

# Your experience of the COVID-19 vaccination programme



April 2021

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## Executive Summary

In March 2021, Healthwatch Sunderland and Healthwatch South Tyneside launched a survey to gather people's general experiences of using their local COVID-19 vaccination programme.

This report covers those patients who had used either a Sunderland based vaccine centre or are a resident of Sunderland and responded to the survey between the 30<sup>th</sup> March and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021. We received a total of 163 surveys.

The purpose of this report is to share the findings with key NHS providers and commissioners, to help them identify what is working well and highlight those areas that need to be improved.

### Key themes/findings

The survey was based on seven main sections. The main findings under each of the sections are as follows:

- **Invitation to receive the vaccine** - The majority of respondents received the invitation for both their first and second vaccine appointment either through their place of work or via a text message.
- **Booking of appointments** - Overall, the vast majority of respondents found booking both their first and second vaccine either very easy or fairly easy. Those who rated it as difficult, in the main, commented on difficulties of finding available booking slots for both their first and second vaccine, when booking in their own appointments via the online system.
- **Vaccine venue** - The majority of respondents found getting to the venue for their vaccine either very easy or easy. A minority of respondents had difficulty getting to their vaccination venue because it was either out of their local area and were therefore unfamiliar with the location or because they found the Nightingale Vaccination Centre difficult to find, due to roadworks in the area and/or poor signposting.
- **Receiving the vaccine** - The vast majority of patients, felt safe in the venue whilst receiving their vaccine, received a vaccination card after their first and/or second vaccine, were informed of potential side effects and informed of which vaccine they were receiving.
- **Information to take away** - The majority of respondents received an information leaflet to take away with them and found the information contained very useful or useful.
- **Second vaccinations** - 50% of respondents did not know when they would receive their second vaccination. However of these individuals, 70% stated

that it had been explained to them what would happen when it was time for their second vaccine.

- **Overall experience** - Respondents were very positive about their overall vaccine experience with many thanking the staff and the volunteers involved and the how well organised and efficient the programme was working. The few negative comments received, in the main were related to the online booking system and the frustrations of obtaining an appointment for both their first and second vaccine.

### **Next steps**

The response to our survey to date has been incredible, we appreciate the time taken by all respondents who have shared their experiences with us so far.

We are sharing the feedback received with commissioners and key providers on a regular basis for several months to come as the vaccination programme progresses. We are doing this in order to provide relevant information in a timely manner, so service providers can identify areas that are working well and those that may require further improvements.

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## Introduction

### What is Healthwatch?

Healthwatch is the independent local champion for people who use health and social care services. We are here to make sure that those running services put people at the heart of care.

By speaking to residents in our local area we aim to understand their needs, experiences, and concerns of accessing and using local health and social care services. We can then speak out on their behalf to local service providers, focusing on people's concerns about current services and ensuring they are listened to and addressed by those who are running services.

We encourage and work with local services to involve local residents in the changes to health and social care provision. The ultimate aim is to get things right for the future, with health and social care services which meet the needs of the local community.



*We champion what matters to you and  
work with others  
to find ideas that work.*

*We are independent and committed to  
making the  
biggest difference to you.*



## Findings

The findings in this section are based on responses to the survey. In total, there were **163** survey responses for the period of March 30<sup>th</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

## Demographics

The demographic breakdown of those individuals who completed the survey is given below:

### Gender - 163 answered the question and 0 skipped the question



	Count	Percentage
Males	35	21%
Females	127	78%
Non-binary	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Prefer not to say	1	1%

### Age ranges - 163 answered the question 0 skipped the question

	Count	Percentage
18-24	3	2%
25-34	10	6%
35-44	19	12%
45-54	39	24%
55-64	48	29%
65-74	30	18%
75+	14	9%
Prefer not to say	0	0%

### Ethnicity - 163 answered the question 0 skipped the question

	Count	Percentage
Arab	0	0%
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	3	2%
Asian/Asian British: Indian	0	0%
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	0	0%
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	1	0.5%
Asian/Asian British: Any other Asian/Asian British background	0	0%
Black/Black British: African	0	0%
Black/Black British: Caribbean	0	0%
Black/Black British: Any other Black/Black British background	0	0%
Gypsy, Roma or Traveller	0	0%
Mixed/ Multiple ethnic groups: Asian and White	0	0%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups: Black African and White	0	0%
Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups: Any other Mixed /Multiple ethnic backgrounds	1	0.5%
White: British/English/ Northern Irish/Scottish/Welsh	155	95%
White: Irish	0	0%
White: Any other White background	2	1.5%
Another ethnic background	0	0%
I'd prefer not to say	1	0.5%

Are you currently pregnant or have you been pregnant in the last year?  
(157 people answered this question, 6 people skipped the question)

	Count	Percentage
Yes	0	0%
No	156	99%
I'd prefer not to say	1	1%

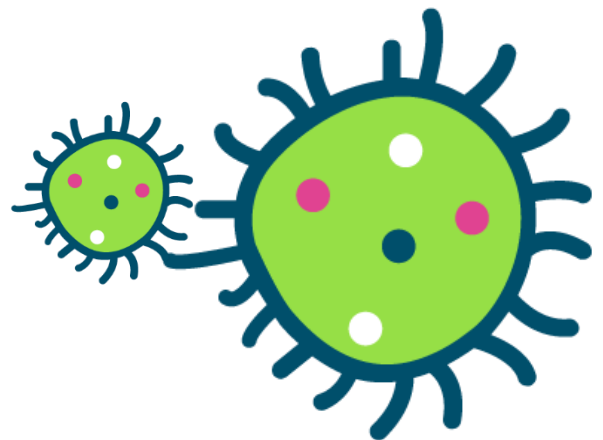
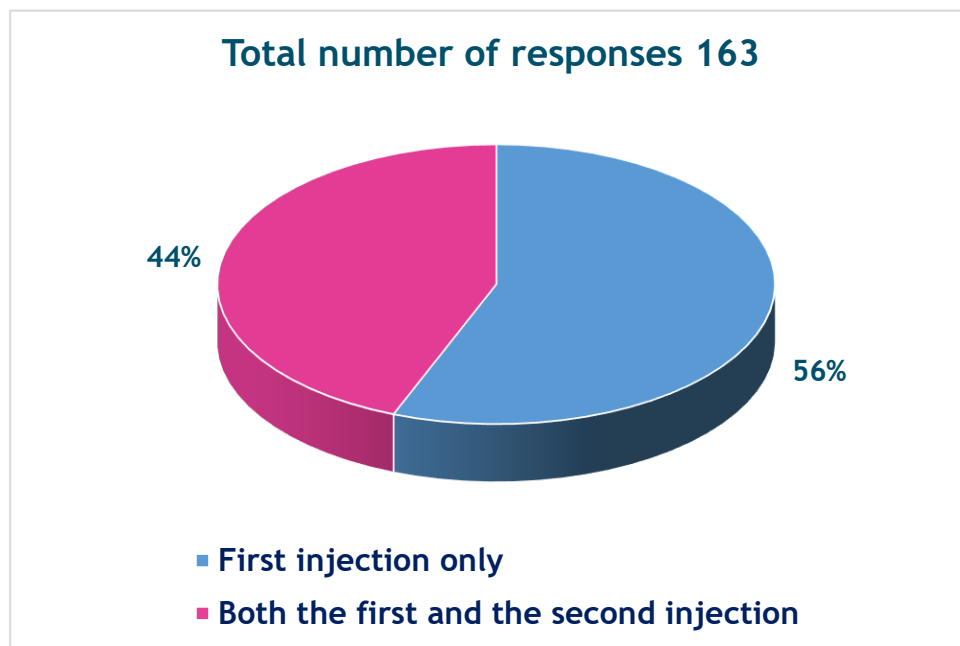
Do you consider yourself to be a carer, have a disability or a long-term health condition? (Select all that apply):

	Count
Yes, I consider myself to be a carer	43
Yes, I consider myself to have a disability	29
Yes, I consider myself to have a long-term condition	44
None of the above	65
I prefer not to say	3



## Please can you tell us which vaccines you have received?

At this stage in the vaccine programme the majority of those who responded to the survey, 56% had only received their first injection.

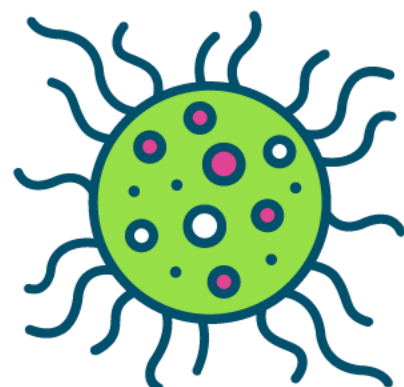
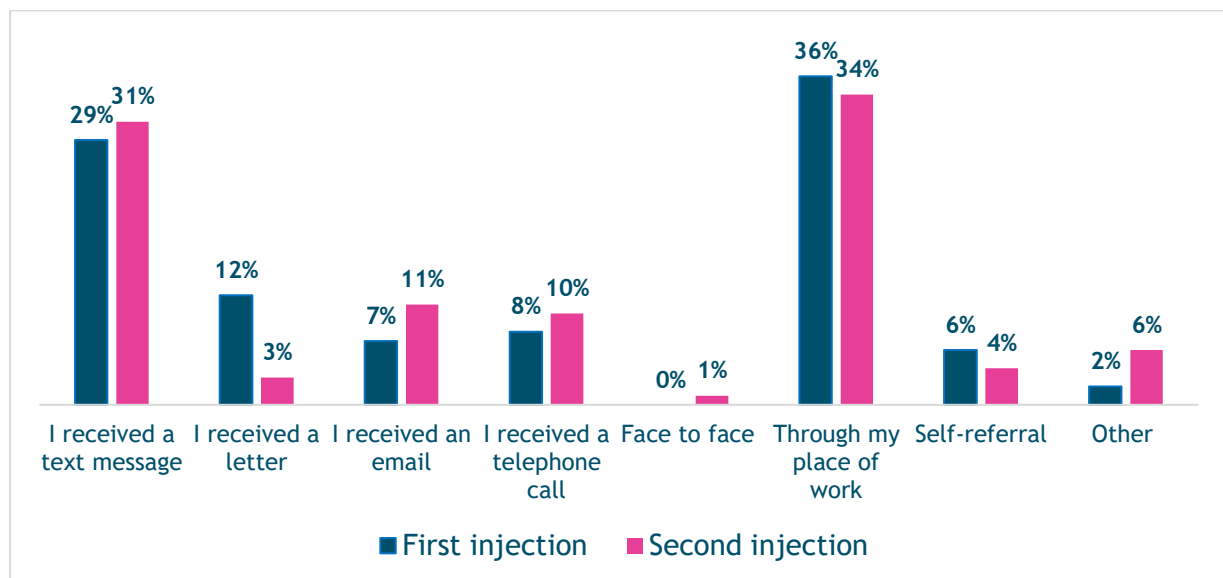


## Receiving your invitation for an appointment

### How were you invited to make your appointment to receive your vaccine?

The majority of respondents had received their invitation to have both their first and second vaccine either through their place of work (36%,34%) or via a text message (29%,31%).

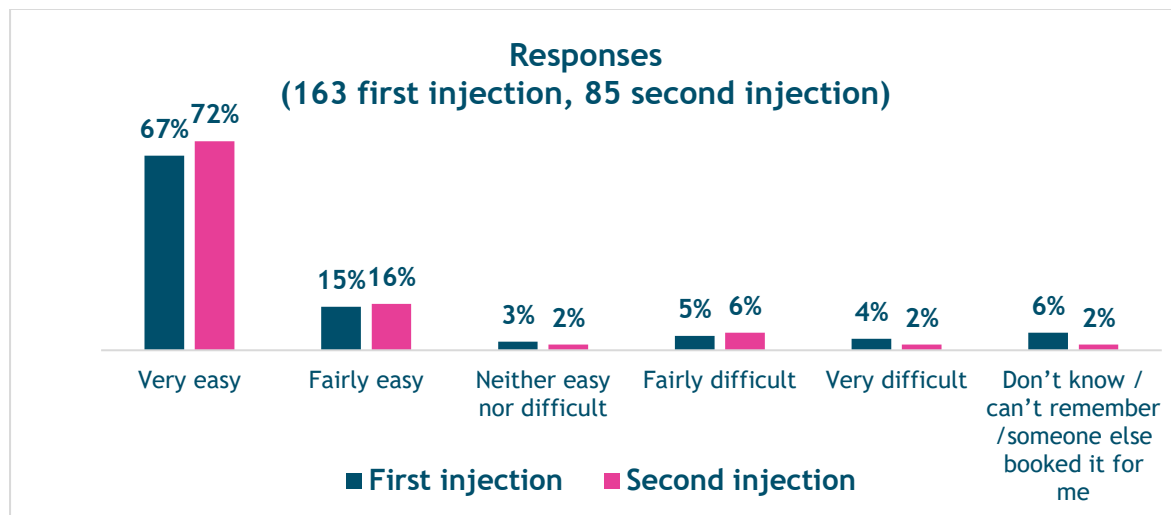
Some respondents stated they received their invitations in other ways, these included through voluntary work or through their GP practice. One person stated that following Government guidance, they applied online, and another person attended a session with their husband who is vulnerable and was offered their second vaccination too.



## Booking your appointment

### How easy was it for you to book your appointments?

Overall, the vast majority of Sunderland respondents, for both their first and second vaccination, stated that they found it very easy (67%, 72%) or fairly easy (15%, 16%) to book their appointment.



### Please tell us what you found easy or difficult when booking your appointment for a COVID-19 vaccination.

When we asked patients what they found easy or difficult when booking their appointment, we received mainly positive responses. People cited this was due to the fact that appointments were either booked through their GP practice, workplace or that the booking system was clear and easy to follow. Some of the responses received included:

“My GP sent me a text message (Fulwell Medical Centre). I contacted my GP, who made the appointment for me, it was very efficiently done.”

“We were called by commissioners and told to send so many staff to the Bunny Hill Centre during a certain time slot.”

“Work booked a group session for whole team to attend.”

“Just clicked on the link provided and booked a slot within seconds.”

“Link received and clear instructions given, responded to text and had a choice of appointments.”

A minority of patients informed us that booking their vaccination appointment was difficult, with the main issues cited being the lack of available appointments for their second vaccine. Responses included:

“Issues with the website. Unable to book first if you couldn't book second.”

“Was just a little difficult trying to match first and second dates but managed after 3 attempts.”

“No appointments available for 2nd appointment therefore took me 2 days for new appointments to show up on system.”

“Constant slots disappearing and when I moved to confirm I needed to refresh constantly to get a local site rather than 60 miles away.”

“Text message did not state who message was for & came on a phone used by more than one person. It also said to click on a link but it was not a smart phone so we had to contact the surgery.”

“The second vaccine was harder to book but I think this was because the appointments and booking systems were new. You could book your first appointment but then you were initially unable to book your second injection so you couldn't proceed. It just took a number of attempts to get both coordinated to proceed. The second injection was delayed but the system was straightforward to book again the later date.”

## Venue for your vaccination

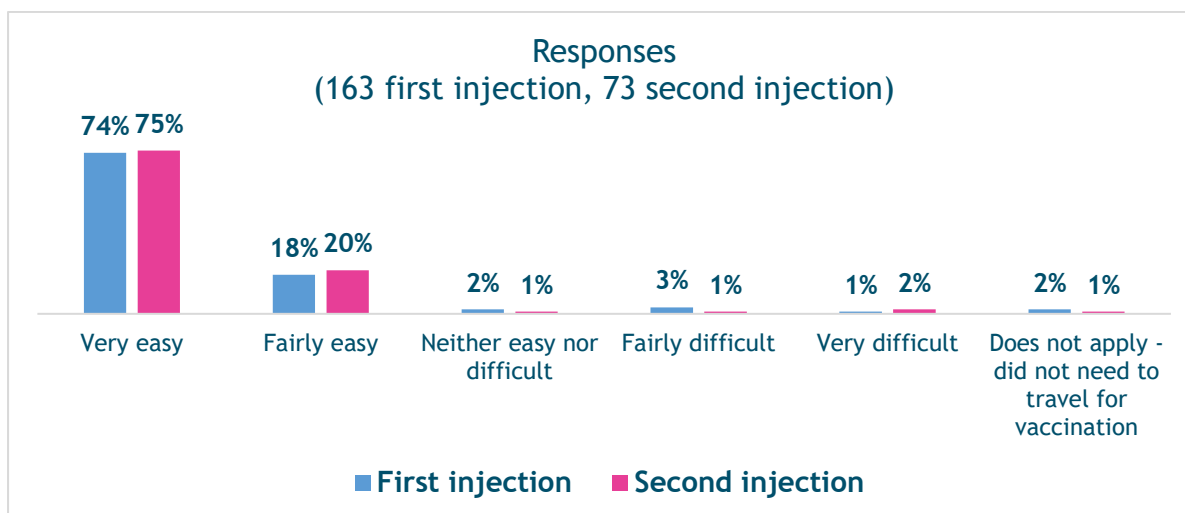
### Where did you receive your vaccination?

The chart below shows where respondents received their first and second vaccinations. Those who responded to say they had received their vaccination at another venue stated this was at the Arnison Vaccination Centre, the Centre for Life Vaccination Centre or at a care home.

	First Vaccine (163 responses)	Second Vaccine (76 responses)
Bunny Hill Primary Care Centre	14%	13%
Houghton Primary Care Centre	7%	10%
Washington Primary Care Centre	8%	6%
Grindon Lane Primary Care Centre	9%	22%
Riverview Health Centre	4%	4%
Nightingale Hospital Sunderland	33%	27%
Millfield Medical Centre	14%	9%
Sunderland Bangladesh International Centre	1%	0%
At Home	0%	0%
At Hospital	0%	0%
GP practice	2%	3%
At place of work	2%	1%
Other	6%	5%

## How easy or difficult did you find it to get to the venue for your vaccination?

When asked how easy it was to get to the venue for their first vaccination the vast majority, 92% of respondents stated they found it very easy or fairly easy, this was similar for those receiving their second vaccine with 95% finding it very easy or fairly easy.



## Please tell us more information about why you found it easy or difficult to travel for your vaccination

The majority of respondents told us it was easy to get to their first and second vaccination appointment as the venue was either known to them, close to their home or workplace, someone took them to their appointment, or the venue was easy to get to by car or public transport and was well signposted. Comments included:

“A wheelchair taxi was arranged for me and my wife by the CCG.”

“It was perfect; no queue, plenty of amazing, kind, friendly people. I was jabbed in less than 4 mins of entering the building. They were closing late on a Saturday night so my husband who was in the car got his too instead of three days later. I cannot thank those wonderful angels enough. I even get emotional now thinking about it. Thank you to each and every one of you.”

“I received my vaccine in my care home.”

“It was a free service and made no stops.”

“Well signposted plenty of parking.”

“I travelled by car so was easy for me to get there, plenty of parking at the door and staff to guide you each step of the way. Extremely well organised and efficient. Was well impressed.”

A minority of respondents stated that their vaccination appointment was difficult to get to, with the majority of these people stating that this was because of the roadworks surrounding the Nightingale Hospital and poor signposting leading to this site. Others stated difficulties were linked to having to travel out of Sunderland for their appointment. Comments included:

“Could have been signposted better, lots of roadworks.”

“Quite a distance to travel, unknown area.”

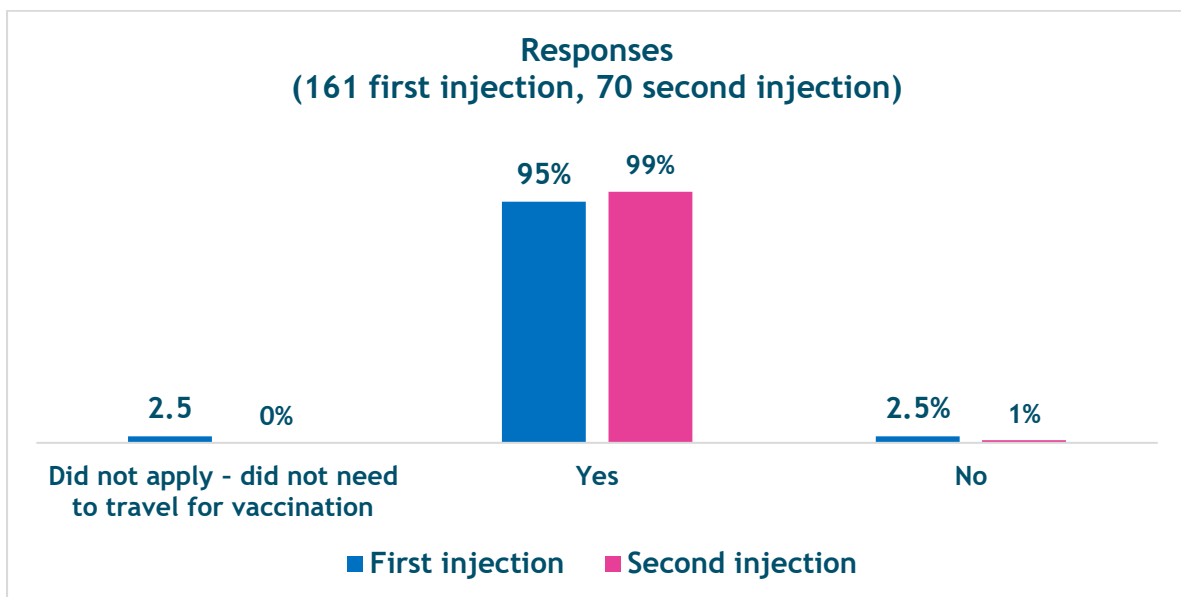
“Road closures and diversions were not very clear

“Roadworks on A19 made it a bit confusing but well signposted after that.”

“This appointment is at a random pharmacy in Stockton, and I have never been there before and will rely on Sat Nav.”

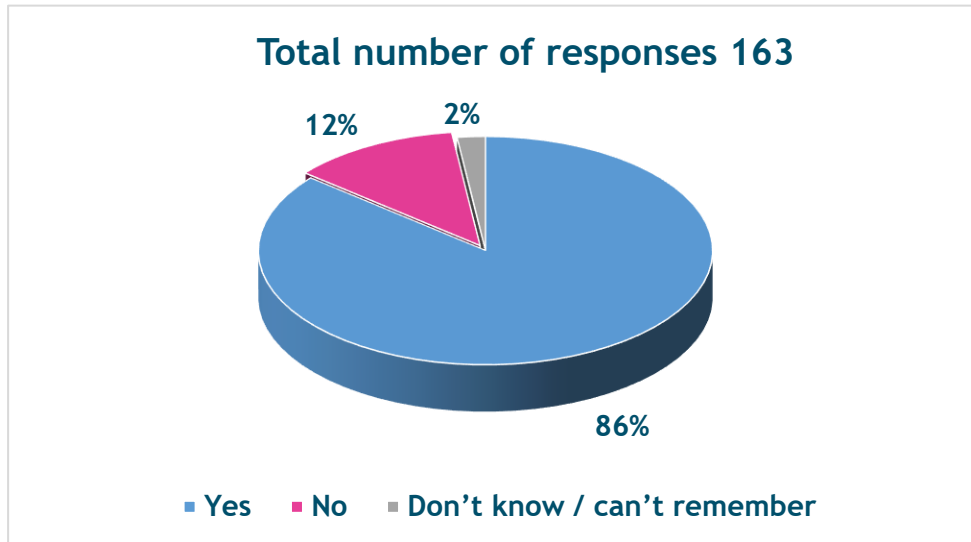
## When arriving at the venue, were you met and shown where to go?

The vast majority of respondents receiving both their first vaccination (95%) and second vaccination (99%) were met when arriving at the venue and were then shown where to go.



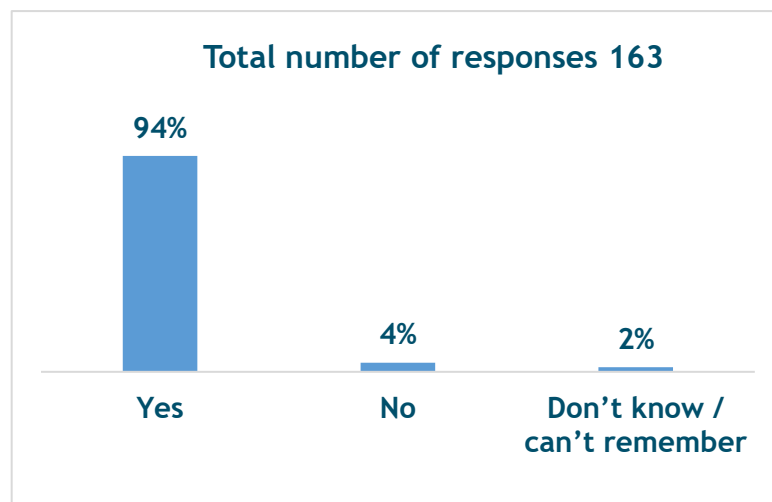
## Were you told which vaccine you were getting?

Overall, the vast majority of respondents 141 (86%) were informed of which vaccine they were receiving, very few 19 (12%) were not.



## When receiving the vaccine was it explained to you about the possible side effects?

Overall, the vast majority of respondents (94%) were informed of the possible side effects of the vaccine and a few (4%) were not.





## Receiving your injection

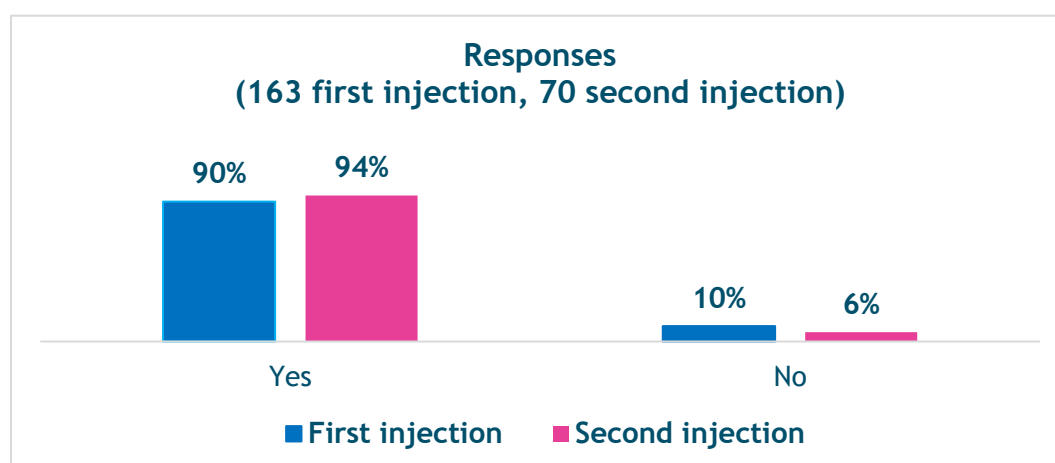
Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements

Overall the vast majority of Sunderland respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statements below which related to safety measures put in place at the vaccination centres.

Sunderland respondents	DNA	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / can't remember
I felt safe while receiving my injection	0%	78%	18%	1%	1%	2%	0%
The staff wore correct PPE	0%	77%	18%	1%	1%	3%	0%
Social distancing measures were in place	0%	78%	17%	0%	2%	3%	0%
People followed social distancing measures	1%	71%	23%	0%	3%	2%	0%
Hand sanitisers were available	1%	76%	18%	0%	0%	2%	3%
The staff were helpful	1%	82%	14%	1%	0%	2%	0%

## After receiving your vaccination did you receive a vaccination record card?

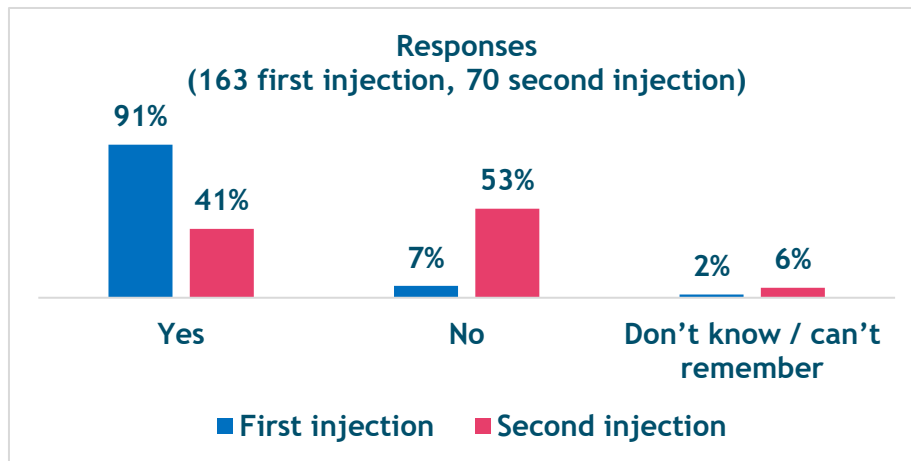
Overall, the vast majority of respondents (90%) did receive a vaccination card after their first vaccination and 94% after the second vaccination.



## Information to take away

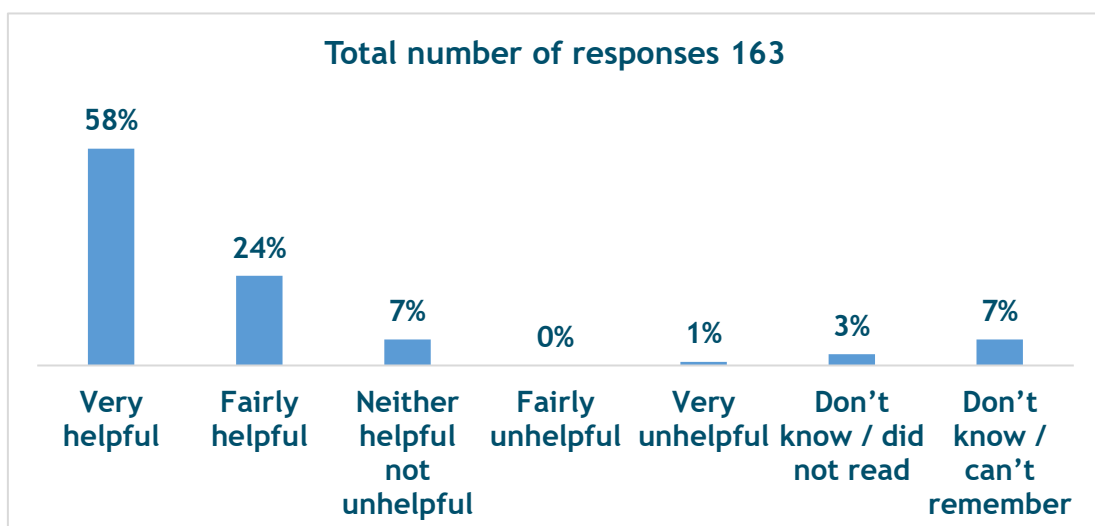
### Did you receive an information leaflet to take away with you?

Overall the majority of respondents receiving their first vaccination (91%) stated that they had received an information leaflet to take away with them.



### If you received some information to take away with you did you find it helpful?

The majority of respondents had found the information they were given to take away either very helpful or fairly helpful 82%.



## Tell us more about why you found the information helpful or unhelpful.

All but three of the respondents to this question indicated that they found the information in the leaflet provided to be clear and useful, especially to refer to when experiencing side effects from the vaccination. Comments included:

“Was as it should be, basic factual information, not complicated.”

“The information listed symptoms or reactions to look for and what to do if you experienced any.”

“Told me what to expect and where to go for help if needed.”

“The leaflet told me all I need to know about the vaccine.”

Although none of remaining three respondents gave negative feedback about the leaflet, one person felt it was inappropriate for their age range, another felt it was not required as they had received information from the nurse who administered their vaccine, and the third person said the information provided was what they had heard already in the media. Here are their comments:

“I was given a leaflet regarding vaccines for older people.”

“It was self-explanatory. I didn’t need to read it as I had so much information from the nurse, but I did read it.”

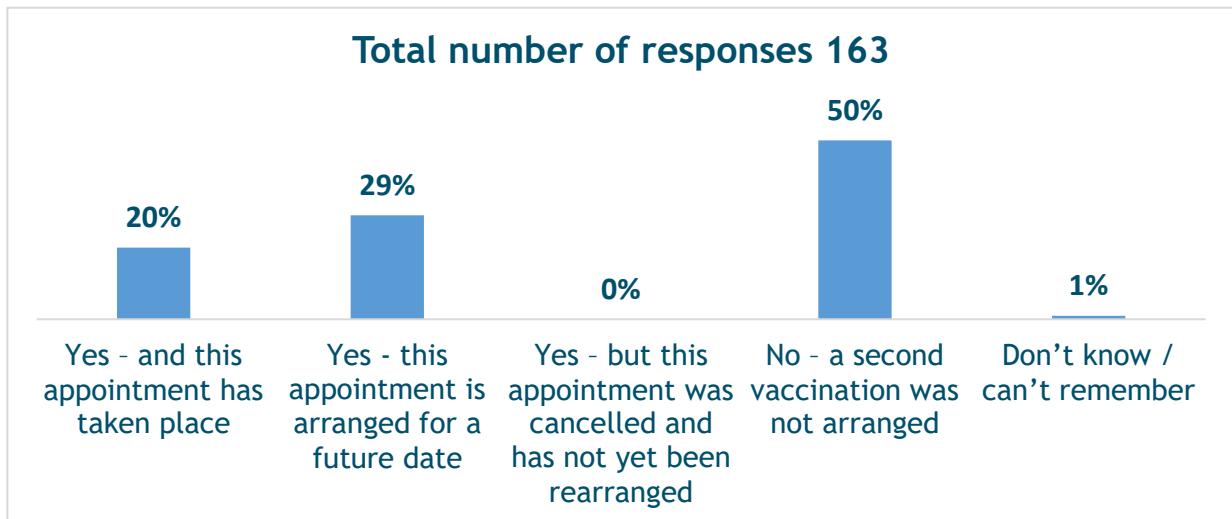
“I already had this information from general publicity and news.”



## Second vaccinations

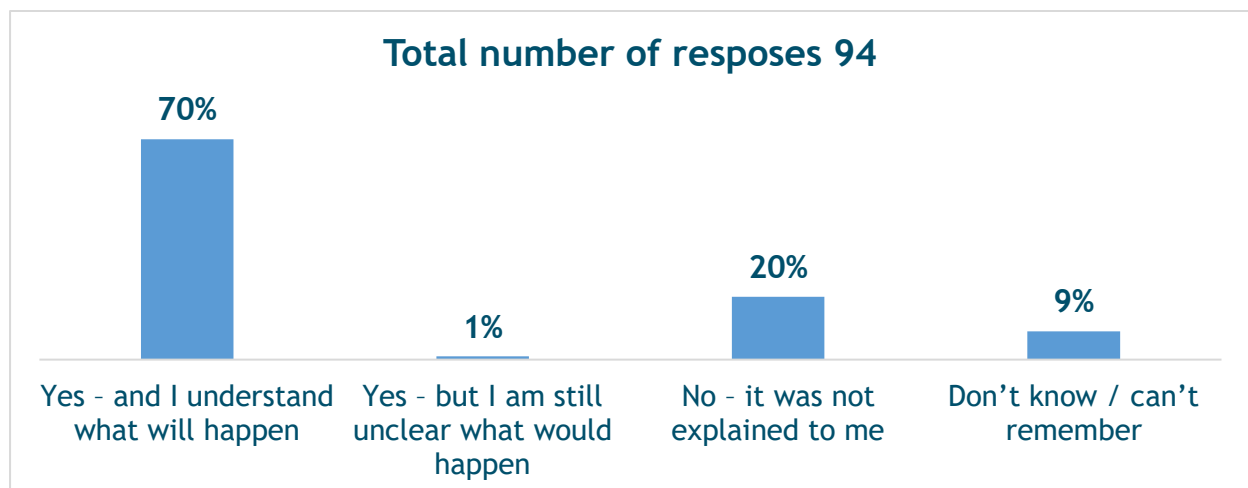
**After you had your first injection, were you given the date and time of your second vaccination?**

The majority of respondents (50%) replied that they hadn't had their second vaccine appointment arranged after receiving their initial vaccination.



**If you did not have a second vaccination appointment arranged, or your vaccination appointment was cancelled, did anyone explain to you what would happen when it was time for you to get your second vaccination?**

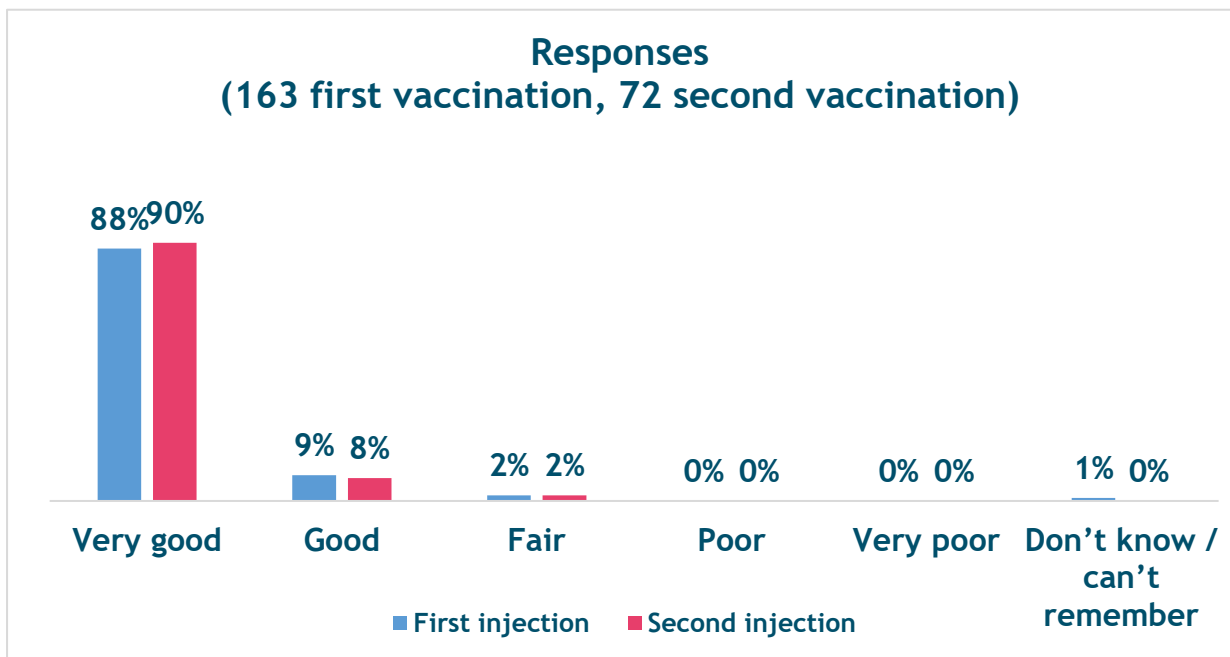
The majority of respondents, (70%) stated that they understood what would happen when it was time for their second vaccination, however a further 21% were still unclear or it wasn't explained to them.



## Overall experience

### Overall how would you rate your experience of receiving your vaccine?

When asked respondents to rate their overall experience of receiving their vaccine, the majority (97%) of recipients rated the experience of receiving their first vaccine as either very good or good and a 98% of recipients who when receiving the second vaccine rated it as very good or good.



## Additional comments

Overall, the people who gave comments in this section of the survey were very complimentary of the service they had received from the NHS when having their COVID-19 vaccinations, many stating that staff and volunteers had helped to make this a positive experience for them as well as also sharing compliments about the clinics and how well planned and organised they were. Some of their positive comments included:

“The whole process was extremely well organised and ran like clockwork. I was in and out within minutes. Excellent work and the NHS are to be congratulated.”

“I thought from the beginning to the end the staff were really friendly and were accommodating to my visual impairment from beginning to the end.”

“I felt safe and was treated exceptionally well throughout the whole process. With sincere gratitude.”

“Would just like to say thank you to everyone involved from my workplace to arranging this and to the amazing volunteers at the nightingale was such an emotional journey and I feel so grateful to them all.”

“Very impressed at how well organised it was, everyone seemed to know their role. I had questions to ask about drugs and my suppressed immunity, a nurse and three doctors helped me.”

“Venue was well signposted. Greeted at the entrance and given instructions on where to go. Met by staff who took relevant information and instructions on where to go. Well organised, social distancing in place. Informative staff. 1st class experience. Thank you!”

“A happy experience after all these months of worry and despair. I cannot thank the nurses and vaccinators enough.”

Some respondents giving negative comments shared in more detail their frustrations around the booking system, criteria for prioritisation for the vaccine and side effects. Some comments included:

“Booking website clunky. Appointments disappearing before you have a chance to confirm. I received a letter advising to book and then a few days later a text with a booking link which would have enabled me to double book. There should be more synergy between the systems to prevent this as I am sure that this will be the cause of a lot of “no shows.”

“I was given a link from work via a text message to click into to make a booking. (2 venues to choose from). The setting up for booking online was awful. It would let you select for first appointment but could not go ahead unless there was a 2nd appointment available. It took hours as you had to keep scrolling and selecting different appointments dates/times.”

“I found out from the National Hereditary Spastic Paraplegia site that I should have been in the first group of patients to be vaccinated as I am considered extremely vulnerable i.e. with a severe neurological condition (affecting one of the rare genes SPG21) and less likely to survive pneumonia. This did rather surprise me!”

“I was warned of the side effects but didn’t expect to feel like Satan had personally taken my soul to the gates of hell and set it on fire! Also, my arm is still swollen 6 weeks post injection, I was advised to fill a yellow card in but haven’t heard anything else.”

“I was surprised at how much I reacted to it. I've not felt well since and it's been 5 weeks. I've never had a reaction to any vaccination before and it has put me off having the second.”

Some people gave a mixed response about their experience of receiving the COVID-19 vaccination on a range of areas of the process. Here are some of the responses we received:

“The difference between the two systems were so stark, national booking very frustrating and time consuming. Locally so quick, so easy, amazing!”

“First vaccine was quite unorganised and there was a very, very long wait time despite having a time slot. Second vaccine was absolutely fantastically organised.”

“Surprised that no ID was requested, only had to give name on entry. Would have preferred to be given a date for my 2nd vaccine.”

“Booking system totally frustrating when it wouldn't work, and now wants to book another 2nd Vaccine! Everyone I met was helpful, cheerful, and informative both paid NHS staff, security, or volunteers.”

“Nightingale hospital was very well organised and efficient. The only issue I had was that the lady that gave me my injection did not wear gloves.”





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