

Supporting the uptake of winter vaccinations by older people via trusted third-sector partners

End-of-grant report, Leeds Older People's Forum, February 2026



In 2025 Leeds Older People's Forum (LOPF) was approached by Leeds Public Health to co-ordinate small NHS grants and action across a number of Primary Care Networks (PCN) to increase the uptake of vaccinations by older people, including Flu, COVID-19, Pneumococcal and Shingles. LOPF identified 13 third-sector delivery partners, all of whom are trusted organisations firmly rooted in their local communities and already working in PCN areas. 10 of the 13 were [Leeds Neighbourhood Networks](#). LOPF gave each a grant of £1,500 funded by the NHS. The grant paid for staff time, room hire, materials, refreshments etc. with the aim of encouraging older people to talk about vaccinations, ask questions, understand the benefits, overcome barriers and get vaccinated.

Delivery partners

The following partners were involved: Armley Helping Hands, Bramley Elderly Action, Burmantofts Community Friends, Caring Together in Woodhouse and Little London, Cross Gates and District Good Neighbours' Scheme CIO, Feel Good Factor, Halton & Osmondthorpe Project for the Elderly (HOPE), Health for All, Holbeck Together, Leeds Irish Health & Homes, Older People's Action in the Locality (OPAL), Richmond Hill Elderly Action (RHEA) and Seacroft Friends & Neighbours.

“It's not about telling people what they should do but about giving them what they need to make a decision themselves knowing they can ask for support. It also enabled discussion with peers at our activities as they sometimes realise it's not only them who may have fears.” Feel Good Factor, Chapeltown PCN

Variety of approaches

Each of the 13 partners designed their own approach based on their members' needs and local context. All 13 partners promoted information about vaccinations and the support available via their regular communication channels including social media, WhatsApp and newsletters. Four partners obtained existing, multi-language promotional materials from the Public Health Resource Centre in Leeds and some also designed bespoke vaccination uptake posters and leaflets (see a selection on page 7). All 13 partners integrated targeted conversations about vaccines into their existing social activities so that members received information regularly from trusted sources, were able to talk to friendly, knowledgeable staff and progress at their own pace. All 13 partners selected specific older people to have 1-2-1 conversations about vaccines and offer gentle, regular encouragement and support.

In addition, eight partners publicised the benefits of vaccinations through public events and community outreach, including stalls at wellbeing events, community festivals, local supermarkets, and outreach in schools and community spaces. Partners often linked with other third sector and public sector organisations to enable a wider reach and more in-depth experience for attendees. Some partners also delivered bespoke vaccine awareness sessions in-house. Three partners asked their members to share vaccine information with their friends and peers to encourage sign up via word-of-mouth.

The main aim of the grant was to increase awareness of vaccines and increase the number of vaccines that older people received. Armley Helping Hands supported a pop-up vaccination event at their local GP surgery. One partner booked members in for a vaccination at a cross-sector Winter Wellbeing Event held at Crossgates Shopping Centre (see pages 8 and 9). OPAL decided to hold a Flu vaccination pop-up clinic in October in their own community space, in partnership with medical professionals, so

that members could be vaccinated in an accessible, familiar place. One OPAL attendee said “**I didn’t plan to get vaccinated today, but it was so easy here, I’m glad I did.**”

Not all partners had premises suitable to hold pop-up clinics or the staff resources to support vaccination events. To remove barriers to accessing vaccines in pharmacies and GPs, seven partners provided practical assistance to help individual members book appointments online or over the phone, with some partners also holding bespoke IT sessions to teach members how to use the NHS online booking system for appointments (see pages 10 and 11). Nine partners provided transport to enable older members to travel to pharmacies and GP practices for a vaccination. Examples of these approaches, using partners’ own words, are included later in this report.

Outputs achieved

Overall, delivery partners estimated that over **7,500** older people benefited from the work they did to promote the benefits of vaccination and access to appointments. They were asked, where possible, to keep a tally of the work done as part of this project. It was hard to collect accurate data in such a light-touch way. One partner said:

“We promoted [vaccination] across nine relevant groups we run each week but repeated this. Also [conversations] happen outside of the groups and at the events we attend so it is difficult to gauge numbers accurately.”

Number of events delivered where vaccination was promoted	490
Number of engagement conversations and/or sessions held	1573
Number of phone calls made to support uptake	4321
Number of text messages sent to support increasing uptake	1015
Number of people supported to make a vaccination booking	560
Number of people vaccinated whilst attending vaccination events	369

*In the stories below, all names have been changed and details anonymised.

Pat's story

This detailed case study from Burmantofts Community Friends (Burmantofts, Richmond Hill and Harehills PCN) explains the variety of person-centred support which enabled Pat* to make the journey from vaccine-hesitant to fully vaccinated.

“Pat is an individual supported by Burmantofts Community Friends (BCF), who has previously experienced challenges engaging with health services due to anxiety around appointments and unfamiliar environments. Pat expressed concerns about attending health clinics and had previously missed routine vaccinations.

Through regular discussions and reassurance from our wellbeing worker, Pat agreed to consider attending an appointment to receive both the seasonal flu and COVID-19 vaccinations. The BCF team worked closely with Pat to:

- Provide information about the vaccines via regular wellbeing calls in a clear and accessible way, addressing any worries or misconceptions.
- Arrange a suitable appointment at a local health centre that was familiar and easy for Pat to access.
- Use a person-centred approach to reduce anxiety by visiting the clinic with Pat in advance and talking through what would happen during the appointment.
- Offer practical support, including transport arrangements and accompaniment on the day of the appointment.

With the support of BCF, Pat successfully attended the appointment and received both vaccinations. This marked a significant achievement for Pat, demonstrating increased confidence and engagement with healthcare services. Since receiving the vaccines, Pat reported feeling safer and more comfortable spending time in the community, particularly in social settings and public spaces. They have continued to attend community groups and outings with greatly reduced concern about illness or infection.

Pat's story highlights how tailored, person-centred support can empower individuals to overcome anxieties relating to vaccines and actively engage with healthcare services.

Project photos from Holbeck Together

“We held events focused on winter vaccinations during our coffee mornings, lunch sessions, and at other community centres. Additional promotion took place through local social media, leaflets in community hubs, schools, libraries, and with the support of councillors. By creating opportunities for open discussion in trusted community settings, we were able to reach individuals who may otherwise feel isolated or hesitant to seek information.” (Holbeck Together, Beeston PCN)



Evidence of success and impact on older individuals

As outlined on pages 2 and 3, partners used the grant in a variety of ways, provided qualitative and quantitative data and shared insight and challenges in their end of grant monitoring form. Here are some excerpts from the monitoring forms, using partners' own words, to bring to life the work and the impact it had on older people.

Quote from a person supported to have a vaccination

“I have always been terrified of needles. I can still remember the anxiety I felt as a child when going for immunisations. As a result, I didn't go for winter flu and didn't have any covid vaccinations. It was only following a visit I had from a member of staff at HOPE that they gently encouraged me to get vaccinated. They picked me up, held my hand and supported me and it wasn't so bad. All those years of anxiety over the needle, maybe they are smaller than when I was a child. I now feel confident to get vaccinated next year”. (HOPE member, York Road PCN)

Individual older people received advice, information and practical support

This short case study from (Bramley Elderly Action, Bramley PCN) explains how Joel* and his wife overcame challenges to access their vaccinations.

“Joel is a carer for his wife who has advanced dementia. He has a sitting service who come and sit with his wife for 3 hours a week and he comes to our coffee and catch up where we spoke to him about the vaccines. He told us that the GP does home visits for his wife but he cannot go to the GP because there he can never get an appointment when the sitting service comes. We were able to help Joel set up an NHS digital profile and told him that we would support him when he was ready to make an appointment.

A couple of weeks later he asked for help to book the appointment during the sitting service and we were able to do so. When the visited his GP surgery for the vaccine, the surgery staff were able to get him sorted for home visits and him to have the vaccines when they came to vaccinate his wife. He was delighted that he had been able to sort out so many health related issues by coming and having a coffee and a chat with us.”

(Bramley Elderly Action, Bramley PCN)

Events (bespoke or existing) where vaccination was promoted



“We raised awareness through various public events, including the Beeston Gala (where we engaged with over 600 people), the Middleton Gala (engaged with over 90 people), and at Beeston Village Community Centre.

We also held monthly information stalls at City View Medical Practice and Parkside Health Centre, participated in local Winter Wellbeing events, and held a stall at the local supermarket. During these activities, we handed out leaflets which we ordered from the Public Health Resource Centre.

Typically, our stalls at the local Health Centre attract around 40 visitors each time, and two stalls are held every month.” (Health for All, Beeston PCN)

Promotional materials created by delivery partners

Partners created these posters for their members and shared them via newsletters, posters, WhatsApp and social media. Members were encouraged to get in touch and these tangible items helped to start conversations about health and vaccinations.

Flu Jab Clinic

Friday 10th October
Drop in between 10am and 3pm
 at the Welcome In Community Centre, 55 Bedford Drive, LS16 6DJ

To make the process on the day quicker, you can ring OPAL to register your interest: 0113 261 9103

For all members of the community who meet the flu jab criteria:

- children aged two and three years on 31 August 2025
- school aged children from reception to year 11 (inclusive)
- people aged 6 months to 64 years in a clinical risk group
- people aged 65 years and older (age on 31 March 2025)

Free transport is provided for OPAL members

Get Vaccinated





Protect Yourself

Get Vaccinated

HOPE in Partnership with Leeds Older People's Forum Supports the Covid and Flu Vaccine Awareness Campaign May to November 2025

Get vaccinated, stay healthy, and protect your loved ones. Vaccines work—and they save lives.

Stay Protected

Reduce your risk of serious illness through vaccination.

Protect Others

Help safeguard the vulnerable in your family and community.

Trust Science

Vaccines are tested, proven, and approved by experts.

Prevent Outbreaks

High vaccination rates stop disease from spreading further.

Feeling apprehensive or struggling to attend a vaccination appointment? We can support you, just call the number below

☎ 0113 249 3597 # info@hopeprojectleeds.org.uk




Tuesday 14th October
09:30-11:30
The Newman Centre

The Newman Centre
 Station Road
 Crossgates
 LS15 7JY

FLU & COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

Who is eligible?

COVID-19

Anyone aged 75+
 Residents of adult care facilities
 Immunosuppressed individuals

FLU

Anyone aged 65+
 Clinically at-risk individuals
 Care home residents
 Carers of elderly or disabled people
 Close contacts of immunocompromised individuals
 Frontline social care and healthcare workers

Not eligible for NHS jab? Private vaccinations also available

tinyurl.com/newmanvaccinations



Scan the QR code to register for an appointment

Or call/text Catharine (07882 432914)

STAY PROTECTED THIS WINTER

Vaccines against viruses

Who should get vaccinated?



Aged 65+



Living with long-term health conditions



Pregnant people



Living in care homes / caring for others

What vaccines are available?



Flu
yearly protection against influenza



COVID-19
booster to reduce risk of severe illness



Shingles
protects against painful rash and long-term nerve pain



Pneumococcal
protects against pneumonia, sepsis and meningitis

“We ran a one page special in our autumn/winter newsletter that went out to 849 local older people and deliberately talked about facts around vaccinations and their importance. We asked Local Care Partnership colleagues for input on this messaging and took the latest advice from the NHS. At our weekly Winter Warmth stalls (October to January) we had deliberate conversations with 79 members about vaccinations to check they understood entitlement and uptake. We will also have the same conversation with attendees at our Slipper Exchange next week which will see another 70 members there.” We will also have professionals from The Garden GP Surgery there offering advice.” (RHEA, York Road PCN)

Phone calls made and text messages sent to support uptake of vaccinations

“The grant also supported practical access to vaccinations. Staff made approximately 2,450 phone calls that included vaccination reminders or discussions, sent around 480 text messages, and directly supported approximately 73 individuals to book or attend vaccination appointments. In some cases, staff accompanied members to appointments to reduce anxiety and practical barriers.” (Caring Together in Woodhouse and Little London, Woodsley and Holt Park PCN)

Insight into the organisation of pop-up vaccination events held in the community

“We organised a Winter Wellbeing Event held at Crossgates Shopping Centre, featuring over 40 stalls and attracting 12,542 attendees. Vaccinations were available on-site. Third sector and private sector partners were also present to provide additional support and advice on topics including dementia, liver health, smoking cessation, and wider welfare rights. We were well prepared for the vaccination event and had shared a full list of attendees in advance, so that everyone involved was aware of who was booked in. On the day, there were some minor information gaps, which meant we needed to be flexible and work collaboratively to keep things running smoothly. Our staff and volunteers supported attendees by helping with paperwork while the GP focused on delivering vaccinations. As a result of this teamwork, we successfully vaccinated over 102 people on-site. The GP expressed how impressed he was with the staff and volunteer team and thanked us, stating that he **“could not have completed**

the vaccinations without our support on the day.” (Cross Gates and District Good Neighbours’ Scheme CIO, Seacroft PCN)

Insight into the organisation of the in-house vaccination event at OPAL

“We had many comments from people telling us how convenient it was for them to get their vaccination whilst at OPAL. We put out tables and chairs with refreshments so it made it into a social occasion which worked well. One attendee said **“It was very convenient getting my vaccine at OPAL as I go there a lot. The pharmacist was very efficient and I hardly felt the injection.”**”(OPAL, Woodsley and Holt Park PCN)

Transport

The offer of transport was vital for many people. Some partners had their own community transport, others had volunteer drivers using their own cars and some helped people to book taxis to appointments.

“We provided transport to 51 individuals who would have struggled to attend independently, this was due to frailty, anxiety about having vaccinations or both. Transport was to GPs and pharmacies” (HOPE, York Road PCN)

Inclusive access and tailored support for culturally diverse communities

“We engaged with Sri Guru Nanak Sikh Temple, Tong Road Leeds, Christ Church and local council Retirement Life residents to raise awareness. We were able to adapt health information at a local level and use culturally sensitive communication methods to build trust.” (Armley Helping Hands, Armley PCN)

“We work closely with communities that often face multiple barriers to accessing and understanding the benefit of vaccinations, such as language barriers, cultural stigma, low health literacy, competing life priorities, and lack of trust in messages. By delivering activity and promoting through community networks and using appropriate approaches means trust is built as people are hearing messages from organisations they know, which hopefully provides encouragement and lowers anxiety around accessing vaccinations.” (Feel Good Factor, Chapeltown PCN)

Amal's story

This case study from Caring Together (Woodsley and Holt Park PCN) explains the way in which they supported Amal* to address language barriers and access to primary care.

“Amal’s first language is Arabic and they had limited understanding of vaccination invitations received from health services. Amal was socially isolated and unsure how to book an appointment, leading to missed opportunities for vaccination in previous winters. A support worker held 1-2-1 discussions using simple English and visual resources in Arabic sourced from the Public Health Resource Centre. Information was reinforced over several contacts to ensure understanding. Staff helped Amal to book an appointment and accompanied them to the appointment to reduce anxiety.

Amal successfully accessed their vaccination and reported feeling more confident about engaging with health services in the future. This support reduced a structural barrier to preventative healthcare and helped prevent avoidable winter illness. The case highlights how targeted, inclusive support can improve access for marginalised groups and supports Leeds’ ambition to be a healthy and caring city for all.”

Support with digital inclusion

Delivery partners found that some people struggled to use the internet and this was a factor in their reluctance or inability to get vaccines. Delivery partners used a range of approaches to help people to book appointments and get their vaccines. Some people received 1-2-1 support to make an appointment, or attended IT training sessions focused on making online NHS appointments.

“Combining a high-footfall event with smaller, targeted sessions ensured we reached a broad range of older people, including those less likely to attend large events or book vaccinations online. Staff provided digital support at the events to enable people to make appointments via QR codes. Staff supported those who needed digital help to learn how to use their mobiles to access QR codes for booking vaccinations, how to follow the links and make vaccination appointments.” (Cross Gates and District Good Neighbours’ Scheme CIO, Seacroft PCN, York Road PCN)

Case study: Promoting digital support to increase vaccination uptake

This case study from Leeds Irish Health and Homes explains the variety of person-centred support provided to get online to book appointments and vaccines.

“We have been actively promoting the winter vaccine through the Tuesday Club at the Leeds Irish Centre, distributing leaflets, sharing information, and speaking directly with every member to ensure full engagement. Many members had already booked their vaccine appointments independently, showing strong awareness and initiative. We have also provided group and 1-2-1 support, helping individuals access accurate information and understand the services available to them.

Through promoting the winter vaccines, we identified that several of our older clients already had their vaccines automatically scheduled. For those who had not been contacted by their GP, we helped them to access and navigate the NHS App, check messages, and review upcoming appointments. Many clients found the NHS portal challenging, highlighting a need for digital support. To address this, we introduced hour-long 1-2-1 digital sessions, helping clients build confidence to use the NHS App to manage appointments and access medical information. These sessions have become a key part of our digital inclusion work, ensuring that clients not only receive the vaccine but also gain long-term digital skills to manage their health independently.

By engaging regularly through community venues such as the Leeds Irish Centre, the Old Fire Station, and our internal groups (Men’s Group, Art Group, etc.), we have reached a diverse range of people aged 40–90. Alongside community development, we continue to promote the winter vaccine and digital literacy support through 1-2-1 work.

The funded activities strengthened vaccination awareness, increased understanding of vaccine benefits, and ultimately contributed to better health outcomes across the York Road PCN and the people we worked with on both a 1-2-1 and in a group setting. We witnessed first hand people expressing a further interest and asking further questions about the different types of vaccines, improving knowledge and understanding. We also witnessed health improvements and people displaying a sense of empowerment.

Our combined approach — community outreach, vaccine promotion, and digital education — ensures that clients feel supported, informed, and empowered. We will continue promoting the winter vaccine at upcoming tea dances, community events, and group activities, ensuring awareness of both the vaccine and the digital tools available to access healthcare. As we continue to work in the community, we will be focusing on clients and service users that have not yet had their vaccines, offering support to book appointments.” (Leeds Irish Health and Homes (York Road PCN)

Additional benefits arising from this project

Delivery partners often included other health-related topics and interventions when talking to their members about the importance of vaccines. Information stalls carried a wide range of health information. This enabled a more holistic approach and led to other health outcomes for older people, in addition to vaccines.

“Over 500 older people benefited from the project, with many sharing information with friends and family, creating a positive knock-on effect across the community.

Conversations about vaccines with older people often led to conversations about children's vaccines and may have influenced the uptake of children's vaccines too. We worked closely with local pharmacies to promote additional treatments, including vaccinations for shingles. Working together, we were able to support people to attend vaccination appointments, helping to reduce anxiety and make the process feel less stressful. Alongside vaccination awareness, we also promoted healthy eating and encouraged blood pressure checks, supporting a more holistic approach to health and wellbeing.” (Holbeck Together, Beeston PCN)

“The vaccination awareness sessions within our services offered the opportunity to provide a wider range of preventative health services and information, such as blood pressure checks, guidance and support to manage long term health conditions, access to podiatry services, information on metro and transport links, access to trade people and access to telecare thereby offering a more holistic approach to community well-being.” (Armley Helping Hands, Armley PCN)

Partners' experience of taking part in the project

Overall, partners appreciated the flexibility to design an approach that centered around their members and worked in harmony with their organisation and the resources available within their communities. The small amount of funding didn't create big changes within each organisation, it enabled partners to increase staff hours, hire rooms or create posters to help focus their conversations with members on vaccinations and health. A tangible reason to work in partnership with others also helped to develop relationships locally and some partners said that having access to accurate, trusted and up to date information through the Public Health Resource Centre gave them confidence to spread the messages with older people. All partners are committed to helping their members to thrive and live full, happy and healthy lives so this project helped them to test out a range of interventions to improve vaccine uptake, some of which could continue in the future with or without new funding.

Ideas on what partners would do differently next time, if new funding was found

The main improvement mentioned by 3 delivery partners, should they be asked to run a similar project, was to look for ways to offer vaccinations in-house. This would require cross-sector collaboration but it would mean that members could get vaccinated in a familiar setting, with support on-site, and this would significantly increase the uptake.

Here are a few excerpts from the end of grant monitoring report:

"I think next time we would have arranged to have vaccination surgeries in-house. We felt more people would have attended and been more open to receiving a vaccination, especially if it was a place where they felt more comfortable and know the staff around them. Some of the anxieties we picked up on were definitely fear of the unknown."

"[Our] new Community Hub is opening this year. This will give us more space and is well located. If we were to do this again, we would run vaccination clinics from the Hub and work more in partnership with local GPs and Health Centres."

“If we were to do this again, we would be open to having mobile vaccination hubs at our centres so that people can get vaccinations done locally.”

“Whilst the impact has been positive, had we been prepared and ready to go in late summer this would have had a bigger impact and enabled us to have further reach. Lots of potential clients had already accessed some services but after our interventions they requested additional services, for example they signed up for Flu and then agreed to the COVID and RSV vaccine.”

Other changes would be to use community transport with a dedicated driver so that there could be a more streamlined transport service to help more members travel to and from appointments. One partner suggested that they would ensure a member of staff was available at all vaccine information sessions to support the booking of appointments. They said **“We found that the older people who accessed these sessions were those who had not been able to get appointments, so there was a direct impact of the work we did.”** (Seacroft Friends and Neighbours, Seacroft PCN)

Conclusion

The World Health Organization has listed vaccine hesitancy as one of the biggest threats to global health. This project has demonstrated (albeit on a small scale) that person-centred support yields results. Each partner was given a grant of £1,500 to run this vaccine uptake project and the project shows the value for money the community sector can bring to collaborative health projects such as this.

“This type of funding allows us to build relationships with the community and the people accessing our services. As we know from COVID people can be sceptical about vaccinations and having space to speak to staff and peers is important so they can allay some of their fears and realise others may be feeling the same and are able to talk things through. It also helps to support the health of our communities and build trust with health services.” (Feel Good Factor, Chapeltown PCN)

For more information about Leeds Older People’s Forum visit www.opforum.org.uk