



## Vaccine Confidence Toolkit

### Sharing information about the COVID-19 vaccine: Frequently Asked Questions from Organisations

This document is designed to support your organisation in the use of the Doctors of the World UK (DOTW) COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence Toolkit (accessible here:

[https://www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/translated-health-information/?\\_gr=vaccine-confidence-toolkit](https://www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/translated-health-information/?_gr=vaccine-confidence-toolkit)) to engage your population and inform them about COVID-19 and the COVID-19 vaccine. Delivery of COVID-19 messages is sometimes tricky for organisations who may not have medical or scientific roots. DOTW has developed a toolkit to help you with this. Below are answers to some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) from organisations. These may help your organisation to run an information sharing event to empower the people you support to make informed decisions about whether or not to have the COVID-19 vaccine, and to explain how they can access it.

#### **Has Doctors of the World evaluated what people from socially excluded groups need?**

Yes. Doctors of the World carried out a scoping exercise with individuals from socially excluded groups and supporting organisations to explore issues around vaccine confidence and evaluate the best approaches to engage people and communities who may not have easy access to the UK healthcare systems or available reliable sources of information.

#### **Vaccine Confidence and Information: does one approach work for every organisation?**

No. Different people and groups have different needs. People have different backgrounds, different viewpoints and access different sources of information. Some groups may engage better with live face-to-face meetings while others may have a preference for leaflets or videos they can refer back to and readily share with others. It is important your organisation finds out what information format the people you support prefer and find most accessible before you set up your COVID-19 information initiative.

#### **Why do different groups of people respond differently to information provided?**

Generally, people want to be involved in decision making about their own health and body. To achieve this people need information they find accessible, understandable, reliable and trustworthy. A person's cultural and educational background, life experiences, relationship of trust with information source, and previous exposure to misinformation and conflicting information will all influence how a person responds to the information they receive.

### **How does my organisation know what will work best for the people we support?**

Your organisation will know the people you support and have an insight into their cultural background and beliefs. As a trusted organisation you will be able to work with them to determine their information needs and how these can best be met. Very often people have specific ideas or questions about COVID-19, the available vaccines and the vaccination programme. People appreciate having their questions listened to and answered factually. This toolkit is designed to enable you to address some of these questions and signpost people to reliable information.

### **Does my organisation have to have healthcare workers 'on board' to inform the people we support about the COVID-19 vaccination and vaccination programme?**

No. Doctors of the World does not think there is a requirement for medically trained people to support your organisation in the delivery of your initiative. We have developed a toolkit with information that will allow you to answer basic and practical questions. If people would like to access more scientific sources of information our Toolkit has provided links to reliable sources of information, which you and the people you support can freely access. However, you may wish to invite a local healthcare professional to support your information sharing event and this is discussed under 'Who should I involve in the planning and delivering of an information sharing event?'

### **My organisation has no medical or scientific background nor experts in the field of COVID-19 vaccination. How do we answer medical or scientific questions?**

It is very important to only answer questions that are within your remit. If questions are out of your area of knowledge, it is useful to refer people to a reliable (external) source of information or to let the questioning person know you will get back to them with an answer.

If people have concerns about COVID-19 and on how a vaccination may affect their personal health, we would generally recommend they seek advice from their GP. Their GP will have the information on their medical situation to advise them most appropriately.

### **What approaches have worked well for other organisations?**

Feedback from other organisations has been that live group information sessions with time for questions and answers have worked well. People need to be able to access the information in their own language and animations and graphics are often welcomed. People have expressed the need to receive information from known or respected and trusted community members. Peers sharing their personal experiences has also been successful.

## **How should my organisation deal with people who do not believe in COVID-19 or the vaccines?**

We advise answering questions factually. When people do not believe in vaccines or vaccination it may be useful to direct them to reliable sources of information (as recommended in our Toolkit). If you feel your initiative is being compromised because people are spreading incorrect information and discouraging other people from accessing reliable sources of information you may want to decide to ask these people to not attend your initiatives.

## **Do you have any tips on talking about the vaccine?**

Yes. It is crucial to have a conversation about vaccines and vaccination in a non-judgmental manner with space and time for discussion of beliefs and questions. Most people, regardless of their situation or background, want to make an informed decision. In order to do this, they need to be able to access the information in a format that accounts for their literacy and language needs and digital access. The Toolkit includes an infographic entitled 'Talking about the COVID-19 vaccine' with some tips which you may find helpful.

After a live or face-to-face session, people sometimes like to have information handed out they may access afterwards, when considering their decisions.

Some general tips:

- make sure the person(s) is interested and willing to discuss vaccines and vaccination
- get an understanding of existing thoughts, beliefs, concerns and questions
- have an understanding of the difficulties or barriers the person may be facing and be ready to guide them through the process of getting vaccinated (if they want to)
- don't assume people understand the information immediately; check in with your audience regularly to see if they have indeed received the message you were trying to get across
- the goal is not to get everyone 'convinced' during the session. You are trying to inform them as well as possible about vaccines and vaccination. Ultimately, it is their choice.

## **How do I decide whether to hold an information sharing event virtually or face to face?**

This will in part depend on current Government guidance, the number of people you are hoping to invite and whether your target audience is digitally enabled. Virtual events will require people to have the digital skills and technology to access the meeting. Face-to-face events must be COVID-secure and follow the current guidelines in terms of numbers present, social distancing and mask-wearing in shared indoor spaces. It may be that an event could be simultaneously run face-to-face as well as virtually to reduce in-person numbers but include those without digital access.

## **Who should I involve in the planning and delivering of an information sharing event?**

It is important to take into consideration the personal circumstances of your target audience when planning the time of day, location and format of the event in order to maximise participation. Therefore, consulting with representatives from the populations you support is invaluable.

While the Vaccine Confidence Toolkit has been designed to enable organisations to independently run an effective information sharing event on COVID-19 and vaccination you may wish to engage well-informed community or religious leaders who support the vaccination programme and local health professionals.

Involvement of respected and trusted local community or religious leaders who themselves are aware of the COVID-19 facts could inform tailored delivery of the information session, increase engagement and provide support in addressing vaccination concerns that may stem from religious or cultural beliefs.

Involvement of local healthcare professionals could increase trust in the information delivered and also provide support in answering questions. Local healthcare professionals could be approached through local GP practices or Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). A template invitation letter is provided in the Toolkit.