



Together for Health: Summary Report

Samantha Bingham, Development Manager
Community Action Network
September 2025 - February 2026

Together for Health: Summary Report

Project Overview



Background

The Dorset Integrated Vaccination Service, led by Dorset HealthCare, is a central community ‘hub’ for vaccinations, supporting health and wellbeing at every stage of life, from maternity and early years through to adulthood. The service has a dedicated outreach team that reach out into communities to deliver life changing vaccines and aims to ensure their service is inclusive and accessible as well as supporting a principle of Making Every Contact Count (MECC).

In Dorset, we know that some of our communities are less engaged with vaccination services, which can lead to lower protection against illness.

The Together for Health pilot was created with Community Action Network (CAN) partnering with with a local community group to co-create an engaging Autumn event and seek to understand some of the barriers to vaccination engagement, whilst raising awareness of the vaccination team, importance of vaccines and to offer Winter vaccines in the community.

1. Introduction



The Power of Connection

Community Action Network (CAN), an award-winning infrastructure organisation with trusted relationships within local ethnically diverse communities, identified and approached Nigerian Community Dorset to co-lead this engagement and awareness raising event.

Acting as the connector, CAN brought together the Vaccination Team, LiveWell Dorset and Nigerian Community Dorset and supported a co-produced approach by designing an engagement session, shaping insight gathering methods and ensuring the approach respected people's cultural backgrounds and lived experience. CAN provided planning, advice and guidance, on the day facilitation and creative insight gathering.

Together, these activities generated a detailed understanding of the factors influencing vaccine confidence, health engagement and trust in services among members of the Nigerian community in Dorset. The findings in this report are intended to support Dorset HealthCare's Vaccination Service to shape future approaches, improve access, address barriers and strengthen relationships with ethnically diverse communities across the county.

2. Planning and Methodology

1. Initial engagement

CAN began by meeting with Nigerian Community Dorset to introduce the proposal, outline the purpose of the work and explore whether the approach aligned with the community's priorities.

2. Establishing a working group

Once our ethnically diverse community partner was confirmed, CAN convened a working group including representatives from:

- Nigerian Community Dorset
- Dorset HealthCare's Vaccination Team
- LiveWell Dorset
- and CAN staff.

These sessions were used to collectively agree the aims of the event, refine research questions and confirm roles, responsibilities and expectations. The collaborative process helped ensure that all voices were heard and that the event design reflected both community insight and sharing clinical expertise.

3. Designing an insight gathering approach

Based on feedback from Nigerian Community Dorset, CAN designed an insight-gathering methodology that fitted naturally into an existing regular community event. This approach helped maximise attendance, reduce barriers and create a familiar, comfortable environment for open discussion.

The structure for the session included:

- Sharing food at the start, recognising its role in attracting attendance, creating connection and setting a friendly, welcoming tone.
- A presentation from the Vaccination Team, providing clear information about vaccines, addressing common concerns and creating space for questions.
- Multiple creative feedback methods, chosen to give people different ways to express their views:
 - Filmed "vox pop" interviews
 - A community conversation board
 - Live sketchnoting to visually capture ideas
 - A short, traditional feedback form.

This combination ensured a blend of qualitative and quantitative insights.

4. Pop up clinics during the event

To turn insight gathering into practical support, the event also included:

- A vaccination clinic, enabling people to receive COVID and/or flu vaccinations on the day if they wished.
- A LiveWell Dorset health checks clinic, offering wider health and wellbeing assessments.

Providing these services in the same space as the engagement activities helped reduce access barriers and allowed attendees to act immediately on the information they received.

3. Delivery

With up to 20 members of Nigerian Community Dorset attending, the event achieved an excellent turnout and created a warm, engaging atmosphere.



Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with participants expressing appreciation for the chance to hear clear information about vaccinations, understand how they support their health and share their own views and experiences.

The combination of friendly conversation, accessible information and opportunities to ask questions directly to vaccination nurses and professionals helped build trust and encourage open dialogue about vaccines and wider wellbeing.



“Absolutely brilliant, I’d love to do this anytime. [You’d come again?] Oh definitely!”

“Formally I was scared due to the fact that you hear stories they used foetus to make vaccines, so it does put me off. But after a while I realise that these are stories and what is most important is that it does help your body to fight against the problem.”

NCD Community member.



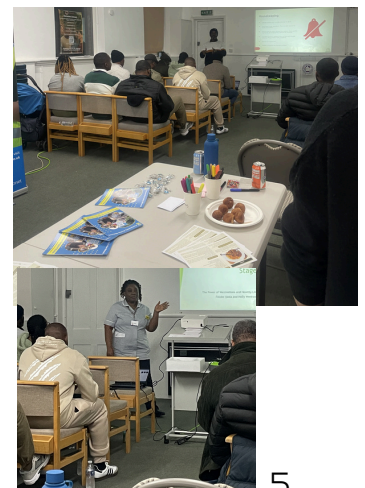
“We’re learning all the time about what helps people to feel more comfortable, understanding the types of questions that people have. It’s not always the things that we think it is that people are worried about sometimes it’s something completely different so these events are really, really important for that”.

Suzanne Charles, Matron, Vaccination Clinical Sites, Dorset HealthCare

“The outreach and the information shared today is helpful.

Thank you”.

NCD Community member.



4. Key Findings

Insights gathered from the engagement event create a rich picture of what supports and challenges vaccine confidence, health engagement and trust in local services.

How people find and use health information

People said they go to:

- their GP for advice
- the NHS website
- friends who work in healthcare
- online sources and social media.

Some people said they didn't know where to find health information, reinforcing the need for clear, simple signposting.

- Many people rely on health professionals, trusting those who have studied in their profession.
- Some people prefer in person conversations, finding them easier and more reassuring.
- A number of people emphasised the need for accessible information, particularly for people with sensory impairments or cognitive difficulties.
- Several respondents said they want signposting to reputable websites, mirroring community requests for trusted online sources.

Together, these findings highlight a strong preference for clear, direct, trustworthy and accessible health information.

Understanding vaccine confidence and concerns

People shared a mixture of worries, myths, and misunderstandings, including:

- Concerns about whether vaccines were tested with people from their community in mind.
- Feeling that some vaccines were “rushed through”.
- Bad stories and misinformation lingering over time.
- Cultural differences, such as vaccines not being emphasised in the same way in their home countries.
- Questions about whether vaccines might “give you the flu”.
- Desire for positive, reliable information that feels relevant to their culture.

Who the information comes from matters

People reported that having time to talk directly to professionals helped dispel myths and build confidence.

Some attendees shared their confidence in vaccines as low, revealing feelings of fear, uncertainty or lack of understanding. Others expressed a higher confidence when they felt informed and supported, showing that knowledge directly influences empowerment.

A strong recurring message was the need for more information, more often, and in formats that are easy to follow.

Time to build trust and cultural sensitivity are central to improving vaccine engagement.

5. Key findings cont...

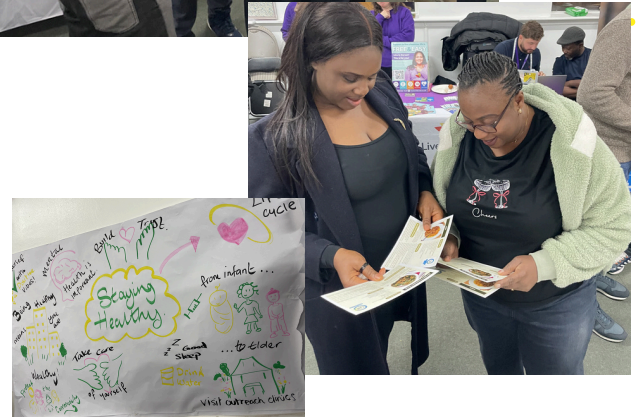
What support people want to help them manage their health and take up vaccinations

Insights show people would like:

- More information about health as they age.
- Clear explanations of why vaccines are recommended, how they work, and when they should be taken.
- Face to face conversations with health professionals.
- Peer and community support.
- Signposting to reputable websites.
- Information that is accessible and inclusive.

Questions captured that community members asked during the event, bring opportunities to understand our communities gaps in knowledge around vaccinations. This is key insight to support an increase in knowledge sharing and a way to strengthen local messaging.

- *Where can I check which vaccines I should have?*
- *Can I walk in anywhere for a COVID jab?*
- *What vaccines are recommended and how often?*
- *Does the flu vaccine give me the flu?*



What people shared they valued about the event

- the chance to discuss concerns openly
- the friendliness of the environment
- the opportunity to meet NHS staff face to face
- the cultural relevance and co-created nature of the event.

Health professionals said they learnt

- the real concerns people hold
- the importance of cultural understanding
- how trust is built through presence, listening and respect.



6. Outcomes

Number of vaccinations given on the day

The vaccination service administered four flu and one COVID vaccination to attendees at the event.



Number of LiveWell Dorset Health Checks delivered

The Health Check Practitioner delivered three full NHS health checks and four MOT (shorter NHS Health Checks) during the engagement session and confirmed a follow-up visit with the community to carry out additional checks for more people.



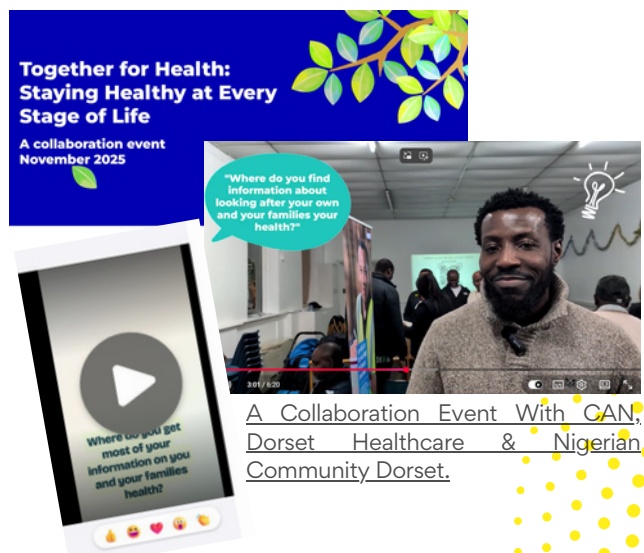
Demonstrating impact

The event confirmed a co-created community-based engagement session is a powerful way to build trust for health and lifestyle services. The findings from the session provide a strong foundation for future outreach, communication strategies, and partnership work across Dorset.



Creating a lasting evidence and creative resources

The CAN team captured an overview of the day including people's reactions, views and reflections through film, a library of photos and written evidence a valuable resource for Dorset HealthCare to use in future engagement, learning and service development.



YouTube short video and social media reels.

7. Conclusion

The collaborative event with Nigerian Community Dorset demonstrated the real value of co-designed, community-based health engagement. The voluntary sector can play an important role in bringing health and lifestyle service together with community groups and demonstrating its impact. Coming together in trusted cultural spaces creates the conditions for honest, meaningful conversations that would not typically happen in clinical settings.

The insights gathered across filmed interviews, the conversation board, one-to-one discussions and the wider feedback form show consistent themes. People rely heavily on trusted professionals, clear and accessible information is essential and vaccine confidence is deeply influenced by trust, cultural context and the ability to ask questions without judgement.

People expressed a strong desire for more understanding, more reassurance and more opportunities to learn about health and preventative care in ways that feel relevant to their everyday lives. At the same time, the event highlighted a willingness within the community to engage positively with NHS services when the approach is respectful, culturally informed and relationship based. The overwhelmingly positive feedback demonstrates a clear appetite for continuing this style of outreach and partnership working.



We would like to say a big thank you and shout out to Azukaego Umeonigwe and his team at Nigerian Community Dorset and to everyone who took part in sharing their views. A thank you to Matt Briant and colleagues from Live Well Dorset and Holly Wentworth and the incredible Vaccination Team at Dorset HealthCare.

8. Suggestions for Future Work

1. Continue to work collaboratively with voluntary partners to co design community events

- Deliver similar events with other ethnically diverse communities across Dorset.
- Maintain the model of co-planning with community leaders to ensure relevance and trust.

2. Improve access to clear, culturally relevant information

- Create simple, visual and easy read resources addressing common questions (e.g. vaccine timing, side effects and walk-in options).
- Ensure resources reflect diverse communities in imagery and language.

3. Strengthen trusted, in-person conversations

- Offer more drop-ins or outreach clinics where people can talk privately with health professionals.
- Link and co-organise with voluntary sector partners and use existing events and activities.
- Familiar faces help build trust over time.

4. Enhance signposting to reliable online information

- Provide guidance on where to find accurate health information, especially for vaccines and preventative care.
- Share recommended, reputable links during events and through community groups.

5. Build community health champions

- Work with VCS and ethnically diverse communities to identify and support local trusted voices who can share accurate information and signpost peers.
- Offer training for community volunteers on how to have safe, supportive health conversations.

6. Address misinformation through culturally sensitive conversations

- Develop communication assets directly responding to common myths heard at the event (e.g. “Does the flu vaccine give you flu?”, “Are vaccines tested on people like me?”).
- Use trusted community channels and leaders to share these messages.

7. Strengthen follow up support

- Provide clear pathways after events, such as where to get health checks, vaccinations or wellbeing support.
- Ensure people know who to contact for further questions.

8. Ensure accessibility for people with additional needs

- Ask people how they prefer to receive information before providing it.

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE