



Vaccine attitudes report
March 2021

Contents

Introduction	2
What we did	2
Who took part?	2
Findings	3
Summary and Conclusions	12
Recommendations	12

Introduction

Healthwatch Halton is the independent voice of the public in health and social care services in Halton. We gather feedback from members of the public about their experiences of using health and social care services. We use that feedback to work with service providers and commissioners to find ways of improving services for the public. One of the ways that we collect feedback is through carrying out a focused project around particular services, conditions or groups within the community.

With the national rollout of the Covid-19 vaccination, we wanted to take this opportunity to assess how residents of Halton feel towards the vaccine and how the vaccination programme is being run locally, and to gather their experiences, ideas and concerns so that they can be represented to key stakeholders.

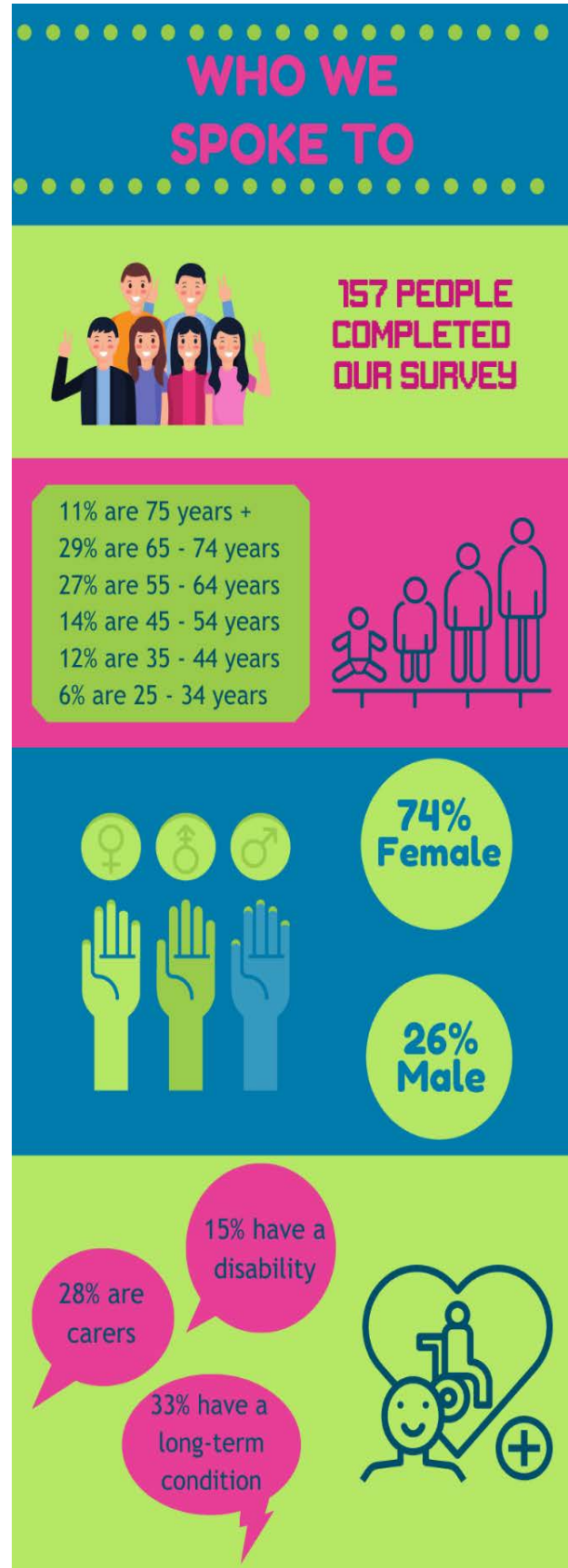
What we did

Due to the lockdown restrictions in place at the time, we were not able to speak to people on a face-to-face basis, so the feedback for this project was gathered using an online survey.

The survey was made up of 9 multiple-choice questions, and 6 open text questions that enabled respondents to expand on their responses.

The survey was available online from Thursday January 28th 2021 until Thursday 11th March 2021.

Who took part?

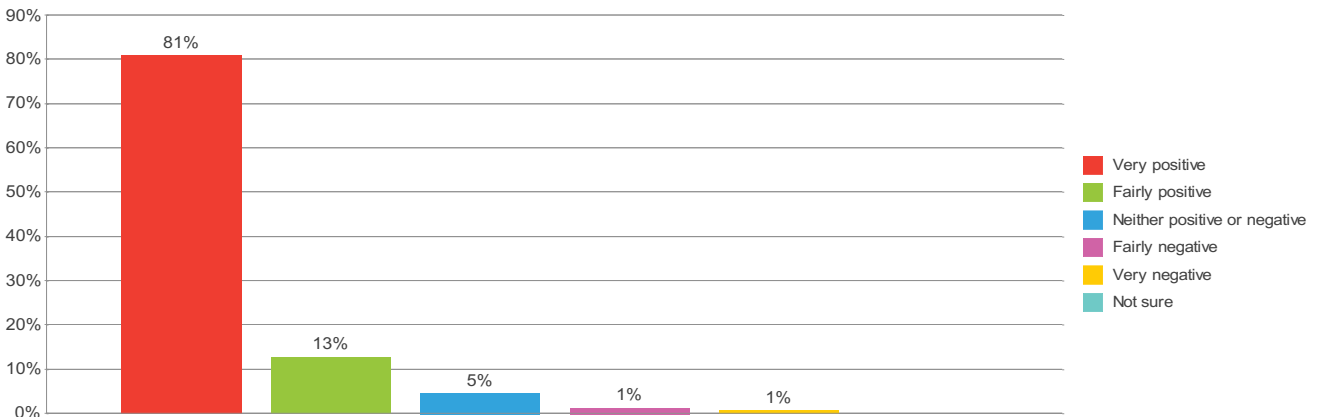


Findings

The survey was split into two sections, the first section asked participants their thoughts and feelings about getting the Covid-19 vaccine, and the second section asked participants their thoughts and feelings about the information provided about the Covid-19 vaccine.

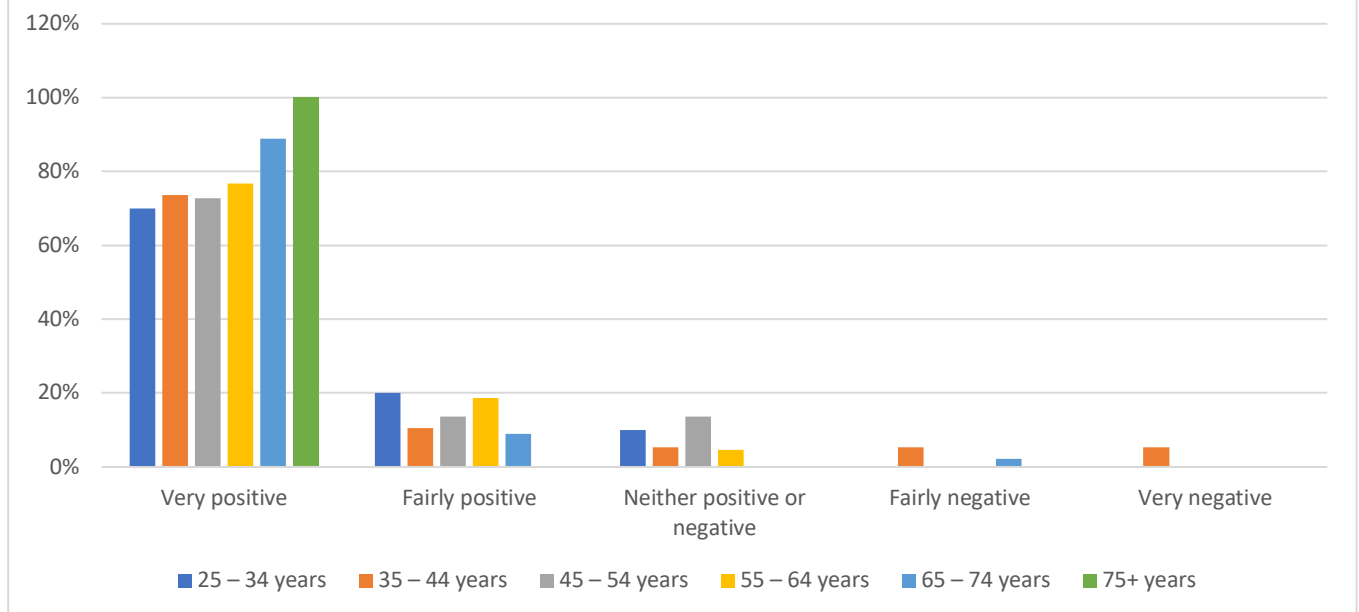
Participants were asked about their sentiment towards vaccinations in general and 81% of respondents indicated that they were held a *very positive* view, 13% held a *fairly positive* view, 5% held *neither a positive or negative* view, 1% held a *fairly negative* view, and 1% held a *very negative* view of vaccines.

Thinking of vaccinations in general, such as those given for flu, polio or tetanus is your view of vaccinations



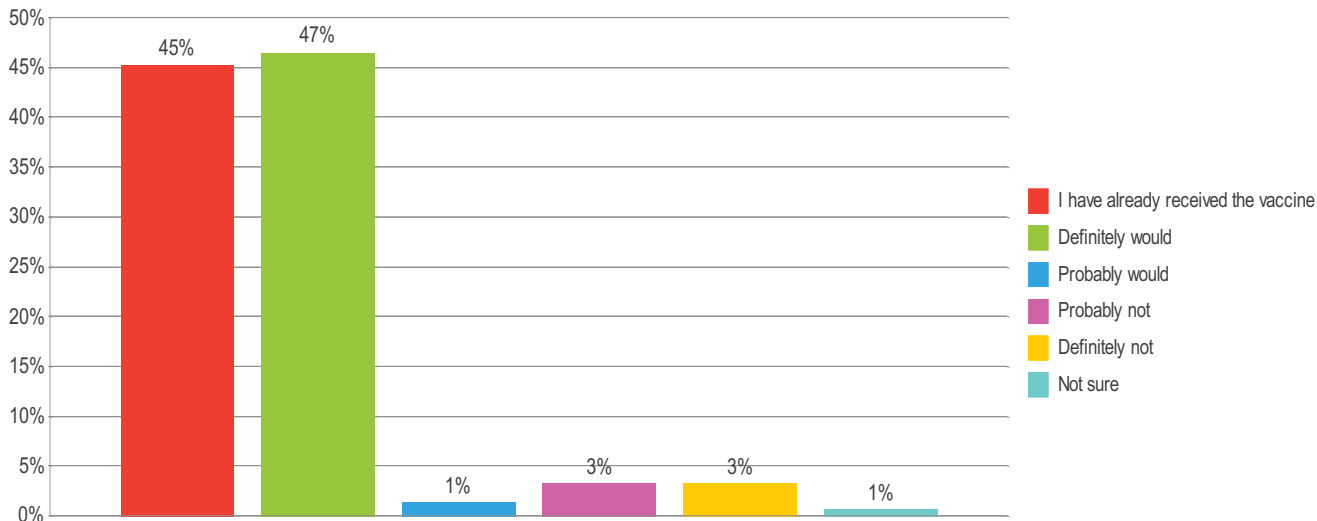
Age: All the age groups reported they held a *very positive* view of vaccinations more frequently than any of the other options, but the 75 years and over group reported this exclusively (100%). The most negative view towards vaccines was held by the 35 – 44 years age group, who reported that they had a *fairly negative* view (5.3%) and a *very negative* view (5.3%), all the other age groups did not report any negative views except the 65 – 74 years age group who reported a *fairly negative* view (2.2%).

Attitude towards vaccinations in general by age



When participants were asked the likelihood of them accepting the Covid-19 vaccination, 45% reported that had *already received the vaccine*. A further 47% stated that they *definitely would* have the vaccine, while 1% stated that they *probably would* have the vaccine, 3% stated that they would *probably not* have the vaccine, and 3% stated that they would *definitely not* have the vaccine. 1% of respondents stated that they were *not sure* whether they would have the vaccine or not.

If you were offered a vaccine against COVID-19 (Coronavirus), and at no charge through the NHS, how likely would you be to get vaccinated?



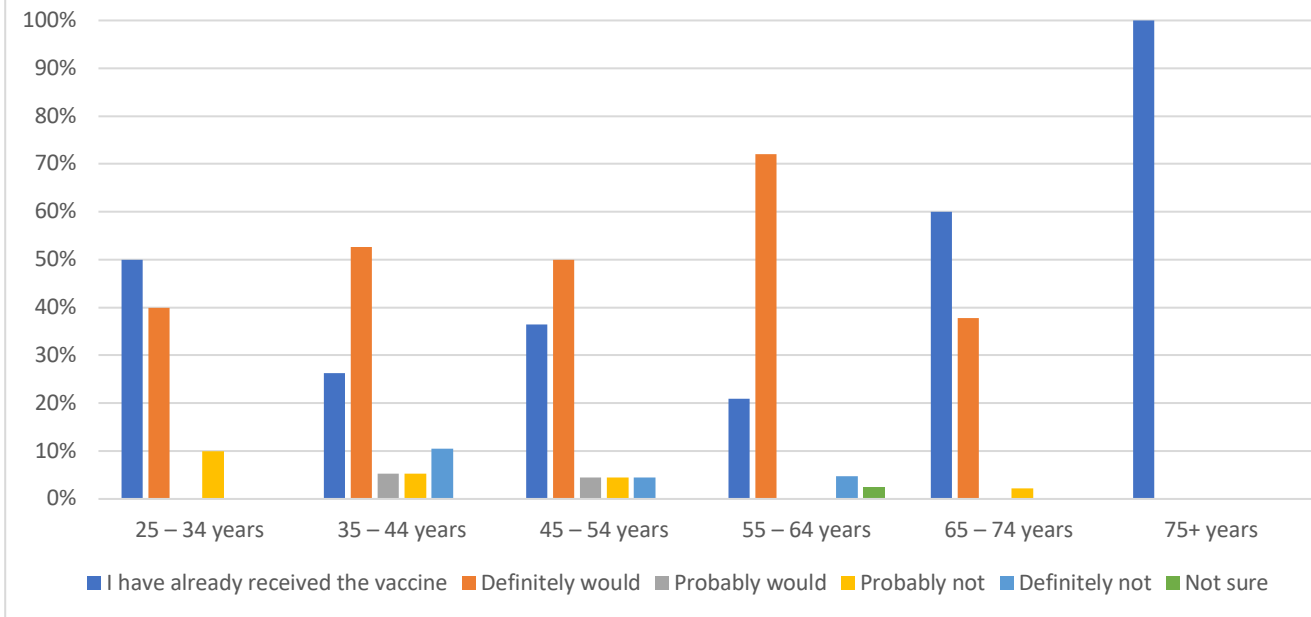
Age

Participants in all age categories reported that they had already received the vaccine, with 100% of the over 75 age group indicating this to be the case. In every other age category, the majority of participants who had not already received the vaccine, reported that they *definitely would*, 50% of 25 – 34 years, 52.6% of 35-44 years, 50% of 45 – 54 years, 72.1% of 55 – 64 years, and 37.8% of 65 – 74 years.

Respondents who reported that they *probably would* accept the vaccine belonged to two of the age categories, these were the 35 – 44 years (5.3%) and the 45 – 54 years (4.5%). Those who reported that they would *probably not* accept the vaccine belonged to four of the age categories, these were the 25 – 34 years (10%), the 35 – 44 years (5.3%), the 45 – 54 years (4.5%) and the 65 – 74 years (2.2%).

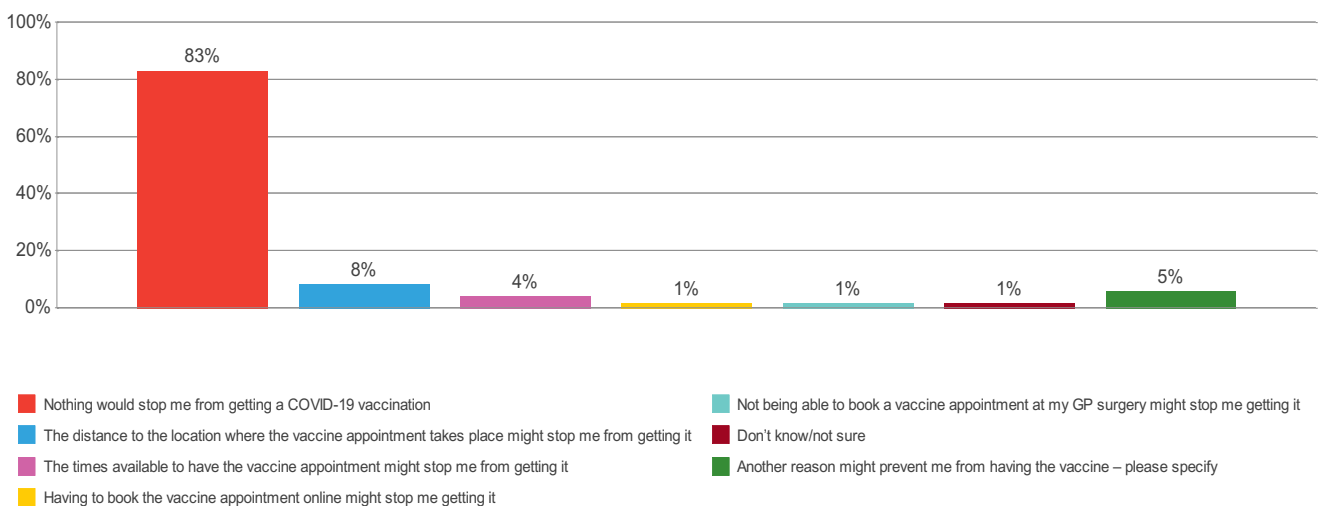
Respondents reporting that they would *definitely not* accept the vaccine belonged to three of the age categories, these were the 35 – 44 years (10.5%), the 45 – 54 years (4.5%), and the 55 – 64 years (4.7%). Only 2.3% of respondents reported that they were *not sure* whether to accept the vaccine, and these belonged to the 55 – 64 years age group.

The likelihood of accepting the vaccine by age



Participants were asked if there was anything that would prevent them from having the vaccine, and 83% selected the response *nothing would stop me from getting a Covid-19 vaccination*, 8% selected *the distance to the location where the vaccine appointment takes place might stop me from getting it*, 4% selected *the times available to have the vaccine appointment might stop me from getting it*, 1% selected *having to book the vaccine appointment online might stop me from getting it*, 1% selected *not being able to book a vaccine appointment at my GP surgery might stop me getting it*, 1% reported that they *don't know / not sure*, and 5% selected *another reason might prevent me from getting the vaccine*.

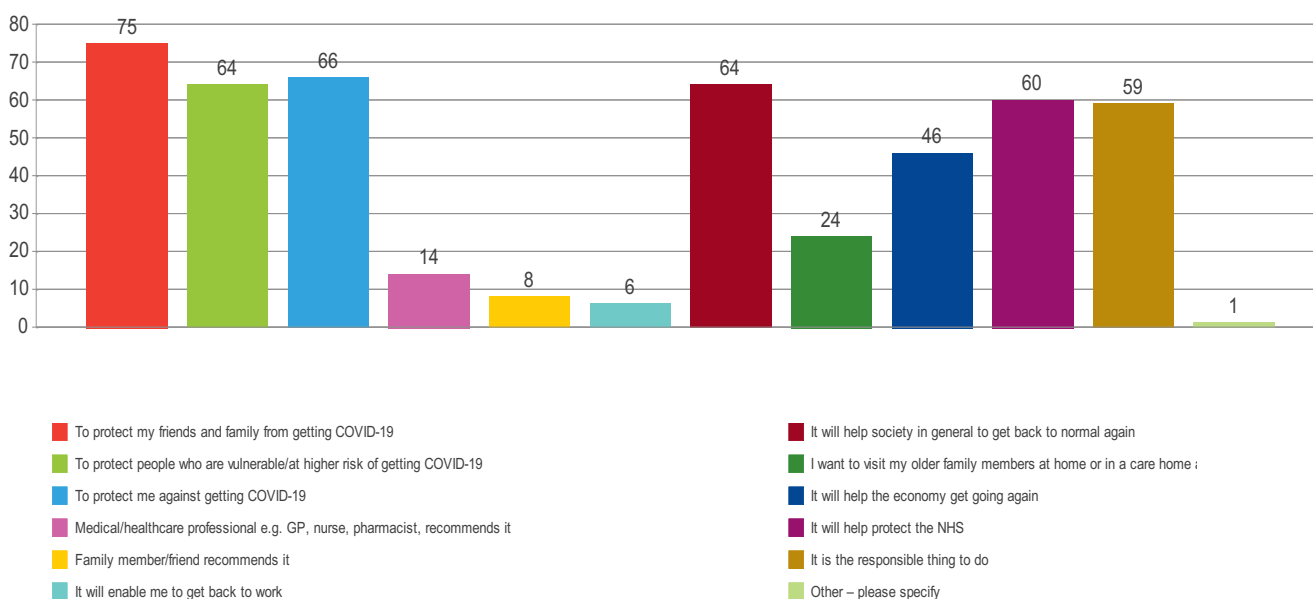
If you want to be vaccinated, is there anything that may stop you from receiving a vaccine when it is made available to you?



The participants who selected *another reason may prevent me from having the vaccine* were asked to specify what those reasons may be, one person reported that *'if a legitimate peer reviewed medical journal found compelling evidence it was not safe'* this would stop them from accepting the vaccine, and others stated that *'if they were medically unfit'*, or had *'allergies'* to the contents of the vaccine this would prevent them, another stated that it would *'depend on whether the vaccine will interact with other medication'* that they take, whilst another had concerns about having *'no transport home from the vaccination appointment'*.

Participants were asked the main reasons they want the Covid-19 vaccine and were asked to select as many of the response options as were relevant to them. 75 people selected *to protect my family and friends from getting Covid-19*, 64 people indicated that they want *to protect people who are vulnerable/at higher risk of getting Covid-19*, 66 people selected *protect me from getting Covid-19*, 14 people reported that *medical/healthcare professional recommends it*, 8 people want the vaccine because *family member/friend recommends it*, 6 people want the vaccine as *it will enable me to get back to work*, 64 people believe that *it will help society in general to get back to normal again*, 24 people stated that they want *to visit family members at home or in a care home*, 46 people believe that *it will help the economy get going again*, 60 people believe *it will help protect the NHS*, 59 people felt *it is the responsible thing to do*, and 1 person stated that it was for *other* reasons.

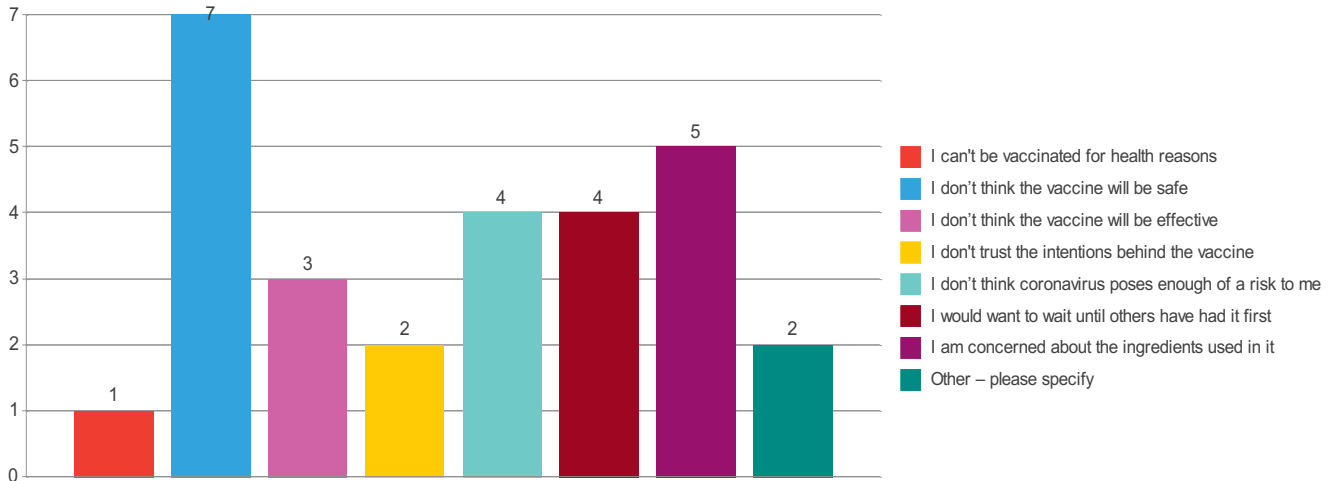
What are the main reasons you want the COVID-19 vaccine?



There was a subsequent open text box to this question to allow participants who had selected *other* to specify their response, whilst only one person selected other from the response options, two comments were received. One person stated that as *'a teacher'* they *'feel school staff have been treated dreadfully in all this. School is open we are all at risk and nowhere to be seen on the vaccine list'*, the other person stated that they are *'in group 6 vulnerable and whilst not told to shield formally, I was told by my cancer nurse to remain in my family bubble because of my immune system being low'*.

When asked what motivations would be for refusing the vaccine, the most frequently selected option was *I don't think the vaccine will be safe* with 7 people selecting this option. 5 people were *concerned about the ingredients used in it*, 4 people *don't think that Coronavirus poses enough of a risk*, 4 people *would want to wait until others have had it first*, 3 people *don't think the vaccine will be effective*, 2 people *don't trust the intentions behind the vaccine*, 2 people stated they did not want the vaccine for *other* reasons, and 1 person stated they *can't be vaccinated for health reasons*.

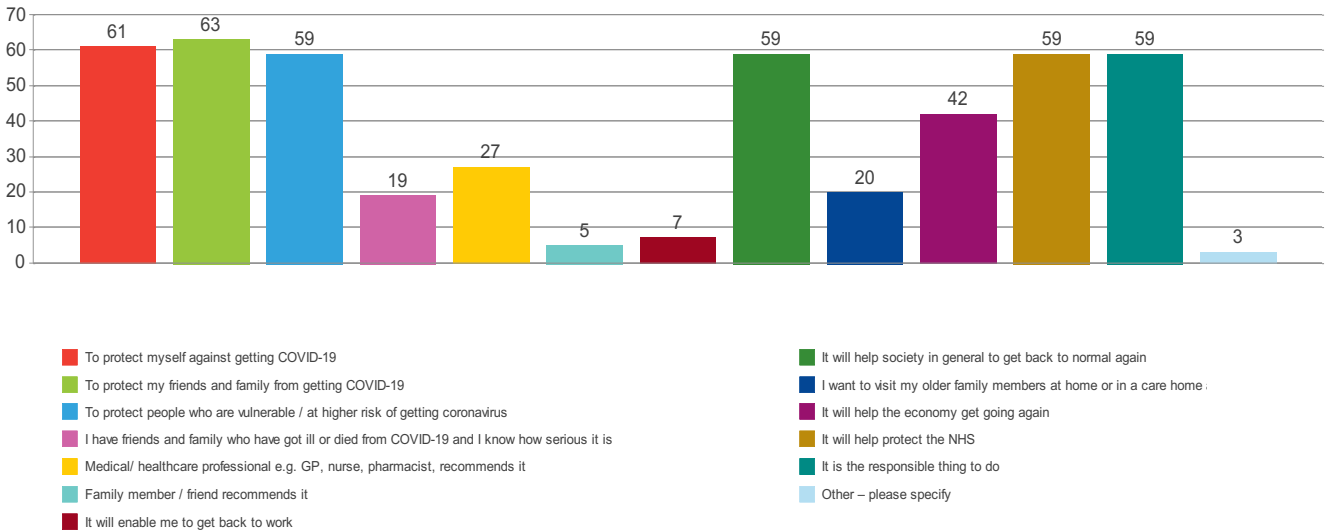
If you would not want to be vaccinated, what would be your motivation for refusing the vaccine?



There was an open text box following this question to allow participants who selected *other* as an option to specify their reasons for their selection, whilst 2 people selected *other* as a response, four comments were received. One person stated that *'With an ever mutating virus I'm not too sure we will ever be in a position where a vaccine will be effective enough without having to have an update one every year'* another stated that they are *'not willing to have the vaccine with the limited testing it has had and the varied different brands of it'*, another reported they are *'worried about any side effects which may only come to light in years ahead'* and the last reported that they *'don't think there has been enough research on either the virus or how effective the vaccine is, until that I may reserve judgement and avoid these current vaccines in use'*.

Participants were asked to select as many reasons why they decided to be vaccinated against Covid-19 as were applicable to their situation from a list of options. 61 people reported that they decided to get the vaccine *to protect myself against getting Covid-19*, 63 people selected *to protect my friends and family from getting Covid-19*, 59 people selected *to protect people who are vulnerable/at higher risk of getting coronavirus*, 19 people reported they *have friends and family who have got ill or died from Covid-19*, 27 people reported that *medical/healthcare professionals recommended it*, 5 people stated that *family member/friend recommends it*, 7 people stated that *it will enable me to get back to work*, 59 people felt that *it will help society in general to get back to normal again*, 20 people stated they *want to visit older family members at home or in a care home*, 42 people felt that *it will help the economy to get going again*, 59 people felt it *would help protect the NHS*, 59 people felt *it is the responsible thing to do*, and 3 people selected *other*.

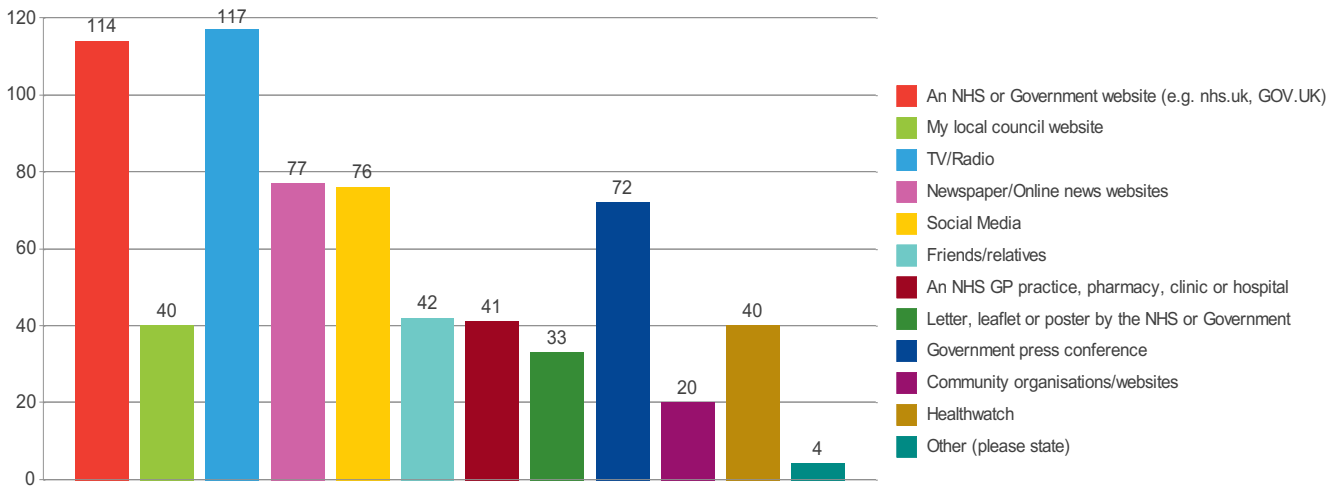
Which of the following are reasons why you decided to be vaccinated against COVID-19?



There was a subsequent open text box for people who had selected *other* to specify their reasons, whilst there were only 3 people who selected this option, 7 comments were received in response. 4 people made comments that related to building herd immunity to Covid-19, one person stated that the vaccine will *'help society to build mechanisms to protect the entire human race'* another stated *'each vaccine has a minimum level of take-up to reach herd immunity, so it is essential that as many people as possible are vaccinated'* and another felt that the vaccine is *'part of society's response to the emergence of a new virus'*. 3 people made comments relating to care responsibilities, one reported that *'I am an unpaid carer for a family member'*, another stated they *'care for a vulnerable person so important'* to have the vaccine, and another felt that they had *'a duty to support the vulnerable adults I support within LA supported housing network'*.

Participants were asked where they had mainly seen or heard information about the Covid-19 vaccination and were asked to select as many as apply to their situation from a list of options. 117 people told us that *TV/radio* were their main sources of information, 114 people found information on *NHS or government websites*, 77 people selected *newspaper/online news websites*, 76 people found information from sources on *social media*, 72 people reported that they had followed the *government press conferences*, 42 people obtained information from *friends/relatives*, 41 people obtained information from their *GP practice, pharmacy, clinic or hospital*, 40 people selected their *local council website*, 40 people reported that *Healthwatch* were their main source of information, 33 people received a *letter, leaflet or poster by the NHS or government*, 20 people found information through *community organisations/websites*, and 4 people reported that they had found information from *other sources*.

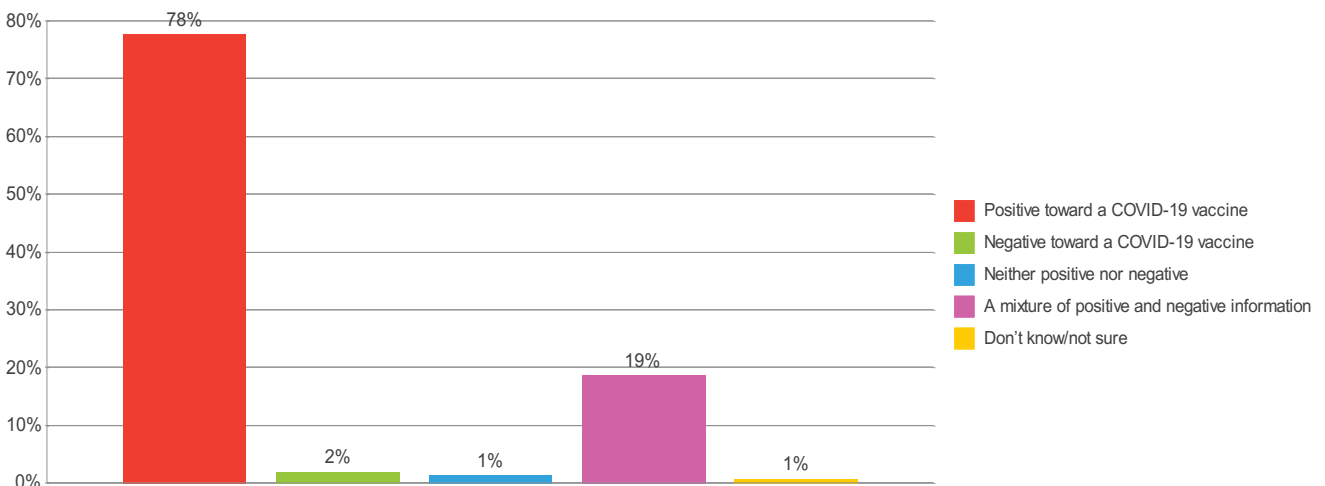
Where have you mainly seen or heard information about a COVID-19 vaccine recently?



The participants who selected other were asked to specify their answer in a separate open text box. We received 5 comments in response, one person received information through *‘relatives in the health industry’*, another had found information *‘through work’*, one person had received *‘direct email advice’*, another was a *‘member of GP surgery’s Patient Participation Group’*, and one other person used *‘google scholar to find peer reviewed papers on the vaccines’*.

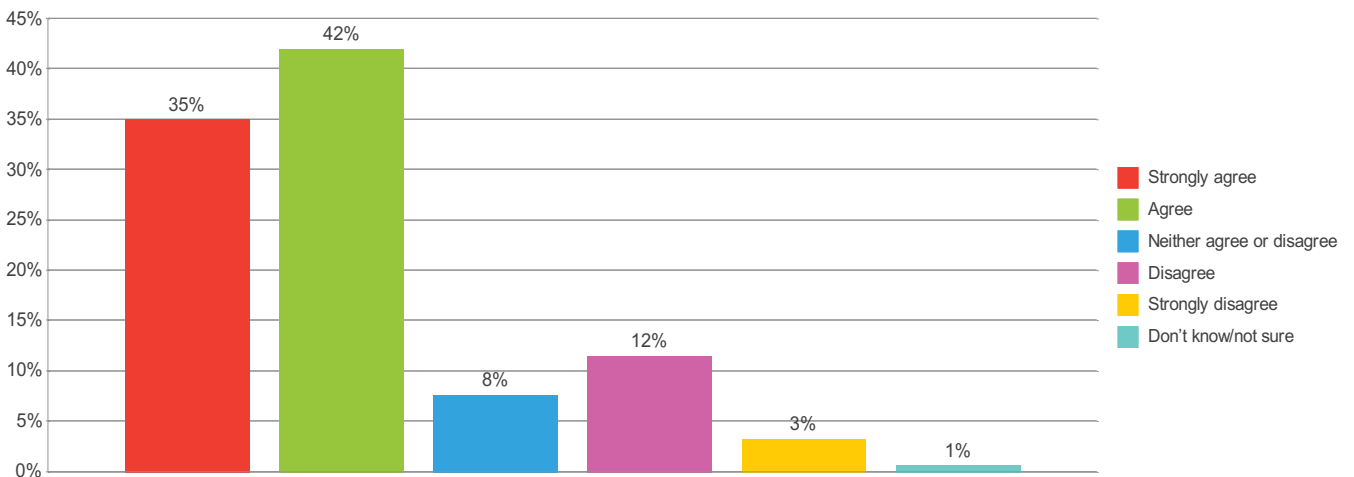
Participants were asked to rate how they had found the sentiment of the information that they had seen or heard recently and 78% reported that the information was *positive toward a Covid-19 vaccine*, 2% reported the information was *negative toward a Covid-19 vaccine*, 1% reported the information to be *neither positive nor negative*, 19% reported a *mixture of positive and negative information*, and 1% of respondents reported that they *don’t know/aren’t sure*.

Overall, was the information that you have seen or heard recently...

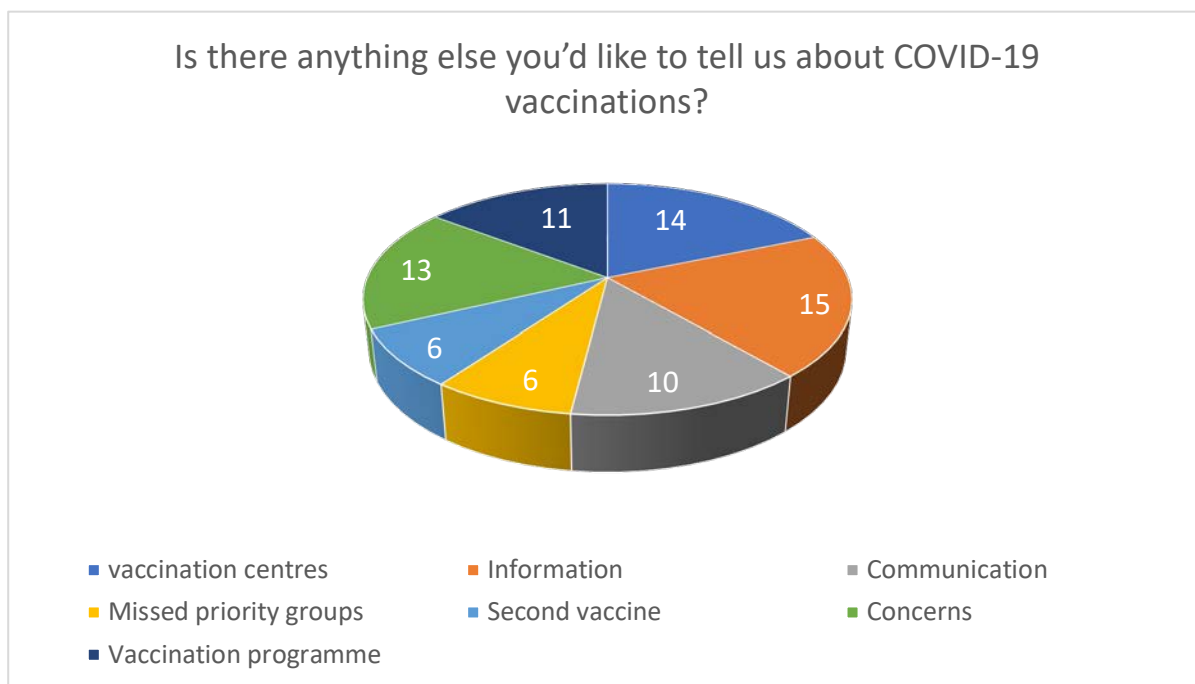


We asked respondents if they agreed that information from the NHS or government about the vaccine and its rollout has been communicated clearly and effectively. 42% of participants *agree* with this statement, 35% *strongly agree*, 12% *disagree*, 8% *neither agree nor disagree*, 3% *strongly disagree*, and 1% *don’t know/not sure*.

Do you agree that information from the NHS or the Government about the vaccine and its roll out has been communicated clearly and effectively?



Finally, we asked participants if there was anything else they would like to tell us about Covid-19 vaccinations, this was an open text box and a total of 75 comments were received. Comments have been grouped according to similarity and 7 themes emerged from the data.



The most frequently reported theme related to *information* about the vaccinations and this theme received 15 comments, one person felt that *'not enough is being done to shut down misinformation on social media'*, another felt that *'the benefits of delaying the 2nd jab have not been explained in clear enough ways'*. With regard to information about the local vaccination programme, one participant stated they *'would appreciate a daily update regarding how many vaccinations has taken place in Halton'*, another stated that they *'cannot find out which group I have been allocated to so don't know when we can expect to be called'* and another reported that *'it could be clearer who will get the vaccine, when and where'*

Vaccination centres received 14 comments, all of which were positive about the experience people had when receiving their vaccination. One participant reported that they were *'impressed with the efficiency at the Stadium'*

while another stated that *'everything went very smoothly, no waiting, very professional operation'* when they attended for their vaccine. One person felt that the vaccination programme locally is a *'very professional and efficient service by our Primary Care Network'*, another thought that *'using our GP's medical centre to administer the vaccine was brilliant. Very efficient and with minimum of fuss and waiting'*, and someone else *'was very impressed by the standards, the staff and volunteers were all extremely helpful, could not have been better'*.

13 people raised concerns in their comments regarding various issues, one person felt that *'more work needed on the anti-Vaccine group of people and general worriers who are unsure'*, and someone else felt that *'the websites that are allowing anti-vaccine and Covid deniers to post this dangerous misinformation should be forced to remove it'*. With regard to the vaccine itself one person stated they *'don't trust anything that has only been trialled for a short time'* another felt that *'the vaccine seems to be very rushed in its production - prompting doubts, while a third stated 'limited testing doesn't help to promote reassurances'*.

The vaccination programme locally was discussed by 11 respondents, one felt that *'Halton seems slow compared to people we know in Lancashire'* another stated that the programme *'needs be rolled out a lot faster'*, and a third stated they *'thought there was a strict order for the vaccination rollout, it seems not to be the case in Halton'*.

10 people discussed the communication they had about the vaccine, one person felt that *'it would be helpful if the local CCG/PCN could give better information about when people will be vaccinated'* and another stated *'communication from some local GP's in Halton has been poor'*.

6 people discussed the second vaccination in their comments, one person stated they feel that *'the gap between the two vaccinations needs to be shorter'*, and another felt that *'the second date for dose two should be given or you should be able to book it'*.

Missed priority groups were discussed by 6 people, one person stated that they *'have asthma and my husband has COPD, chronic diabetes and is morbidly obese, none of these conditions make us clinically vulnerable but we are at increased risk'* and another felt that *'groups who are working as key workers and have done all the way through the pandemic should be considered for the vaccine to keep them and their families safe and support the economy'*.

Summary and Conclusions

The findings show that the majority of people are positive about the Covid-19 vaccine and want to have it when they are offered it. The main reasons for this are to protect their friends and family, vulnerable people, and themselves from the Covid-19 virus.

There was exclusively positive feedback about the local vaccination centres and process from those that had already received their first Covid-19 vaccination, but these same respondents had concerns as they did not understand why the second vaccine was delayed for so long, that they may not receive their second appointment, or why they couldn't book the second appointment in advance. Feedback from those who had not yet received their first vaccine revealed similar concerns about being missed for their appointment, and not knowing how or when they will be contacted to make their first appointment. Participants also requested regular updates regarding the progression of the local vaccination programme.

The findings also showed that people have concerns about the consistency of information that is given through the various NHS sources and feel that some GP practices may not have the most recent information about the vaccine. Some are making comparisons with other areas as to progression of the vaccination programme, and others feel that the order of groups to be vaccinated is not being followed locally. People also have concerns about the side effects of the vaccine, the possible interaction it may have with other medication, and the speed with which the vaccine has been designed and produced.

Recommendations

- 1.** Provide clear information for local people as to the process for booking first or second vaccination appointments.
- 2.** Provide clear information about the methods that will be used to contact patients to book their vaccine appointment and reasons why patients can't book appointments for their second dose in advance.
- 3.** Provide clear information as to any reasons for the delay between the first and second dose. Ensure that patients given dates for second vaccinations are kept updated on any delays or changes of date or venue for the second dose.
- 4.** Provide regular updates about the progress of the vaccination programme including numbers already vaccinated, and the reasons why other areas may be progressing at different rates.
- 5.** Provide clear information regarding the reasons why patients can't book the appointment for their second dose in advance.
- 6.** Provide the public with clear information about the order that different groups will be called for their vaccine.
- 7.** Provide more information about the safety of the vaccine and about any potential interaction with other medications.
- 8.** Provide more information about any possible side effects of the vaccine.
- 9.** Ensure that information from all NHS and local government sources, is consistent, accurate and updated promptly when changes to national or local guidance are announced. Continue to use a wide range of methods to communicate with patients, making use good use of local groups and networks to cascade this information.

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