

Vaccines research

Looking at why some people get vaccinated
and some do not

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Introduction



Research means getting facts, figures and information about something.

This **research** has been done to understand why some groups of people get vaccinated and why some do not.



We will use the information we get to plan the future of Scotland's Vaccination and Immunisation Programme and make sure it includes everyone.



In December 2020 the Scottish Government started a Covid-19 vaccination programme to make sure everyone could get a **vaccine**.

A **vaccine** is a medicine that is injected into your body to help you fight a disease.

In Autumn/Winter 2021/22, this was changed to include both Covid-19 and flu vaccinations.



From April 2023 Public Health Scotland will arrange all vaccinations in Scotland.



People may not have had a Covid-19 vaccine for lots of reasons.

Some people may have got their vaccine but found it difficult to do.

Some of these groups are:

- younger people
- people from some ethnic groups
- people living with long term health conditions or disabilities
- people living in the most **deprived areas**



A **deprived area** is one where people have more difficulties in different parts of their life.

For example many of the people who live there do not have:

- enough money
- choices and chances
- resources – there might not be as many public services



The most important things about the research were to get information about

- people's experience of the vaccination programme
- why some people decided to get the vaccine
- why some people decided not to get the vaccine

81 people took part in the research.



They were adults living in Scotland when the vaccination programme was happening.

They are members of groups who:

- may have found getting a Covid-19 or flu vaccine more difficult
- may be less likely to get the Covid-19 or flu vaccine



We spoke to each person on the phone or on a videocall for around an hour.

All interviews were between 11 March and 3 May 2022.

We asked everyone the same questions.



What were the most important things we found out?

Getting a first Covid-19 vaccination



Most people got information about the vaccination programme from the TV, radio and newspapers.



People also got information from :

- social media
- talking and listening to other people like friends or family
- online searches and official websites
- things like leaflets and posters
- religious leaders
- and employers or support organisations



Most people trusted the information they got from the news and from organisations like the Government or the NHS.

They did not trust social media or things that people had told them as much.

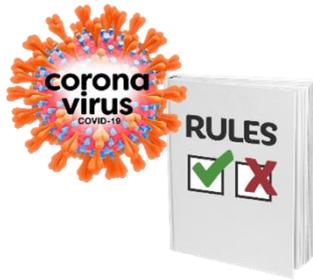


Most people felt they had enough clear information to make a decision about getting a vaccine.

When people decided to get their first Covid-19 vaccination they thought these things were important:

- protecting themselves from Covid-19
- protecting other people's health





- the safety of the Covid-19 vaccine
- sticking to the pandemic rules
- getting proof that they were vaccinated
- their feelings about:
 - vaccines
 - government
 - companies that make and sell vaccines
- what their friends and family thought



Things that helped people to get a vaccine were:

- having local appointments
- having places to get the vaccine that were easy to find, and had staff to help
- being able to drive to an appointment
- being able to get time off from work
- having support with childcare
- invitation and reminder letters that arrived on time to the right address

Things that made getting a vaccine difficult were:



- accessibility issues for people with autism or other sensory needs
- places to get the vaccine were too far away from home
- having to wait in a queue for a long time



- not getting an invitation or a letter to remind you about getting vaccinated
- staff that were not friendly or welcoming
- or not being able to get time off from work

Getting a second or third Covid-19 vaccination



As time went on people listened more to their friends and family and to their experiences of getting the vaccine.

Most people felt they knew more about second and third vaccinations.



They knew more about **side effects** and how the vaccine was working.

A **side effect** is a symptom or change in someone's health after they have taken medicine or had a vaccine.



Things that were difficult to understand were:

- why you needed a third vaccination
- what 'booster' meant



As time went on, people had more personal experience of Covid-19, either getting Covid-19 themselves or close family and friends having the virus.



Some people had mild or no symptoms when they got the virus.

This could have made them feel that Covid-19 was not a big risk to their health.



This could mean they were not keen to get Covid-19 vaccinations in the future.



Over time, some people were more worried about:

- the number of Covid-19 vaccine doses that were needed
- if the vaccine was working – this was because people realised that having the vaccine did not stop you getting Covid-19



This meant that some people did not want to get a third vaccination.



Most people had similar experiences of getting their first, second or third vaccines.

Some people got vaccinated in a different building.



Some people did not get their second vaccine at the right time because some things made it difficult like:

- childcare
- work commitments



People were worried about being able to look after their children and being able to go to work if they felt ill after getting the vaccine.

More people were worried about this when getting their second or third vaccine.

Getting a flu vaccination



Most people knew about the flu vaccination programme.

Their information about the flu vaccination programme came from:



- NHS invitation letters
- GPs and nurses



- posters in GP surgeries and pharmacies
- adverts on TV
- information in their workplace - particularly for NHS employees

People were most worried about the risk to their health when deciding if they should get the flu vaccine.

Other things they thought about were:



- if the vaccine worked and was safe
- if the vaccine had side effects
- Covid-19 and flu being in circulation at the same time



Most people had a good experience of getting the flu vaccination.

There were mixed views about getting the flu vaccination at the same time as the Covid-19 vaccination.

Some people thought this was good because it saved time.

Some people were worried there would be more side effects and this put them off getting vaccinated.



Views on children getting vaccinated



Most parents felt their children agreed with them about getting a Covid-19 vaccine.

Older children were more likely to be more involved in decision making compared to younger children.



Parents who had strong views about the Covid-19 vaccination also had strong views about their children getting the Covid-19 vaccination.

Parents who had not had any Covid-19 vaccinations did not want their children to have the vaccine.



Views were different for parents who had got the Covid-19 vaccination but were not confident about their children getting it.

There were two main reasons for this:

- people thought children did not need the vaccine because they were not likely to catch Covid-19 or to be very ill if they did catch it



- people felt they had taken a risk by getting a new vaccine

They did not feel comfortable making this decision for their children.



Parents were worried that getting children vaccinated would affect:

- puberty – the way a child's body changes from childhood to adulthood



- fertility - how easily they might have a baby in the future





Most parents were more comfortable with children getting a flu vaccine than a Covid-19 vaccine.

Thinking about the future



When deciding about having Covid-19 vaccinations in the future people were most likely to think about the risks and the good things.

There were different views about having Covid-19 vaccinations again in the future.

Some people who were happy to get future vaccinations were worried about a risk to their health.

Other people's views ranged from being likely to have a future vaccine, to being certain they would not get vaccinated.





Things that made people not want to get a vaccine in the future included:

- people thinking there was not a big risk to their health
- getting fed up with having to get more than 1 vaccine



- people's worries about the vaccine working well
- worries about side effects

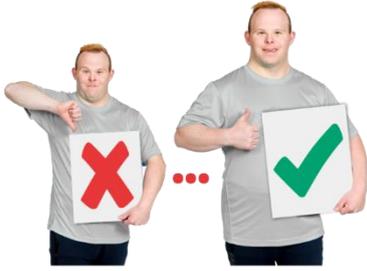


- the original reason for getting vaccinated, was not there anymore – for example some countries did not need you to have a Covid Status Certificate



Changes to these things may change people's minds about getting vaccinations in the future.

Most people felt the Covid-19 and flu vaccination programmes had been well organised.



People suggested some things that would make Covid-19 and flu vaccination programmes better in the future.



People felt it was important for the vaccination programme to:

- include everyone
- be honest and easy to understand
- be flexible and able to change if needed
- have friendly and welcoming staff

A short summary of what we found out



The theory behind our research is that for something to happen people should:

- be able to do it
- have the chance to do it
- want to do it



The research has found things that made vaccination hard, and things that made vaccination easy in each of these things.



Wanting to do it was the biggest reason people decided to get vaccinated.



The most important things people thought about when making their decision were:

- fear and worry about the effects of catching Covid-19 and of vaccine side effects



- thinking about what would happen if they were vaccinated or not

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