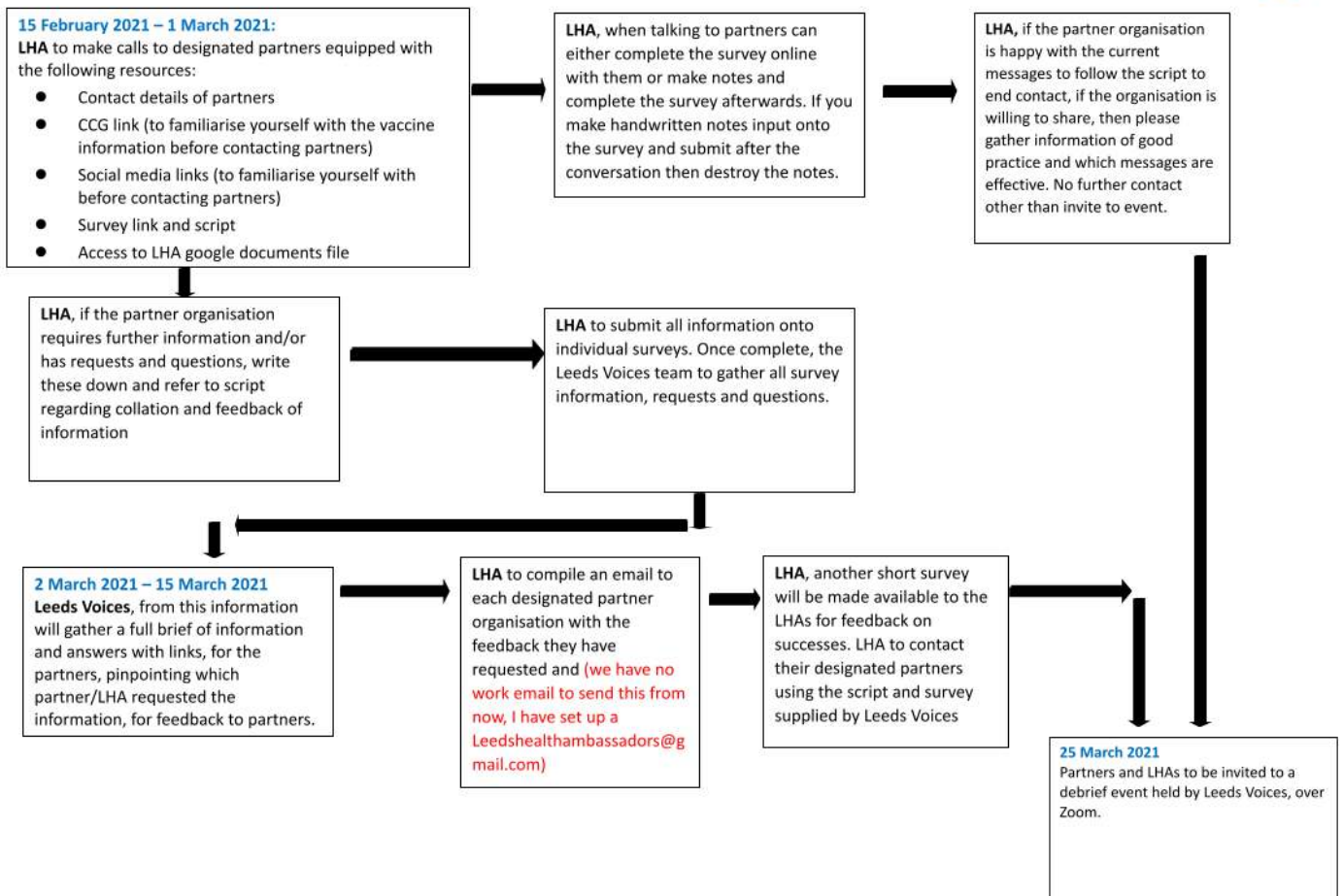
The [Community Champions programme](#) was launched in March 2021 where individuals and organisations receive training to speak to local people and communities about the vaccine. The volunteer role will:

- Receive regular updates on the latest Covid-19 guidance and vaccination information from trusted sources
- Support friends, family and the wider community to remain informed and up to date on the latest information
- Engage with identified priority groups living in Leeds which include; people with disabilities, older people, younger people and Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, to help people make informed decisions around keeping safe
- Feedback any local issues or concerns relating to Covid-19 and vaccinations.

Leeds Voices have encouraged Engaging Voices partners to recruit their volunteers to this programme so that this work can continue within communities.

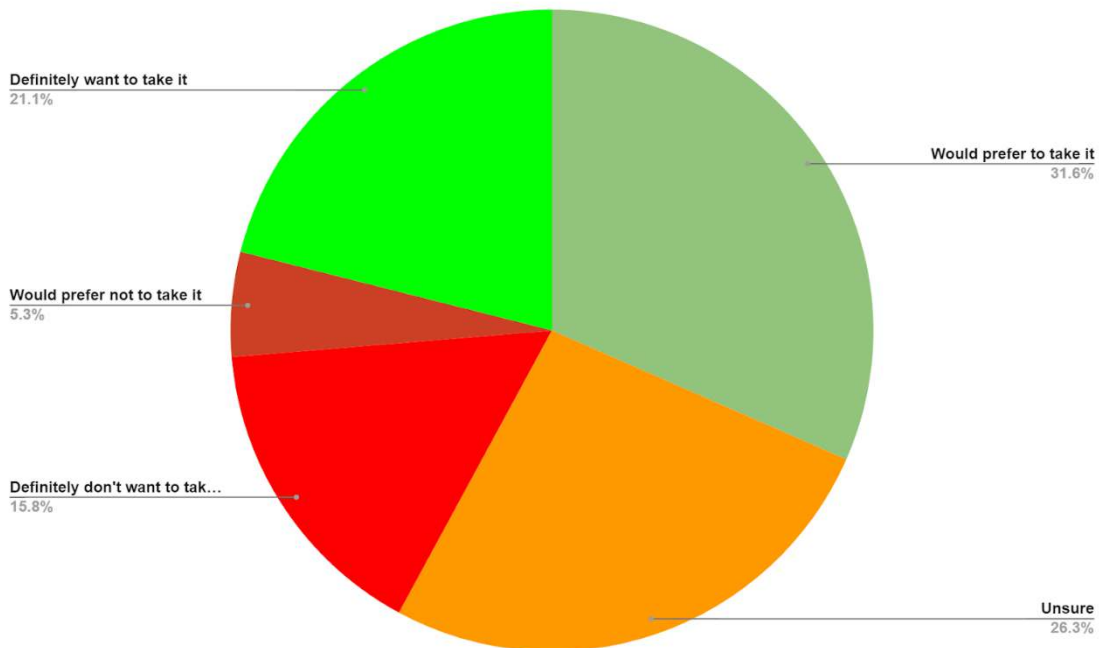
Appendix A: Leeds Health Ambassador (LHA) process Map

COVID Vaccine Engagement Task Flowchart



Appendix B: COVID-19 Vaccine Data Summary

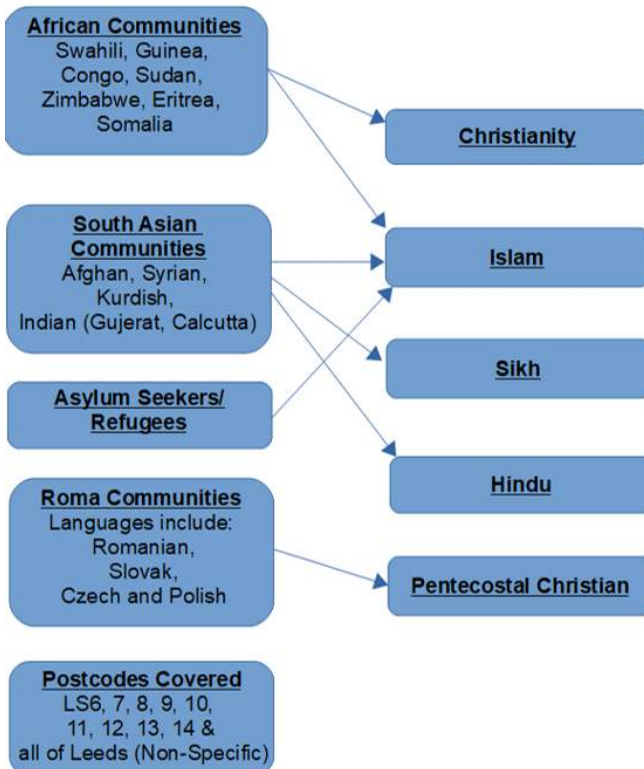
How communities have responded to the vaccine



- Altogether **52.7%** of the 19 organisations said their service users would prefer to take the vaccine.
- **21.1%** preferred not to take it while **26.3%** were unsure, meaning that there potentially could be **79%** who have said they will take it if the information can reassure them.
- **ALL** organisations who said their service users were either unsure or didn't want to take the vaccine worked predominantly with the following communities:

African Communities, South Asian Communities, Asylum Seekers/Refugees, Roma Communities

Information Requested



Ingredients in the vaccine

“Religion is a big factor and there have been worries that the ingredients could change their DNA...having someone speak who is representative to the community would be reassuring.”

Who has made the vaccine and how was it made

“2 aspects - how scientists came up with it. How was it so quick? Break it down to what happened (bureaucracy saw short cut - not safety) this needs to be as detailed as possible.”

When it will be available to which groups

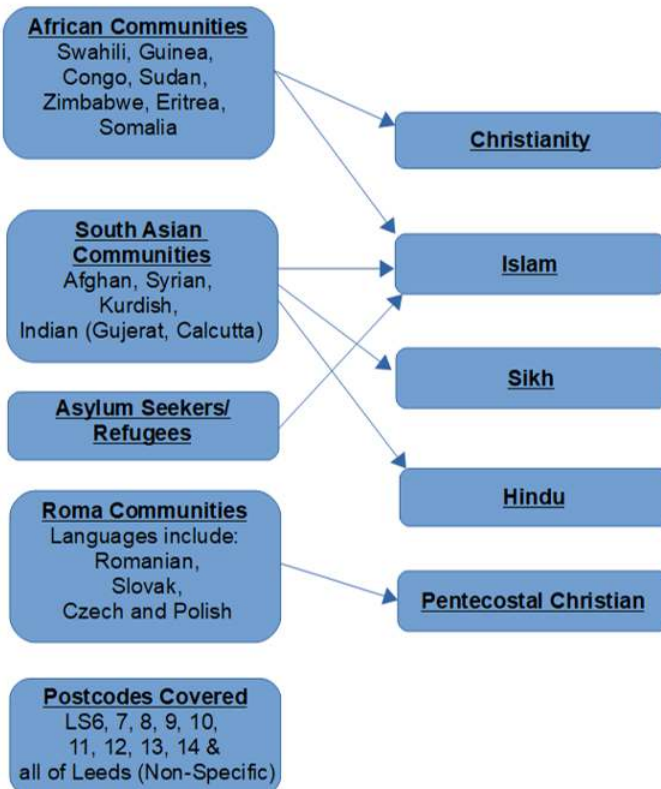
“A lot of people are confused about when the vaccine will be available to them, so clear information about that would be useful”

Outline any possible side effects e.g. headache or fever

“Very important to tell the facts straight, but in context e.g. side effects that may happen but its normal and temporary - don't gloss over the facts”

Directly address common Misconceptions

Methods and formats



Videos/photos showing medical professionals, or community leaders from diverse communities having the vaccine and dispelling myths

“Social media/Facebook – e.g. local leaders have taken selfies as they've had the vaccine...demonstrating their confidence - done on a local level - communities been given positive consistent messages - works better than central messages”

Leaflets with brief facts about the vaccine in community languages

“Leaflets - as above but also in own language is helpful as someone who they can relate to in terms of cultural understanding must have written them. The key is to have the black community represented AT THE START of the process e.g. helping with the actual content of leaflets, rather than asked to deliver them.”

One-minute-long 'mythbusting' videos shared on platforms such as TikTok, Youtube, Facebook or WhatsApp

“Facebook/Tik-Tok /you-tube/ whatsapp videos. Religious sources - trusted, so able to dispel myths”

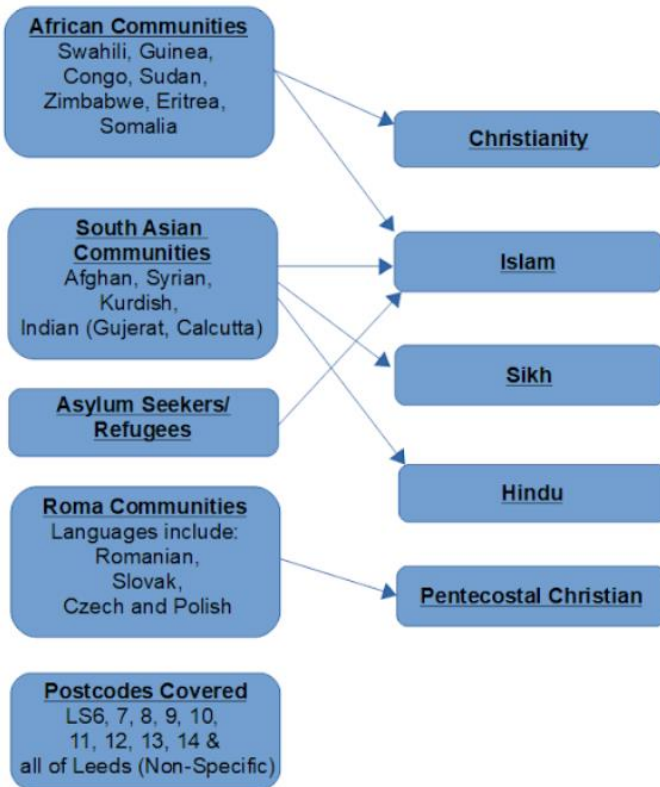
Places of Worship

“Church big time!! Clear message it is allowed in Pentecostal religion. Leaders as role model.”

Community Radio Stations

“Sources of info Romanian TV satellite dishes - Nation Radio Punt (dot) national Roma radio. Andrea Salvage.”

Common Myths/Misconceptions



The ingredients are forbidden by the religions listed

"There are concerns for religious reasons - there are people stopping their families having it due to gelatine."

There could be damaging side effects that we don't know about

"Some of them talking about safety for young people and possible change in their body. Some of them thought more obscure things - like your face may change to look like a particular animal. These were rarer but people hear all sorts of things from whatsapp etc."

People's conditions won't be taken into account

"People with particular conditions are afraid of the side effects. For example my partner has emetophobia (fear of sick) and one of the side effects of the Oxford vaccine is that it makes you vomit, therefore she does not want to take it."

The vaccine is only for people who are sick or unhealthy

"There are elderly people who are healthy but are reluctant to take the vaccine because they question what the point is for taking the vaccine if they do not have the virus"

The process of making the vaccine has been rushed and therefore it isn't safe to take

"Facts such as how much research and safety measures/thoroughness"

Suspicious from minority communities that the vaccine is meant to harm them due to historical health inequalities

"The main concerns were MISTRUST stemming from historical relationships regarding vaccinations and white majority making the decisions - black communities are not centre stage in development/decision making processes."



Appendix C – List of Engaging Voices Partners

1.	Leeds Zimbabwe Community
2.	DamasQ
3.	Peace of Mind
4.	Bahar AFG
5.	Asha
6.	Emmaus
7.	Leeds Refugee Forum
8.	William Merritt
9.	Circles of Life
10.	LS-TEN
11.	DAZL
12.	BARCA Men's Group
13.	Hamara
14.	LASSN
15.	African Communities
16.	Afro Caribbean Communities
17.	CATCH
18.	LS-14 Trust
19.	Holbeck Together