

Reducing the risk

Recommendations for charities to help
increase vaccination uptake in at-risk people

Background

- ILC research has highlighted a number of barriers which may prevent at-risk people from getting vaccinated
- Condition-focused charities and individuals from some clinical risk groups identified some of the challenges and opportunities around vaccination
- Overall, charities are seen as trustworthy and reliable sources for vaccination information and guidance
- As such, charities should act as changemakers to encourage better vaccination uptake within the risk groups they cater to

Challenges

- Our research has highlighted a number of barriers associated with low uptake for vaccination among at-risk people:
 - Poor communication and misinformation
 - Vaccine hesitancy and personal reluctancies
 - Structural barriers
 - Accessibility issues

What do we recommend?

- ILC has developed this guide to showcase ideas on how to overcome these barriers and help charities promote vaccination
- These ideas focus on:
 - Improving vaccination communication and information
 - Closer collaborations and partnerships with local communities
 - Improving access to vaccination

How to use this guide

- We understand that each charity will need to use this guidance in ways that work for them, but we hope these ideas equip you with new ways of thinking about vaccination in people with underlying health conditions
- This guidance has been informed by interviews and discussions with charities and at-risk patients. A full report has been developed with additional details of the barriers and recommendations on how to improve uptake among at-risk populations: it can be found [here](#).

In partnership with:



saving the lives
of people with
blood cancer

Improving vaccination communication and information

ilc...

1. Signposting to vaccination information

Issue: Some at-risk people don't know about all the relevant vaccination information because it's not communicated effectively.

Suggestion: Charities could create designated sections on their websites with information on vaccination. These could signpost links to online information from public health bodies, e.g. the NHS, DHSC and PHE.

Signposting mock-up

Example – Diabetes charity

diabetescharityexample.co.uk

Vaccination for people with diabetes

It is important to get vaccinated against diseases like influenza (flu), as they can put you at a much higher risk of complications.

Read more about the flu vaccine on the NHS website [here](#).

Diabetes

Diabetes is a lifelong condition that causes a person's blood sugar level to become too high.

There are 2 main types of diabetes:

- [type 1 diabetes](#) – where the body's immune system attacks and destroys the cells that produce insulin
- [type 2 diabetes](#) – where the body does not produce enough insulin, or the body's cells do not react to insulin

Type 2 diabetes is far more common than type 1. In the UK, around 90% of all adults with diabetes have type 2.

During pregnancy, some women have such high levels of blood glucose that their body is unable to produce enough insulin to absorb it all. This is known as [gestational diabetes](#).

Get the flu vaccine

Flu can be very serious if you have diabetes. Ask for your free flu jab at:

- your GP surgery
- a local pharmacy that has a flu vaccine service

[Find out more about the flu vaccine](#)

An existing example

[Terrence Higgins Trust's webpage](#) allows people to find all the relevant information on vaccination; this includes recommended ones, like flu, pneumococcal and hepatitis vaccinations, and ones not recommended for those living with HIV, as well as links to the NHS and PHE.

ilc...

Flu jab and other vaccines

Find out what vaccines are recommended for you if you're living with HIV.

The seasonal flu vaccine is free for people living with HIV in the UK.

Should I have the flu vaccine if I have HIV?

Yes. Because of the increased risk of complications and greater severity of influenza in people living with HIV, they are considered to be an at-risk group and are eligible for a [free annual flu vaccination](#).

When to get the flu jab:

The influenza vaccine (flu jab) protects against different strains of flu each season, so you will need to get one every year.

Doctors recommend that you get your shot between September and early November, but it can still be beneficial to get vaccinated until March.

2. Vaccination fact packs

Issue: Vaccination misinformation can create hesitancy and lower uptake among at-risk groups.

Suggestion: Charities could create fact packs about vaccination for at-risk people and why it's important. These packs could reiterate positive messages and dispel misconceptions.

“Dispelling misconceptions” mock-up

The flu vaccine – common questions for risk groups

Can the flu jab give you the flu?

The flu vaccine cannot give you the flu.¹ There might be some side effects, but these are a sign that your body is responding to the jab.

If I'm at risk, could it make my condition worse?

There are different types of 'inactivated' vaccines available to people with your condition which are safe for you.²

Given my condition, will a vaccine actually work?

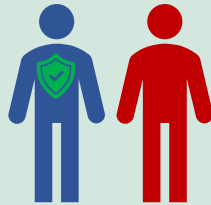
While some people might not produce an immune response to the vaccine,³ having some level of protection is better than none.

Sources: 1. www.nhs.uk (2020) Flu vaccine | 2, 3. Vaccine Knowledge Project, University of Oxford (2020) Types of vaccine

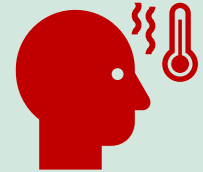
“Risk of catching flu” mock-up

Did you know?

...only 1 in 2 (53%) at-risk people got vaccinated against the flu last winter¹...



...despite the risk of serious illness from flu being higher in people with underlying health conditions?²



Sources: 1. Public Health England (2021) Seasonal flu vaccine uptake in GP patients: monthly data, 2020 to 2021 | 2. Public Health England (2020) Influenza: the Green Book, Chapter 19

An existing example

Harrow Council's COVID-19 vaccine infographic includes:

- Bold messaging
- Representative imagery
- Information on how to access vaccination



The infographic features a woman in a purple hijab and a red patterned face mask, holding a white card with a red heart. The background is a dark teal color. In the top left corner, there is a logo with a yellow circle and the text 'KEEP HARROW SAFE'. In the top right corner, there is a logo for 'Harrow COUNCIL LONDON'. The main text reads 'I HAD MY JAB' in large, bold, white letters. Below this, it says 'Vaccines are the best way to keep you safe. Don't delay yours.' At the bottom, there is a green bar with the text 'Book yours at nhs.uk/coronavirus'. At the bottom left, it says 'Get back to the life we love'.

ilc...

3. Vaccination checklists

Issue: Low uptake is sometimes due to at-risk people being unaware of the vaccinations they should have.

Suggestion: Charities could create a checklist-style document which outlines the vaccinations recommended for people in the risk group they cater to, based on guidance from the Green Book. These documents could also be used to help inform and remind healthcare professionals about each individual's vaccination requirements.

Checklist mock-up

Condition: COPD

Vaccinations:

- Influenza (inactivated)
 - When: Autumn 2021
- Pneumococcal (PPV)
 - When: All year round

These vaccination recommendations are in accordance with Public Health England guidance outlined in the [Green Book](#). Speak to your GP for more medical advice on vaccination.

4. Personalised reminders

Issue: Booking vaccinations can be time-consuming and confusing.

Suggestion: Charities could send their service users tailored reminders that outline why they should get vaccinated. This could include facts about their condition and how to make an appointment. This may encourage more people to get vaccinated and make the process easier to understand.

Personalised reminder mock-up

John, don't let the flu stand in your way this winter

Dear John,

Did you know that people with Chronic Heart Disease (CHD) are more likely to be at risk of serious illness from the flu?¹

But it's easy to book your seasonal flu vaccination. The flu jab is free for people with CHD – and you can get it at your local pharmacy.

Use the free NHS “Find a pharmacy” tool to find your nearest one. The tool also has information about their services, including whether they provide a walk-in flu vaccination service without having to book.

Source: 1. Public Health England (2020) Influenza: the Green Book, Chapter 19

NHS pharmacy flu vaccine service

Enter a town, city or postcode in England

Search

Pharmacy Service

- Community Pharmacy
- Electronic Prescription Service
- New medicine service
- Private consultation room
- Seasonal flu vaccination service (at risk groups)

Closer collaboration between
charities, community leaders and
public health bodies

ilc...

1. Working with community leaders

Issue: Uptake among certain sociodemographic groups is low, including people from some ethnic minorities.

Suggestion: People from some ethnic minorities may be more likely to respond to vaccination information if it comes from a relatable and trusted source. Charities could work with local leaders to co-produce materials for dissemination within their communities to encourage those who are at risk to get vaccinated.

An existing example

As part of the 'Operation Vaccination' campaign from the British Islamic Medical Association, the [Muslim Council of Britain](#) is offering a poster on its website to help Muslim community leaders promote vaccination information. Condition-focused charities could work with local leaders to produce similar materials that outline why those with underlying health conditions should get vaccinated, given that people from ethnic minorities have disproportionate numbers of comorbidities.¹

1. The King's Fund (2021) [The health of people from ethnic minority groups in England](#)

ilc...

KEY FACTS

OPERATION
VACCINATION

Why is it essential to get vaccinated against flu?

1. The flu virus (influenza) kills 11,000 people every year (data from NHS flu campaign, 2020)

- It is NOT the same as the common cold, or the thousands of other viruses which can cause flu-like symptoms. Influenza can cause very serious health problems and make you extremely ill, even leading to death in otherwise healthy people.
- The most vulnerable are the elderly or those with long term health conditions that weaken their immune system or ability to fight the influenza virus – including young children.
- Flu is easily spread and can be carried by people who may not show any signs or symptoms, particularly children.
- By getting vaccinated against flu, you will protect yourself and your loved ones from any severe complications which can be caused by flu.



2. Understand asymptomatic spread and population health

- Some people will have the flu virus in their bodies but not show any symptoms. They may or may not develop symptoms. In this period, they may unknowingly spread the virus to other people. This is what we mean by asymptomatic (no symptoms) spread.
- It can be very dangerous if these asymptomatic people mix with the elderly, those with chronic health conditions, those receiving cancer treatment, or children at high risk, as the virus could be passed to them without anyone realising it.
- So even if you never suffered a bad flu in previous years, you can still pass it onto other people. This is vitally important to understand as what works (or not) for a single person or family is very different when applied to a whole population and community.

3. The flu could also be more serious whilst Covid-19 is circulating

- There will also be extra strain on the NHS as it deals with the seasonal illnesses that winter and flu bring and the pressure these place on GPs, pharmacies and A&Es.
- With the Covid-19 pandemic, there is a high likelihood that services could be stretched beyond breaking point unless we can reduce the impact of flu this year. Flu can cause severe and life-threatening complications and put additional strain on intensive care units.
- This may cause a disastrous knock-on effect and cause untold harm as if people cannot get medical help for problems like flu, coronavirus or even heart attacks, cancer, and strokes.



Considerations for community-focused communication

Healthwatch research suggests five ways to increase confidence in vaccination:

1. **Individual agency:** give people the ability to decide about the vaccine by providing them with all the information.
2. **Independence:** people are more likely to trust doctors, scientists and the NHS when they act independently from the Government.
3. **Transparency:** transparency and trust go hand in hand. It's essential to make all vaccination information public and accessible.
4. **Experience:** the public trust and rely more on the experiences of frontline healthcare workers, local doctors and everyday people.
5. **Targeted messaging can miss the mark:** Black and Asian people felt singled out and forced into a decision through targeted campaigns. Reaching out and engaging locally and directly was more effective.

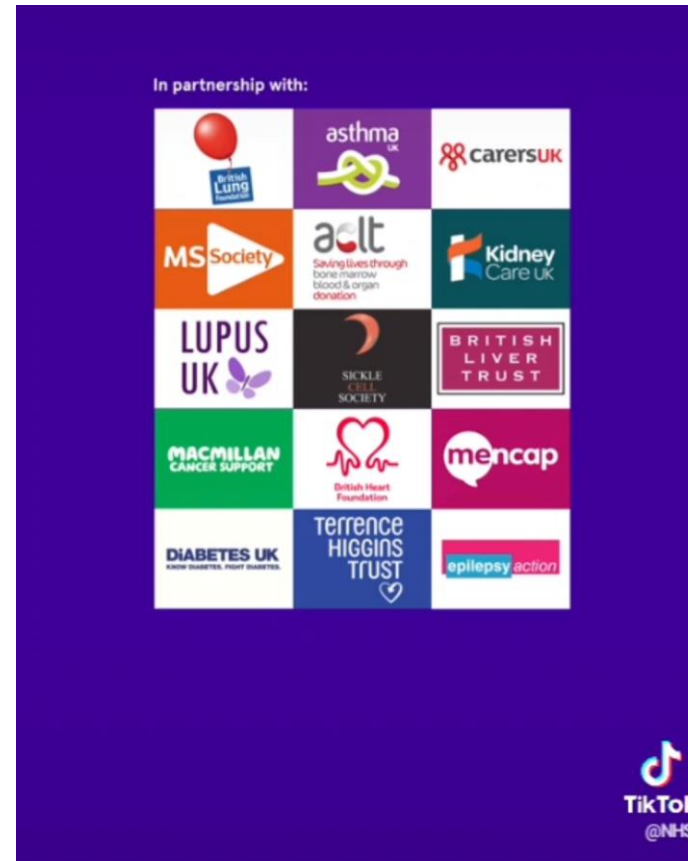
2. Using social media to promote vaccination

Issue: Existing information may not be reaching the right groups because of where it is being shared.

Suggestion: Charities could work with public health bodies to develop social media campaigns promoting vaccination. This has been achieved with COVID-19 and the 'Every vaccination gives us hope' campaign (see next slide), and could be replicated for other vaccinations such as those for flu and pneumococcal disease.

An existing example

Existing social media campaigns, such as the NHS TikTok advert (right), could be replicated for flu or pneumococcal vaccination. Charities should continue to collaborate on social media messaging beyond COVID-19 to help their vaccination messaging reach a wider audience.



ilc...

3. Working with local pharmacies

Issue: Some at-risk groups use pharmacy services, where there is a potential opportunity to promote more vaccination information.

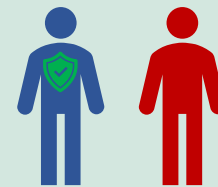
Suggestion: Charities could work with pharmacies to promote information about specific at-risk groups and why they should get vaccinated. Pharmacists could use messaging created by charities to remind people about vaccination, for example, when they come in to collect prescriptions.

Pharmacy leaflet mock-up

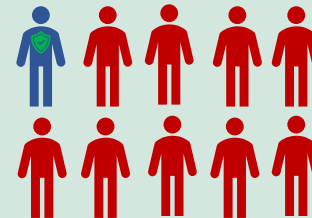
Got your inhaler? Now get your free flu jab.

People with chronic respiratory conditions are more vulnerable to the flu.¹ Make sure you book an appointment with your GP or pharmacy to protect yourself against the flu this winter.

Why not also ask about pneumococcal vaccination too? This can help to prevent pneumonia, which can also be dangerous for people with chronic respiratory conditions.²



Less than half (49%) of those with chronic respiratory disease (CRD) got their flu jab in 2019/20.³



Only 1 in 10 (11%) CRD patients got their pneumococcal jab between 2018 and 2020.⁴

Sources: 1. Public Health England (2020) Influenza: the Green Book, Chapter 19 | 2. www.nhs.uk (2019) Who should have the pneumococcal vaccine? | 3. PHE (2020) Seasonal influenza vaccine uptake amongst GP patients in England | 4. PHE (2020) PPV coverage report, England, April 2019 to March 2020

Increasing the accessibility of vaccination for at-risk people

ilc...

1. Collaborating with lift services to make attending appointments easier

Issue: Some at-risk individuals struggle to get to vaccination appointments due to physical or geographical barriers.

Suggestion: Charities could collaborate with taxi firms or ride-hailing apps to help people from clinical risk groups use those services to get to vaccination appointments. This could incentivise more people while also offering better access to GPs and pharmacies.

An existing example

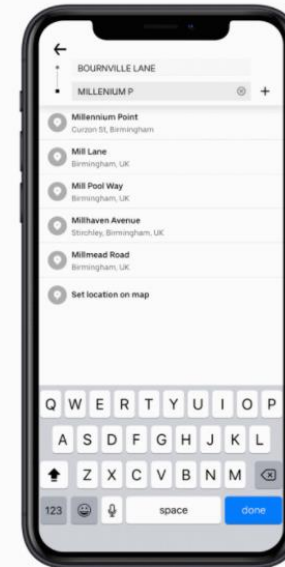
Age UK collaborated with Uber to ensure people could get to their COVID-19 jab appointments. Charities could investigate collaborating with local taxi companies to offer a similar service for all other routine vaccinations, such as the flu jab during the winter.

ilc...



In addition to this, we are working with Age UK to identify areas within its network of local charities where free round trips can be covered by Uber, to help some of the most vulnerable people travel to their vaccination appointments.

How to claim your trip



1. Tap the menu in the top left of the Uber app and select 'Wallet'.
2. Select 'Add Promo Code' at the bottom.
3. Add the promo code **uber2hubUK**.
4. Navigate to the rides home screen and enter the pick-up/drop-off location for yourself or the person you are booking for. Remember, the trip must start or end at one of the seven vaccination centres listed above.
5. Confirm your trip.

The offer will be valid for one £15 trip per person.

2. Ensuring everyone knows where they can get vaccinated

Issue: Some at-risk people may be unaware of the range of the vaccination locations available to them.

Suggestion: Charities could let at-risk people know about all the places where vaccination is offered. This way, some people might find more suitable places to get vaccinated.

Signposting vaccine locations mock-up

Where can I get the flu jab?

While most flu jabs are given at:



GP surgeries



Pharmacies

You may also be able to get them at:



Supermarkets¹



Work²



Home³

1. Supermarkets, such as [Tesco](#) and [Asda](#), offer the flu vaccine at some selected stores either through an in-house pharmacy or drive-through service.
2. Some companies might recruit a nurse (e.g. through [Bupa](#)) to come to the workplace to give people the jab. Ask your company about arranging this.
3. You might be able to arrange vaccination at home. Speak to your GP to see if this is possible. [Find your local GP here](#).



Get in touch

For more information on this best practice guide, please contact Patrick Swain:

patrickswain@ilcuk.org.uk