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13 May 2021

Jennifer Metcalfe

Healthwatch Stockton-On-Tees

Carers Way

Newton Aycliffe

County Durham DL5 4SF

Good afternoon Jennifer,

**Re: 'Covid-19 Vaccine Report (Feb-March 2021)'**

Thank you very much for sharing the latest Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees report with us, the content of which will inform the ongoing work of the Tees Valley Vaccination Board, helping to drive discussion around what has gone well and what could have been improved upon regarding the Covid-19 vaccination programme in Stockton-on-Tees.

It is fantastic that the majority of respondents had either already received their vaccine, or would receive it when offered, but we do acknowledge the potential barriers to vaccine uptake, which include appointment availability and the location of vaccination sites. Since the findings in this report were captured, many more venues have successfully offered Covid-19 vaccinations, including Bowesfield Lane Mosque in Stockton, the Al Mustafa Community Centre in Middlesbrough, large vaccination hubs at the Darlington Arena and Middlesbrough Riverside Stadium and various community pharmacy sites, all of which have increased access to vaccines and will hopefully help to alleviate concerns.

We also acknowledge that some respondents said they would not receive a Covid-19 vaccination, and that a belief that the vaccine is unsafe is one of the reasons for this. Our website has lots of information regarding Covid-19 vaccines which we would encourage Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees and other local partners to share to reassure people that receiving a vaccine is safe and will help to protect them from serious illness arising from a Covid-19 infection. [This information can be accessed here.](https://teesvalleyccg.nhs.uk/covid-19-vaccination-frequently-asked-questions/)

While it is encouraging to hear that respondents thought that communications relating to the Covid-19 vaccine rollout were clear and effective, it is important to reflect on feedback that informal carers and those who provide community services expressed disappointment in the lack of information and support for them to receive a vaccine. Carers, frontline health workers, frontline social care workers and those who work in care homes are all eligible to receive their vaccine, so we would welcome Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees promoting this, and we will also ensure that messages to support this are published to our website and social media platforms.

Thank you again for sharing your findings and we look forward to reading your next report.

Kind regards,

**Dave Gallagher**

**Chief Officer**

**NHS Tees Valley CCG**

**Janet Walker**

**Medical Director**

**NHS Tees Valley CCG**