**Community Conversations 25.01.22**

Cllr Sue Lukes welcomed and gave introductions.What the VCS sector can do as still a crucial point. Need to think how we are going to keep people safe in the future. Still a very infectious pandemic even though numbers going down.

**Public Health Briefing** - Jonathan O’Sullivan, Director of Public Health Islington presented to meeting.

* Omicron has shorter incubation time
* Cases were doubling in London at one point every day.
* Older vulnerable residents were being protected by the booster jab.
* Huge increase in people wearing face masks helped.
* Premises were following good practice rules.
* People following the guidance on looking after yourself and looking after other people.
* Hospitalisations are falling.
* Morality remains very low.
* Thanks to everyone for promoting the vaccine before Christmas – all volunteers, staff, NHS. Very helpful that there are so many more locations in the borough to get vaccinated.

Discussion on the 40k people where ethnicity was not stated. Numbers of factors contribute to this figure. Could be that GPs don’t ask the ethnicity as it wasn’t a routine question in the past. Not a very large disparity from other sources of data.

Soapbox – shared information about campaign instigated through Instagram and YouTube. Examples of work that has gone on in the community targeting young people from BAMER communities.

Discussion on Eastern Europeans reluctant to get vaccine and whether there is more data on this available. The data is very general and does not distinguish on which eastern European countries. Vaccination uptake numbers are generally very low internationally.

Some concerns raised about how people are targeted at the moment – Is it legal to advertise against take-up of vaccine via distribution of flyers/ leaflets. Not against the law as such but certain images/text/flyers are a cause for concern. Some demonstrations and intimidation could be deemed illegal. Council are monitoring far right material and organisations.

Public Health are working through covid champions within communities to raise awareness and support people to access vaccination. Range of work happening - Looked at communication channels that people prefer to use. Pop up vaccination clinics set up in areas such as Christian churches/ mosques.

Discussion on young people and vaccinations. Recommend that people go on Instagram to read about the campaign there was a lot of interesting conversation from young people. There was a lot of truths that they don’t feel valued and respected by central and local government which is why people in the sector are crucial to helping getting the information across to communities as there is a high level of trust there.

**Funding for VCSE organisations** – to enable conversations with young people to help them navigate their decisions around health and Covid-19. £480k of funding to spend between now and the summer. Want to hear about thoughts of particular groups and how can we engage communities differently. Can pick some ideas up through the Health and Wellbeing networks.

Still forming plans on timescales and process and hoping to work through networks. Need to think about how it will work in practice and agree the way forward.

**Community Vaccine Champions Programme** – successful in getting a grant to fund a programme of community engagement around covid vaccination. Looking at neighbourhood where take up is low.

Faith Groups intend to tailor messages themselves from Council and PH to particular groups. There are a number of challenges to bust some myths and address concerns and questions – (reference given to the NHS worker that said he wasn’t going to get vaccinated on TV). Have a lot of ideas and faith and community groups should be able to decide how best to reach their members.

**Leaflets for Distribution** Have leaflets in different languages to be distributed across the borough. If Groups can help with this please contact Navinder to be part of this distribution network.

**Training** free training available. Information to be circulated following meeting. MECC training available.

**Stewards** Look to develop volunteers to be council stewards to stand outside vaccination centres and encourage people in, answer questions and maybe be able to help when activists demonstrate outside centres.

Are more host sites needed? Looking at schools. No answer at the moment.

**Mobile vaccine bus** Council have looked at previously but there are lots of challenges with the bus logistically. Will continue to look at but no concrete plans to have one

Meeting end 6.30pm