



# Community Champions

Evaluation Report 2022



BRADFORD  
Stronger Communities  
Partnership



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities



City of  
**BRADFORD**  
METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

# Introduction

## Project background

The Community Champions project was not included in the original plans for the Bradford for Everyone programme. However, the programme had developed a level of agility through its framework to respond to new and emerging issues. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, roles within Bradford for Everyone team became dual; both in the continuation and adaption of the programme activities but also working under the pandemic response under the 'Covid Supporting Communities' theme. As new needs emerged, Bradford Council built on where communication was known to be effective, keeping things localised, involving community partners and, through those partners, supporting trusted individuals to deliver.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities launched the Community Champions programme and the Council utilised this funding to build on what had already been learnt from the Ambassadors project. Important additions were built in to support volunteers, clear remits, soft intelligence and agile and more responsive ways of working, such as utilising WhatsApp groups. The Community Champions project was added into the overarching four pillar framework that structures the Bradford for Everyone programme. It falls under the 'feeling safe' pillar - tackling misinformation and having difficult conversations, especially around views on vaccinations. The Make Sure It Adds Up campaign was formulated to tackle rumours (adapting learning

from Barcelona's Intercultural Cities (ICC) programme). The campaign materials and training were then adapted to incorporate the COVID-19 context. The Community Champions were also trained using the district-wide Shared Values materials and ethos. The project was announced nationally in January and ran across Bradford district over six months from April – September 2021. It has now run over three phases: 1. covid awareness, 2. mental health and, 3. vaccination take-up. For the purpose of this report, we will be focussing on the first phase, which was primarily targeted at increasing the communication, impact and reach of the council's work with ethnic minority groups, migrants, diaspora (where relevant) and communities with disabilities.

Community Champions expanded the remit of the Council's Ambassadors programme funded through the Bradford for Everyone programme. It began by mapping existing provision. It also provided support to residents/staff to attend training sessions. The training included Anti-Rumour and Critical Thinking modules (Make Sure it Adds Up), focusing on misinformation and rumours, test and trace, and vaccinations. Furthermore, it provided support via already commissioned partners to develop and run support groups for residents – either face-to-face or via Whatsapp groups – in their local communities. Monitoring and evaluation forms were designed and the project went operational within a very short timescale.



Black Health Forum - First trip out for over 65s group since lockdown

## SECTION 2

# Process Evaluation

## Project targets

The project aimed to have an additional **300** Community Champions and by March 2022 achieved **299**

Many new Community Champion recruits are **over 65** and **under 25**

The new Community Champions were recruited via **49** commissioned grassroots organisations

Race Equality Network funded **38** Black/Asian, Minority Ethnic/Central and Eastern European organisations

Equality Together funded **11** disability organisations and groups

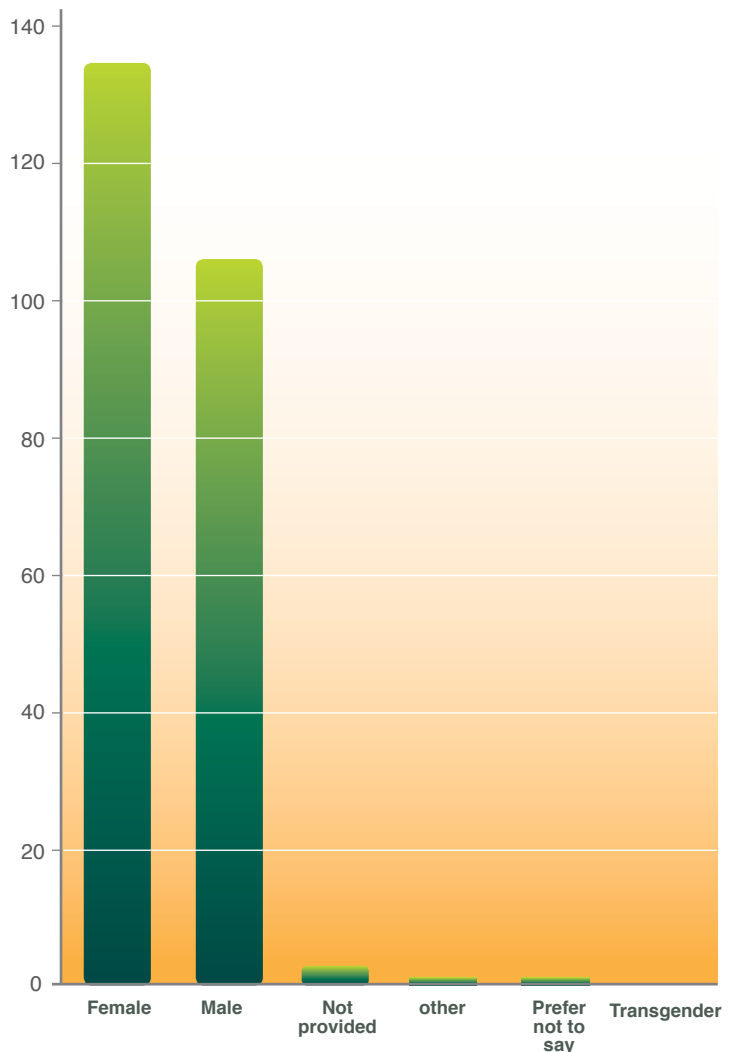


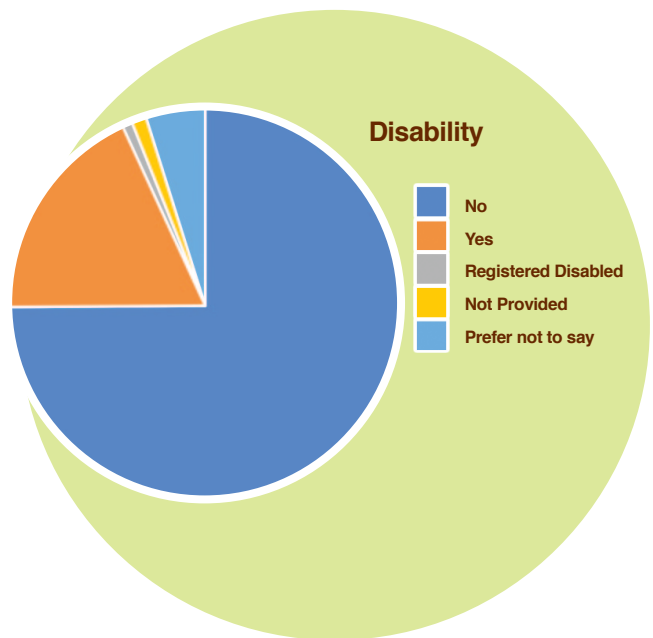
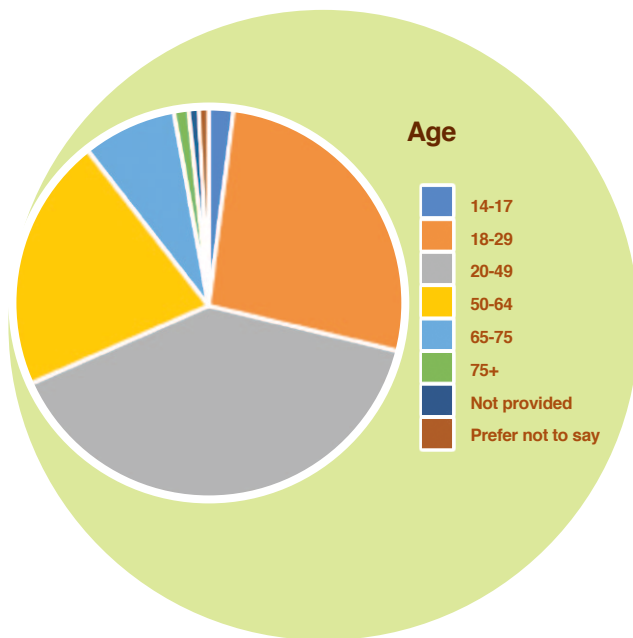
Highfield Food Cooperation

The project aimed to recruit an additional 300 Community Champions from a demographically representative sample of minority and disability groups via existing services and Bradford for Everyone's established network of Voluntary and Community Sector partnerships. The project very nearly met this target, recruiting an impressive **247** Community Champions and training **209** of them by June 2021. However, by March 2022, they had recruited **299**, many over 65 and under 25. The Community Champions were recruited via **49** commissioned grassroots organisations via two lead organisations. Race Equality Network (REN) funded 38 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic/Central and Eastern European organisations (including 4 faith organisations (Bradford Hindu Council, Gudwara Singh Saba (covering all 6 Gudwaras), the Synagogue and St John's Church) across Bradford District. Equality Together funded **11** disability organisations and groups across the District and focused on creating communications in an accessible format with Bradford Talking Media (BTM).

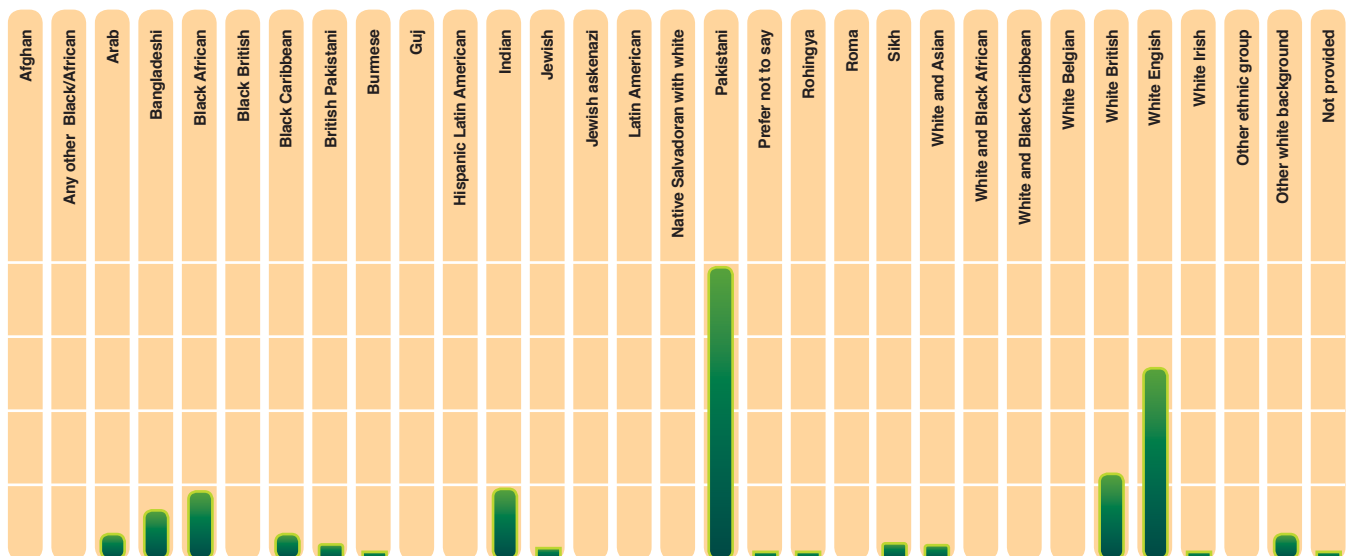
The demographic profiles of the Community Champions were diverse: they represented a number of different genders, ethnicities, faiths and ages and included people with and without disabilities (illustrated in the following charts).

## Gender of Community Champions

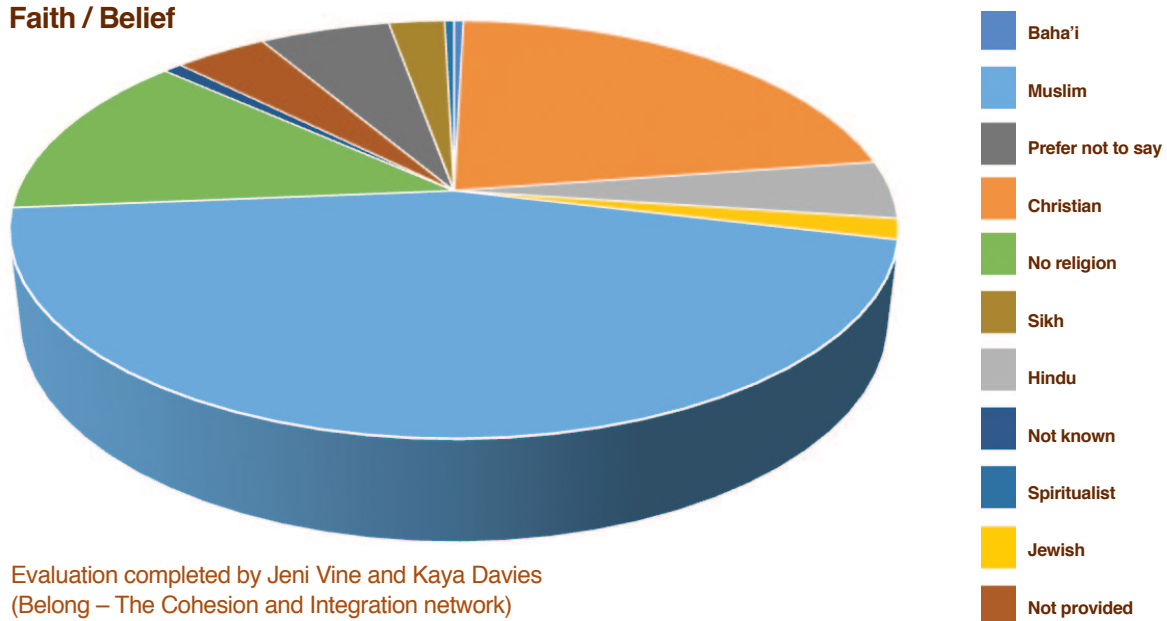




## Ethnicity



## Faith / Belief



Evaluation completed by Jeni Vine and Kaya Davies  
(Belong – The Cohesion and Integration network)

## Training

The project worked closely with the 49 'lead champions' who were responsible for recruiting further champions and acted as bridges between their respective communities and the project. These lead champions were involved in the gathering of soft intelligence, data and in co-producing communication material. They also, working alongside other champions, developed and ran support groups for residents, made phone calls, provided reassurance, webinars and information sessions, and attended surgeries, depending on what was best suited to the needs of their communities.



Highfield Cooperation. Screening of a mental health awareness film

### CASE STUDY

## Lead community champions

"Aiman and Sarbjit both attend the Howard House 8 course through Safety First. They have done all of their classes face to face. They have become friends through the course and both commented it was really good to get to know people from other countries."



209 Community Champions were trained. The training was in two parts and covered anti-rumour and critical thinking, shared values, vaccinations, and Covid health messaging.

The Community Champions operated under Bradford District's Shared Values of We Protect and We Care.

- **We Protect** is all about taking pride and responsibility in looking after each other; being brave enough to challenge things when they are not right; and helping make sure that everybody feels safe and those who are shielding or may be at risk of harm are protected. If you hear or see something, then it is your responsibility to speak out raising your concerns through the correct channels.
- **We Care** is all about making time and effort to care for all those people who need help and support

most. They might be the vulnerable, maybe people who are living in poverty, have disabilities or are lonely or isolated or at risk of abuse – here you can share kindness, have empathy and compassion, and build respect and trust by actively listening, helping and signposting where you can.

All volunteers were trained in 'critical thinking' and how to counter misinformation and provide clarity on the vaccine rollout. Volunteers also attended Q&A sessions with clinical leads to top up their information on the vaccine, new variants and other important information. From June 2021, optional training on mental health was available and both lead partners were trained in Bradford's Citizen Coin scheme, so that they can reward Champions using citizen coins (<https://bradford.citizencoin.uk/>). The project entered a second phase funded by Public Health concentrating on mental health from October 2021- March 2022.



NAF's working with refugee families

## Engagement methods used by the Community Champions to engage with their communities

A variety of methods were used by the Community Champions to reach and engage with their communities. Please see below for an analysis of those approaches considered most effective:

Engagement Method	Output
The Covid helpline hours were extended from February 2021 to build capacity via the recruitment of additional volunteers to manage phone lines and develop a database to monitor performance.	Over 1596 calls were received. The types of calls varied, from requests for information about self-isolation, symptoms, Test and Trace and financial support to, as the project progressed, calls more focused on vaccinations and broader topics, such as travel restrictions.
Community Champions used a range of outreach techniques within communities.	For example, Community Champions attended community spaces (such as places of education, drop-in areas, places of worship and GP surgeries) armed with positive and informed messaging. They also delivered posters, postcards and lateral flow kits, especially amongst under-represented communities who may otherwise have been missed. Targeting these places helped to reach people with Covid messages. These outreach techniques ensured that under-represented communities were engaged with and that all communities were signposted to sources of reliable information.
A co-design and co-production group was established.	Lead champions shared intelligence, supported the development of the engagement plan, and co-designed and co-produced communication materials. Based on this intelligence from the Community Champions, the theme for communications centred around: fertility, accessibility and trust.
The project worked with the NHS to promote vaccinations.	The team worked with NHS colleagues to promote Covid Bus and Twilight vaccine sessions. Q&A sessions with clinicians were established at NHS Bradford and Public Health providing opportunities to discuss issues and concerns around the vaccine. These sessions worked well and were managed by the community champions. They were complimented by messaging through videos and posters, around accessibility for the Roma and refugee communities, highlighting the fact that they did not have to be registered with a GP to have the vaccine.

Engagement Method	Output
<p>Trained Community Champions were signed up to a geographical central communications WhatsApp group to disseminate key messages with expediency.</p>	<p>Around 5,512 people are estimated to have been reached and engaged. Each champion was sent a fortnightly reflection log and was asked questions on reach and engagement. Only a few responses were received, so the project began using data cards and then reflections. Information was cascaded through these WhatsApp groups to distribute messaging on testing centres, vaccine information and support services.</p>
<p>Faith institutions were used to discuss public behaviour and non-adherence.</p>	<p>For example, partners worked with mosques, especially around Eid, to make sure Covid messaging was displayed and also that the Imams used their time to discuss the vaccine and its importance. Places of worship tend to be safe spaces and bring in thousands of people per week. Places of worship were used to discuss key messaging, adherence to rules, and the importance of the vaccination uptake using literature and holy texts by trusted faith leaders.</p>
<p>Tailored branding for Community Champions. Community</p>	<p>Champions helped design T-Shirts for them to wear and be clearly identified within their communities. These used the strapline: "Let's vaccinate for you, for me, for everyone!"</p>


**CASE STUDY** **H.A.L.E.**



HALE trained their social prescribers as Community Champions to enable them to get a deeper understanding of critical thinking and how to share Covid messaging and vaccine information in a non-judgemental way. The social prescribers used this knowledge to work with GP practices to reach vulnerable people and people unsure about receiving the vaccine and provided one-to-one advice and information in accessible formats.

**CASE STUDY** **Connecting Roma**

The project streamed via Facebook live with Connecting Roma to speak to the communities directly. This had a reach of around 700 people. The team worked with local champions who were aware of the Central and Eastern European community and were identified as trustworthy by this community. This community preferred face-to-face engagement, so as lockdown eased, the champions looked at arranging more face-to-face meetings, allowing them to engage directly and build trust.



Connecting Roma. Sports to help mental health session



Jas rayatt - police officer joining in with the bingo session

### Engagement Method

The co-design and co-production group helped develop different approaches for communicating with disability and learning disability communities.

Videos and posters around government guidelines were created in different languages.

### Output

The team reviewed current resources and identified gaps for disability and learning disability communities. Where necessary, QR codes for British Sign Language and easy-to-read content were added to communications materials. Transcripts of the local Covid Deaf Group and a session for local learning disabled communities were obtained and resources were developed out of the FAQs. A short film was developed to contribute to tackling fertility myths among learning disability communities.

These videos and posters made existing material, which was inaccessible to specific communities, accessible, clear and available to key stakeholders.

As a result of the crisis in India in the spring/summer of 2021, the Hindu and Sikh champions recorded videos to encourage their communities to take the vaccine. These videos have been shared on social media and WhatsApp groups.

Muslim Champions recorded video messages in various language to encourage Muslim community members to take the vaccination during Ramadan.

Videos were produced on the new Delta variant and the importance of testing.

Lists of local vaccine hubs and clinics were provided through a newsletter. Posters and videos were created to help refugees understand how to take the vaccine without having to provide information other than their name and date of birth. This proved to be effective with Arab and Rohingya refugee communities, reflected in the good vaccine uptake amongst these groups.

Conversation Cards were developed to guide discussion and encourage open and transparent dialogue about Covid-19 and vaccinations.

## Engagement Method

Regular slots on radio to promote and talk about the project.

The Act as One website had a Community Champions resources page, which was created as a toolkit.

Online communications via social media

Targeted information provided in multiple languages and at different key stages

Online telecommunications used to reach specific communities.

## Output

Partners appeared during seven slots on Ramadan Radio, as well as a dedicated Q&A session with a clinician. The number of listeners varied, but the highest number reached was during the Q&A, which was around 13,000 people. Race Equality Network also had slots on BBC Radio 4 and Asian Network as well as BCB Radio's programme, "Our Guy in Bradford".

The resource page had 616 views in total and 3 newsletters were sent to Community Champions.

A Twitter (@ChampionsCovid) and Instagram (Chatterbox) page were created.

Key members from the African Caribbean community led by example and used social media to live stream their own vaccinations at Broadway shopping centre. This targeted hesitancy and mistrust in the African community, who felt they had been let down after the Windrush scandal and were unsure about taking the vaccine.

Information on lateral flow testing was interpreted in 12 languages: Polish, Slovakian, Bangla, Punjabi, Urdu, Arabic, French, Spanish, Farsi, English, Swahili and Romanian.

The project produced messaging at key stages throughout lockdown and the pandemic, ensuring that everyone was clear about what was required to keep themselves and others safe. Communities living in extended families, such as within Asian households, would often rely on information from their birth countries, such as Pakistan and Bangladesh, where conspiracy theories were often rife.

The African community successfully used Zoom to connect with their communities which helped increase vaccine uptake.



Bingo sessions

# Outcomes evaluation

## Trust

### – in the local authority, health services and the police

Trust in local government, health services and the police was enhanced through this project. The prior investment in Ambassadors paid dividends in tackling the coronavirus pandemic as community networks were already established.

“ Messages from our local NHS and public health and Yorkshire police were very helpful, as they provided reassurance. ”

“ We feel that it went well and gave additionality and extra capacity to some of the work we were already undertaking. ”

Bradford Council was able to devolve responsibility for delivery through to local embedded providers who already had a good working relationship with the council, as well as extending their network to new providers. REN and Equality Together held co-production groups every month attended by leads from all 49 participating organisations.

The council team were praised as

“ ... really accessible, really responsive. Links you into the people you need to talk to within the Council and public health. Championing what we were doing and being very supportive. ”

The co-production group was considered to have

“ ... worked well so we could meet with other projects carrying out the same work and link together so co-work. Information sharing from Equality Together was useful and invites to Q&As and NHS meetings. ”

The training Community Champions received thought to be

“ ... really good. REN also enabled the training of our Community Champion as a trainer so that he could train his two volunteers as they couldn't access the online training and had limited understanding of English. ”

Furthermore, the close working relationships with GP practices was evidenced by community champions being asked by some practices to sit in reception and help with bookings, using their language skills.

“ We signposted people with underlying health conditions who were seeking advice, to their GPs. By becoming a Covid champion, we gained the trust of people in the community which enabled more people to get vaccinated. ”

The team from Bradford Council and the two key delivery agencies (REN and Equality Together) were responsive to feedback and amended their approach over time. The speed of the response to the pandemic meant that that there was a lot of learning along the way.

“ Met the volunteers every week to update the Conversation Cards and gain feedback about the engagement they had done with the community. Most of their conversations were with family and friends. There was some sharing with people they worked with. ”

“ The training for our Learning Disability Communities was the last accessible format for the training to be brought online. This is mainly because it was a partnership approach between ourselves, one of the Learning Disability providers and the trainers, therefore, it was a time consuming. Given the opportunity again, we should have started this work in the first couple of weeks of the project to ensure Learning Disability communities had access to the training at the same time as everyone else and the time between registering as a volunteer and delivering activities would be shorter. ”



Bradford Hindu Council. Mental health workshop event.

“ The training was excellent and perhaps the focus we should have taken was on rolling this out in 1-2-1 or small group sessions to community members rather than trying to engage wider community members. However this would have needed significantly more investment if the volunteers had to be followed up. ”

Different messaging within the NHS undermined some people's trust in the system.

“ Some of the aspects which did not work well were when we held a vaccination clinic, although we were successful in vaccinating a large number of men and women, some people who came to receive their vaccines were given different advice. Some of the staff advised they can have 2 different vaccines, where some said they needed to be the same. Some people advised they can have a vaccine within 4 weeks of the first, and some advised 8-12 weeks. This resulted in members of the community feeling confused. It was difficult to reassure some people after this. ”

Some of the learning on the part of the council and NHS has been regarding the importance of involving communities at all stages of the roll out process.

“ The Council and NHS realised “We can't do this on our own!” Community groups are out there doing all sorts of stuff from foodbanks, delivering parcels to people who have no income and no food, the befriending stuff, the assets that communities have.... It was referred to as speed dating, building relationships really quickly. ”

## – in social media

Social media was used extensively and was translated into relevant languages, adapted for sign language and featured people who reflected the intended audiences. Facebook was the principal social media platform that was utilised. For instance, Bradford Hindu Council reported a reach of approximately 1,400 users with some of their posts.

The Bradford Study Support Network also created and used an Instagram account to help their engagement. For many people it was very effective, especially when used in conjunction with other methods of engaging people.

“ What worked well was the use of social media platforms, volunteering at Grab a Job Events, working across communities sharing different experiences, meeting people in person, places of faith events, engaging community leadership. ”

However, most of the lack of trust in the system stemmed from social media. Messaging on social media was also ineffective for many of the target communities because of language issues or lack of connectivity.

“ There still remains some mistrust and conflicting messages especially with regions and countries where migrants and refugees have arrived from. Different procedures are operating in those regions and conflicting expertise and advice continue to cause disjointed and confusing messaging. ”

Trust in the system was a major issue for many migrant communities and is related to wider issues linked to health inequalities and systemic issues. Some champions faced hostility from their communities for promoting the vaccine.

“ I have been expelled from two or three community groups in Bradford for inviting people and making them see the benefits of vaccines with specific data and documents rather than WhatsApp chain) or some data not confirmed by the WHO, but it does not bother me. Not at all, on the contrary, this reaffirms that we are working for the good of the community and for the good of all as a society in this wonderful country. ”

Generally, the most successful approach was to be available to answer people's concerns but to make it clear that it remained their individual choice whether or not to take up the vaccine. The concerns around fertility were particularly worrying for those of child-bearing age.

“ Some young people were very reluctant on receiving their vaccine invitation because of the stories and conspiracies which were circulating regarding fertility/menstrual problems with young females. This made them feel uneasy and afraid of putting themselves through certain health problems if they have the vaccine. This was due to stories and videos being shared on social media. ”

## – in individuals

The community champions model was already in place and could be readily extended to reach local communities, with champions repeatedly reporting that the most effective approach to changing people's approach to vaccination was working on a one-to-one basis. This was evidenced by the diversity of people who engaged as community champions. The overwhelming majority of groups and their champions described how in-person contact (with a single individual or a small group) and the impact of sharing lived experiences was crucial in tackling uncertainty and boosting uptake.

Bradford Hate Crime Alliance detailed how “getting alongside” people and having direct engagement with them as they went about their day-to-day lives influenced personal decision making. In one submitted reflection, a champion spoke about how their face-to-face discussions were particularly successful, helping them reach 146 people. Others echoed both these views, recommending that listening and speaking directly to others was

“the key to getting messages across to communities” And achieving “open discussions”. Word-of-mouth recommendations from those who had received the vaccine provided reassurance (especially within families) and had a positive impact on those who were hesitant or concerned. Some described how in-person dialogue and the ability to share stories and experiences allowed people to be better able to “discuss and feedback their questions and worries.” Generally, the feedback pointed to how “face-to-face chats are much more productive”.

“ The most effective way to engage with the clients has been through face-to-face interactions, this is because we have offered a hand holding service where we have supported them with booking appointments and offering them support/help. ”

“ Putting leaflets in the food parcels has also been good as people have been calling to ask questions and get additional support to book appointments. The champions have been doing follow up calls which has made the clients feel they have additional support and they have been able to reassure them if they are worried or scared. ”

Both community champions and the general public grew weary of conversations about Covid. People were reluctant to discuss Covid after a while, and this made it very difficult to keep up momentum.

“ We had to try and start conversations about more positive work and then bring the conversation back round to vaccines/mental health/long Covid. ”

Possible missed opportunities were not taking a family wide approach to training volunteers. This was particularly an issue raised by some of the groups supported by Equality Together.

## – in local leaders

A particularly helpful approach was when local leaders became involved in promoting the vaccine.

## CASE STUDY

### Windrush Generation

We work with people from the Windrush Generation, who are predominately of a Black background. It has been difficult to get them to take the vaccine, and there is still some hesitancy. I am a Covid community champion, and had reservations about taking the vaccine. I knew that I would take it at some point but found that some of the government messaging wasn't clear. I am an advocate of the vaccine, and our messaging at Windrush was to weigh up the pros and cons. I had Covid and was severely ill with it, so I used myself as a case study, when engaging with people. We worked with REN to look at ways to engage with the Black community. We did radio shows in our local area. REN had started to run Q&A sessions with a clinician, and this touched on questions that were never addressed before. It allowed me to get inside knowledge of the vaccine, and the importance of it. As a key figure in the Windrush Generation programme, we can reach around 6,000 people, and I felt that it was time for me to take the vaccine and use social media to get the message across, that if I am ok with taking it, you should be to. My views on social media have been over 1000 so far, and some of our community has come forward to take the vaccine.



## Safety issues

The critical thinking campaign materials were designed to help people form their own decisions about what would keep them safe. This was a significant move away from the more traditional approach of myth-busting. Some champions felt they had wasted a lot of time talking to people who were committed anti-vaxxers. On reflection they felt that their time would have been better spent providing the information and letting people make up their own minds. Apart from vaccine uptake, the champions were able to share hygiene and basic safety measures that people could put in place.

“ Many people were encouraged to protect themselves and others, by getting vaccinated, by handwashing, sanitizing, wearing of masks and also by self-isolating during lockdown and when they have been in touch with an infected person. ”

As the pandemic continued, mental health and domestic abuse concerns rose to the surface. The one-to-one conversations were invaluable in supporting people, as were group activities with trusted organisations/contacts. Signposting to appropriate support was facilitated through attendance at the co-production meetings and through the structure of champions leads. Therefore, the successes of the project were much wider than vaccine uptake alone.

“ We would have run more interactive sessions, which were fun. Young people had been affected by many difficulties during the pandemic, and it is important that they are heard and have a safe outlet to share how they are feeling and express their views and opinions. ”

## HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

The sessions will contain key information and are completely free! It will cover valuable NHS advice on topics such as wellbeing, mental health, healthy diets, drug and alcohol awareness and many more.

**Activities for women will be Yoga, Karate, Circuit Training, Jazz and Tap.**

**Activities for men will be Ice Hockey, Rugby, Cricket and Football.**

Healthy lunch will be served before the end of the programme.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

**14/12/2021 | 10AM-3PM**  
**MONTHLY MEETINGS AT**  
**INSPIRE ACADEMY,**  
**BRADFORD, BD8 7RZ**

CONNECTING ROMA  
C.I.C.

BRADFORD  
CITY OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
ENGLAND  
BRADFORD  
everyone  
EQUALITY  
TOGETHER  
REN

Connecting Roma - Mental health event poster

# Key learnings



Bangladeshi Youth Organisation - Games event, to tackle isolation

- 1 Bradford Council's prior investment in the Ambassadors programme was critical in contributing to the success of the project. This prior work in developing trusted relationships meant that community networks were already established and the project could get off the ground as quickly as possible.
- 2 Excellent existing relationships between the Council and local delivery organisations allowed for effective devolved responsibility and co-produced approaches to communications and community engagement. One-to-one conversations proved very effective in passing on positive messaging within communities.
- 3 The use of local leaders to promote critical thinking and messaging was invaluable in developing trust between the Council and certain under-represented or sceptical communities.
- 4 Different communications strategies (e.g. translating materials into multiple languages and using WhatsApp and social media sites to communicate messaging) proved effective in reaching under-represented communities.



Don't forget your  
**COVID-19 vaccination**

Make sure you keep this record  
card in your purse or wallet.

For more information on the  
COVID-19 vaccination or when  
to do after your vaccination,  
see [www.hk.hk/immunisation](https://www.hk.hk/immunisation)

COVID-19 vaccination

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