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Stakeholder
By email

22 December 2020

Dear Stakeholder,

COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAMME – EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

First of all, I want to thank you for all the work you have undertaken already this year to support people and communities coping with the pandemic. Your efforts have without doubt made a very real difference to people across Scotland.

With the extremely welcome news that the COVID-19 vaccination programme is now underway, and gearing up to reach more people, I am contacting you to ask for your support to maximise take-up.

The Scottish Government is working to embed equality and human rights at the heart of one of the most ambitious public health programmes ever undertaken in Scotland. We want to ensure that information about the vaccination, and indeed the vaccination itself, is delivered in an accessible and appropriate way to those in our diverse communities.

You will be aware that the first groups of people to be offered the vaccine are those who are 80 or over; health and social care workers; and care home members. I am asking for your support, especially in relation to people who are 80 and over, including those who have other protected characteristics. We recognise it is important to consider the specific barriers that people face and find solutions to sharing the right information with them. You can support this in two ways:

1. Sharing information about the vaccine

We know it is vital that organisations trusted by communities are well-informed, particularly as your communities may look to you for reliable information sources.

The current information available on the vaccination can be found at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccine leaflets | NHS inform.](#) English, alternative formats and information about other languages can all be found in this link.

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There is also a newly established national Covid vaccination helpline on 0800 030 8013 (available 8am–8pm 7 days a week). If anyone has specific questions they can phone the helpline to ask.

Please share this information widely within your networks, and draw upon it to answer questions that you may be asked by the people you work with and those within your communities.

2. Reassuring communities about the vaccine, to encourage take-up

We want to ensure that the communities you work with are reassured about the vaccine, and that this reassurance is taken forward in culturally appropriate and accessible ways. Your expertise will be vital here. In the coming weeks there will be information on public platforms – TV, radio, social media – about the vaccine, and we want you to be prepared for questions that may be asked as a result. However, there may be other ways that you know are effective in relaying messages to the communities you work with. For example, video clips filmed by community voices and shared on social media can be helpful, but we are aware we cannot rely solely on digital communication - other ideas will be important too.

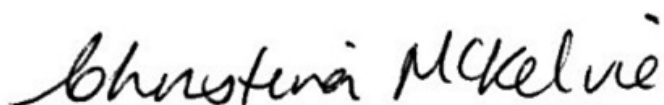
If you have ideas that may help to inform your communities effectively – such as using live online events, social media or by distributing hard copies of information - please let us know and we will work with you to support your idea.

As the vaccinations become more widely available, we want to keep in touch with you. Your feedback will be important so the information we produce can be relevant and accessible.

Please do let us know if you have any questions. Please also do share with us your experiences of using this information, and any ideas about how it can be improved. Last but not least, please do share with us examples of what has been effective in getting the message out to the communities you work with, as it may well be that this will be useful to others.

You can contact Heather Mole in the Equality Unit who will coordinate any feedback. She can be reached on Heather.Mole@gov.scot.

With all good wishes,
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CHRISTINA MCKELVIE

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