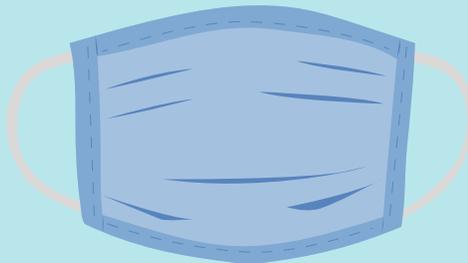


Health Messaging for All



Insight workshop - Beyond Sight Loss
8th March



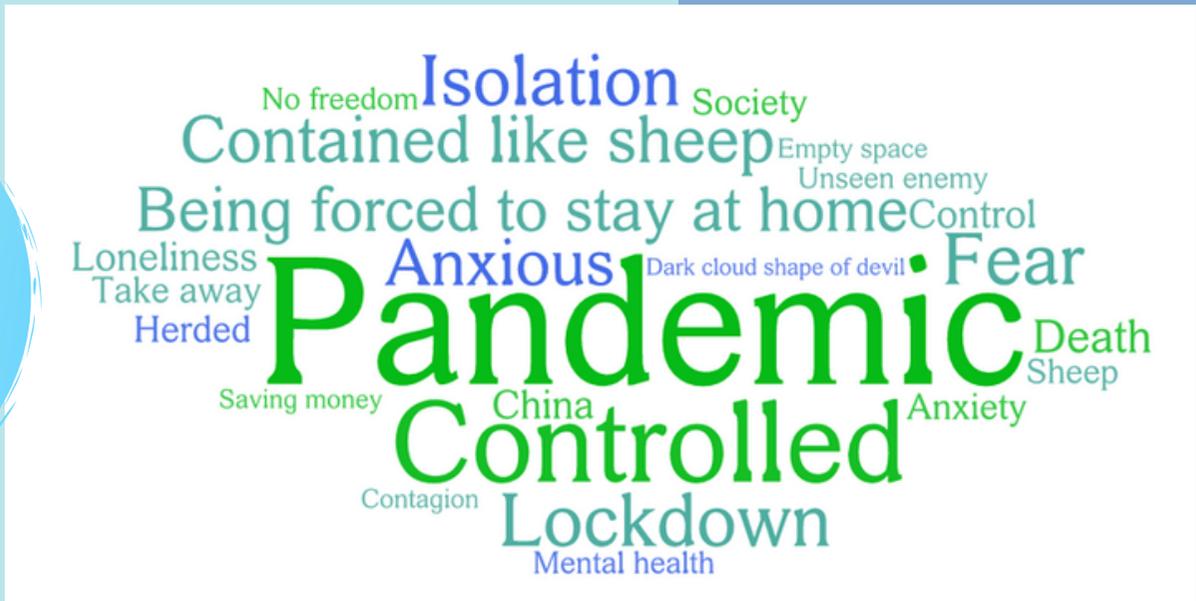
About the participants

Number of participants: **20**

The group is made up of people who are blind or partially sighted. A few have additional disabilities but visual impairment is the main, declared disability.

Most members of the group live in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. A few live in neighbouring boroughs. The group meets twice a month in Tower Hamlets. The language used at meetings is English, although some informal translation into Bengali takes place. Members of the group mostly originate from Bangladesh, the Caribbean, India, Africa, Turkey and the East End of London. Membership is about 50% male and 50% female and the average age is somewhere between 50 and 60 years of age.

We asked participants what comes to mind when we say...



We asked participants what comes to mind when we say...



vaccine

ASTRA ZENEKA
 CONFUSION
 WHICH ONE IS THE BEST
 FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN
 LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL
 DON'T KNOW WHETHER IT WORKS OR NOT
 DEPRESSION CURE OR NO CURE
 WHICH ONE WILL I GET
 CURE GARLIC AND CROSSES
 NOT SURE IF I TRUST THE VACCINE
 HOPE CONFUSION
 MICROSCOPIC TRACKING DEVICES

Depressed
 Island all by themselves
 Loneliness
 Prison Being incarcerated
 Alcatraz
 Claustrophobic.
 Confusion
 Frustrated
 Melancholy
 Isolation Island surrounded by sea
 Bored



Shielding

We asked participants what comes to mind when we say...



We asked participants to tell us what their main sources of Covid-19 health information are

Main sources of Covid-19 Info

NHS SMS



Letter



Friends and Family



Radio



Television

Social media



Charity website

Other sources

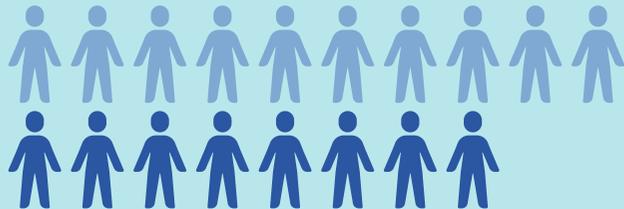
You Tube

Christian radio station

Council website & texts



Accessibility



10 participants had found health information about Covid-19 accessible and easy to understand, while **8** participants had found it inaccessible and difficult to understand

Understanding Covid-19 health messages

We asked participants to tell us what the barriers were to accessing messages

Note: some had very good support from their GPs and some had none. Some GPs had a history of very poor support for disability.



Personal Experiences around Covid-19

TESTIMONY

Information in newsletters from Tower Hamlets Council was clear and helpful, especially on vaccinations.

Technology is easier if you can use it. The main issues seem to be around language and the visually impaired person's competence with technology.

TESTIMONY

My child's school phoned to say he had a temp and must be fetched and isolated. I was called to pick him up. I tried to speak to head teacher without success. When I picked him up, I bought a thermometer and tested him, he was normal. There was little accessible information about booking tests, and no one able to help and solve problems. No support was on offer to help a person with a disability.

TESTIMONY

My GP called me in Bangladesh to advise me and ask if I was isolating. This call was followed by another to tell me I had been prioritised for a vaccination even while I was abroad. I felt well supported.

TESTIMONY

Some took a while to get a response when they reported Covid symptoms and were sent backwards and forwards from the NHS to Track and Trace. But when they finally got into action, they were efficient and reasonably quick with results.

TESTIMONY

We were told that our children needed laptops to do their online schooling, but we were not told about any financial help available. My husband does not speak English and we nearly went into severe debt in order to obtain the necessary equipment. Fortunately I received advice from a friend in good time. My question is: How can you do home schooling when you have a disability like mine?

TESTIMONY

I was able to book a Covid test online and my vaccination, using voice instruction on my computer. I had an eye infection, I phoned 111 and received a quick call back. I used the camera from my computer for the doctor at Morefield's to check eye and was sent cream for my eye. I had a dental problem and got emergency help very quickly.

Recommendations

A secure booking system, so testing and vaccinations can be done on behalf of disabled people

Larger print when receiving letters

Need to make sure that all info and resources are updated

A disability helpline would make a huge difference

Crystal clear language, with clear enunciation so it can be understood by anyone listening

Make interpreters available for people

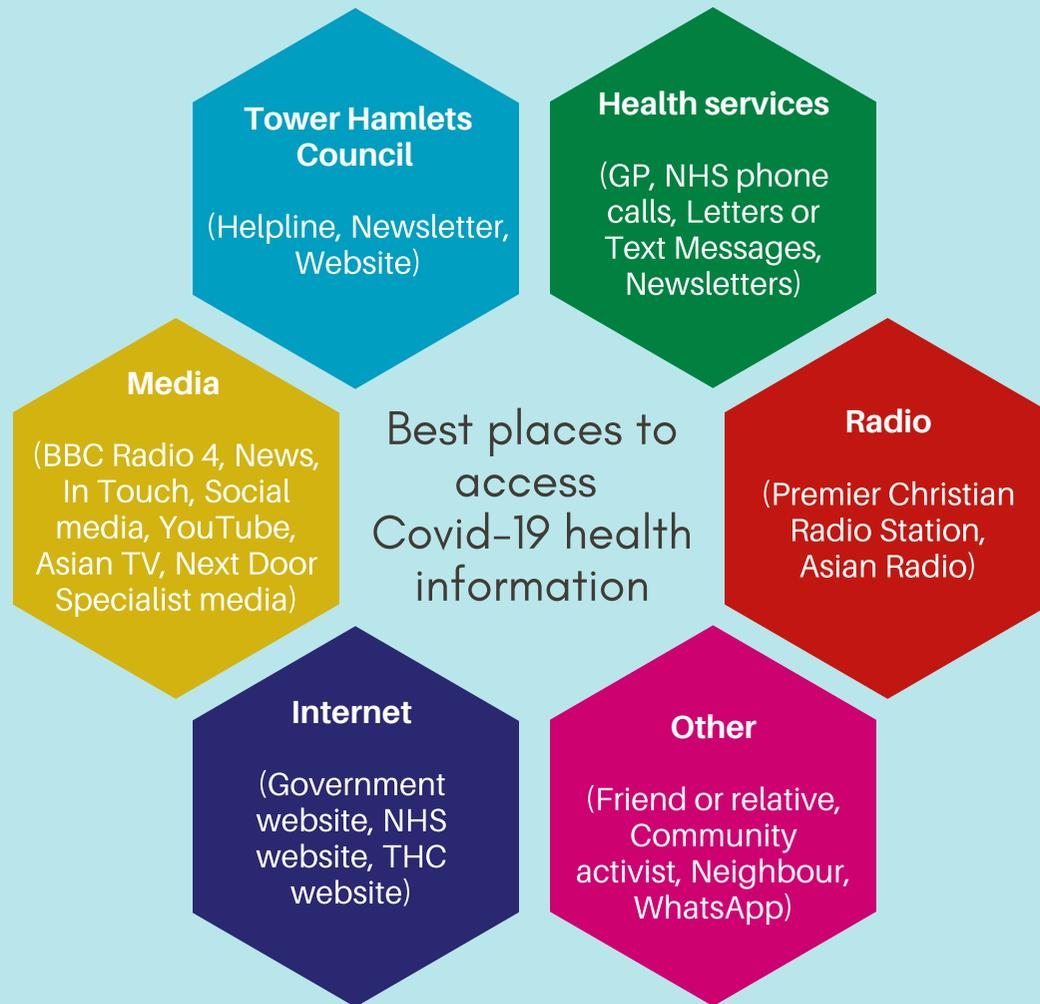
Accessibility for non-English speakers

Pass on more information to local groups

Make people to be available to help fill in forms

Visually Impaired radio programme publicising Covid-19 health information and helpline for disabled people

Making Information more accessible



Where to get information

We asked participants to tell us what are the best sources to receive Covid-19 information

Additional Comments

1

My local council has no disabled person's hot line, the information given always refers to online services. But I can't access online, so I fail to get my problem addressed.

2

Under normal circumstances it can take a long time to get through to some GP surgeries, from 15 up to 50 mins. Under Covid conditions this has worsened and disabled patients are often unable to use online services. The problem with GP surgeries is an ongoing and widespread one. Every GP should have a helpline for vulnerable people.

3

Communication barriers are a problem, circulating info in other languages would be appreciated.

4

There is a generation of people who are excluded from technology due to age or experience, they need to be catered for. A contact of ours, an older Asian woman, can't use a computer. She has experienced prejudice from her GP surgery where she was told that she should use her children to access computers and the GP website.

Principle takeaway

From the insights workshop, it became apparent that quite a few people rely on LBTH Council information and since there is still some vaccine reluctance, it would be helpful to arrange a webinar to help put members' minds at rest and allow them to ask questions.

Action: Webinar arranged for **Monday 29th March 2021**