

We pledge to help more Black African and Black African Caribbean communities to protect themselves and their communities from COVID-19

For the past two years, as a community, we have witnessed with great sadness, the loss, grief and sorrow that COVID-19 has brought into the lives of so many people we know and love. This loss has forever impacted our families, friends and our wider community.

As black leaders and health professionals, the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on black African and black Caribbean communities has been extremely heart breaking. As a people, we are more likely to experience poorer health outcomes with a higher proportion of diabetes, cardiovascular disease and other long term health conditions that create a greater risk profile to COVID-19.

Sadly, even with all the evidence around how safe and effective the vaccine is against COVID-19 and the urgency to get vaccinated, the uptake of vaccinations has been slower and much lower in our community compared to other ethnic minority groups.

We pledge to do more to help you to protect yourselves and each other. To reassure you about vaccination, we will continue to go on record to state:

- We believe that coronavirus vaccinations are safe and is the best way out of the pandemic
- We will treat you with respect and compassion, when you come for your first, second or booster COVID vaccine, or your first, second, third and booster vaccine if you are immunosuppressed
- We pledge to be available to you and all members of the Black community, to honestly and openly discuss the merits of vaccination and answer your concerns
- The COVID-19 vaccinations we use in the UK, do not contain any animal products.

Our pledge comes as we encourage you to come forward and have your COVID-19 vaccination. We will discuss with you any concerns and worries you have, which are the same for other people too. For example, about side effects, or fertility. For these reasons, the NHS, which has looked after all of us when we needed medical help, is working with trusted voices in communities to increase confidence in the vaccine. Our trusted voices are people who understand these concerns and have experienced the challenges we all face.

Whether it is your first COVID-19 vaccination or your booster, we thank you for taking this step. You are helping to protect those who are most vulnerable in our local communities and to prevent more people going into hospital seriously ill or dying.

In addition to vaccination, you can also protect yourself this winter by wearing a facemask if you are able, washing your hands regularly and practising social distancing. If you are eligible, we also encourage you to have your flu jab. Please also follow the guidance on testing and self-isolating if you have the virus. More information is available at www.nhs.uk

You can get your COVID-19 vaccination by booking online or attending a walk-in or pop-up vaccination site. Whichever is your preference – find it online at www.nhs.uk/CovidVaccination. Please be reassured that do not need to have identification or be registered with a GP to receive your vaccinations.

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We hope your support will mean that more of us are protected from serious COVID-19 illness.

Yours faithfully,

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