Dear community teams

Thank you for all your work in helping with community messages around Covid-19 and being a key link in what all our communities need to stay safe.

The following notes have been designed to give you an overview of work around the Covid vaccine and what it means for Manchester people.

It also contains answers from David Regan, our Director of Public Health in response to some of the questions or concerns that we have heard about in Manchester. These answers are written as prompts for when having conversations with the people you meet on neighbourhoods exercises.

It's also important to remember that the vaccine is part of a 3-way plan to help stope the spread of the virus -including testing and also the key Covid rules around hygiene, social distancing and face coverings.

Background:

From today Dec 8, the NHS will begin vaccinating patients against coronavirus in 50 hospital hubs across England.

People aged 80 and over as well as care home workers will be first to receive the covid-19 vaccination, along with NHS workers who are at higher risk.

Other priority groups will then follow in age and potential risk order.

This is very welcome news because having the vaccine will be the best way to protect the most vulnerable people from coronavirus and has the potential to save tens of thousands of lives.

Vaccinations from hospitals in Manchester

For us in Manchester, patients aged 80 and above who are already attending Salford Royal Hospital or Stepping Hill Hospital in Stockport as outpatients, and those who are being discharged home after a hospital stay, will be among the first to receive covid-19 vaccine. All those who are vaccinated will have a second booster jab around 21 days later.

More hospitals will start vaccinating over the coming days as the vaccination programme progresses. We expect this to include Manchester Royal Infirmary and Wythenshawe Hospital.

Vaccinations in the community in Manchester

As part of the first phase of vaccinations the city was asked to identify an area to start community-based vaccinations, where there is high number of people aged 80 or over, along with other reasons linked to how it could be run by GP groups (Primary Care Networks).

Wythenshawe has been chosen as the first area to start from Tuesday 16th December - and more areas will follow very soon.

The site for Wythenshawe will be the Active Lifestyle Centre.

People who are eligible for the vaccination will be contacted either by their GP with all the information they need about it. Eligibility will depend on when people turned 80, along with any other medical considerations.

Once people are called for the vaccine, they will receive the first dose and then 21 days later, they will get the second.

This is really important step in how we fight Covid, but we also understand that people may have fears, so David Regan has answered the following questions which have been fed back to us through community groups:

The vaccine had been developed very quickly – how can we know It is safe?
I'm sure a lot of people will want to ask this and that's very understandable.
And, yes the vaccine has been completed at speed –but that's because we are In a pandemic and it is a priority with our best scientific minds working on it, and dedicated to it.
The vaccine has undergone months of rigorous testing and will only be used once the strict safety approvals have been met. This includes approval from the MHRA, the official UK regulator, like all other medicines and devices.
I'm going to have it and I hope my family will too.

Does it change your DNA?
No, it definitely doesn't. The content of the Covid vaccines does not go anywhere near our own genetic material and has no ability to change it or us.

There's lots of rumours about it containing human or animal products
No, it doesn't contain either human or animal products (so no porcine content either).

**I've heard you can catch flu from the flu jab – can you get Covid from
this vaccination?**
Taking flu first: the flu vaccination used in our country does not contain live virus, so it does not – and cannot – give anyone flu.
If people do feel a bit under the weather after a flu jab it is because their own immune system is kicking in after the vaccination. Sometimes, if people catch a cold at the same they think it is due to the vaccination, but it isn't -it's just a coincidence.
The Covid vaccination does not contain the actual virus, so it's physically impossible to catch the disease from it.

What if I've had Covid already – will the vaccination work for me?

Even if you have had Covid, and were eligible for the vaccination, it would be a good idea to have it. This is because we still do not know how long immunity lasts. Having the jab would help to ensure your immunity is as strong as it can be.

Will I be forced to have the vaccination?
No, you won't, it is by choice. If you decide against it you would need to be aware that you are at greater risk of the virus and of passing it on.

I've heard that the vaccine trials did not include people from ethnic minority backgrounds – is that true?
No, trials did include people from ethnic minority backgrounds. The vaccine producers did make a call for more volunteers recently so that the study matched vulnerable groups – just like they did with the over 65s too.

Should I leave a gap between getting the flu and Covid vaccines?

We are also encouraging people to have their flu vaccination as soon as possible. The flu vaccine is important because if you're at higher risk from coronavirus, you're also more at risk of problems from flu. Research shows people can catch both diseases at the same time, with serious and potentially serious consequences

People also need to have at least 7 days between a flu and a Covid vaccine.