



IMPROVING VACCINE UPTAKE IN THE GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER COMMUNITY IN NEWARK

OVERVIEW

A mobile bus vaccination unit was taken to the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) Community in Newark in enabling walk-in COVID vaccinations. Clinical and security staff were available as well as volunteers to help with engagement and answering questions on the day. Vaccine administration was reported and barriers to vaccination recorded.

IDENTIFYING THE NEED

A multi-organisational group consisting of district councils, COVID vaccination teams, the ICB and Mid Notts locality was established to plan COVID vaccine delivery. It became apparent the plan was heavily focused on reaching people registered with a GP which may miss other groups such as the homeless and traveller communities. A community development worker from Newark and Sherwood District Council had a good relationship with the Newark GRT community and agreed to help with vaccine education and engagement.



SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Developed in partnership with community development workers, Newark and Sherwood District Council and the Community Voluntary Service (CVS). A bus was identified as the best way to provide the service due to significant stigma around receiving vaccinations in the Newark GRT community including being seen to attend a health service to be vaccinated. The bus was therefore sited nearby but not within sight of the community. Word of mouth, social media and texts to GRT community members registered with a GP were used to promote the service and increase engagement.

Nottinghamshire County Council Highways team identified and secured a site for the bus which was also used to provide vaccine outreach to a number of other hard-to-reach communities.



CASE STUDY

One community member invited on to the bus said 'I don't think this is meant for us! We're from Tolney Lane.' When they realised the service was specifically for them, they fetched another 3 family members and all received vaccinations.

Overall 11 members of the community were vaccinated

You are exactly who we have come to see - this is for you. It's why we brought the bus here!



KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Engaging with trusted members of the community is key to addressing cultural fears and improving uptake.
- Prepare for possible protestors and ensure multiple exit routes for safety
- Partnership working is incredibly important - the service would not have been possible without district council, volunteers and community development worker involvement.
- Listen to community voices and work with them, showing them that they are valued members of the community with equal rights to access healthcare