

PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF CHILDREN UNDER 18

Introduction

This document presents summary findings for parents/guardians of children under 18 across Wales, indicating where there are differences and particularities compared to overall results. For quantitative results, differences are significant at the 95% confidence level, meaning that there is only a 5% possibility that the difference has occurred by chance; a commonly accepted confidence level. All differences are statistically significant unless stated otherwise. There is a separate report showing results across groups. The title of the overall report is: 'Evaluation of information resources' (produced by BMG Research on behalf of PHW). 154 parents/guardians took part in the quantitative survey but no parents/guardians took part in the qualitative interviews or focus groups. Fieldwork took place between December 2022 and February 2023. Further information about sampling and methodology can be found on the main report cited above. The decision not to include parents in the qualitative stage of the research stems from BMG having previously conducted research on behalf of PHW focusing on parents.

Recommendations and key take outs for this group are marked in **bold**.

The word 'parents' has been used throughout this document to refer to parents/guardians of children under the age of 18.

Awareness of publicity about immunisation

Parents of children under 18 are more likely than average to say that they have seen or heard something about immunisations for people in the past 12 months (94%, compared to 89% overall). Those who had seen or heard information about vaccination say that it was mostly related to COVID-19 and flu, although the proportions of parents saying that they have seen information about these two vaccines is lower than average (76% of parents have seen information about the COVID-19 vaccine, compared to 84% overall; and 54% of parents have seen or heard information about the flu vaccine, compared to 62% overall). While two in 10 or fewer parents have heard of the other vaccines included in the Welsh national vaccination programme in the past 12 months, parents are more likely than average to have heard about most vaccines, likely reflecting their engagement with the vaccination programme through their children: 6-in-1/DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB (diphtheria, hepatitis B, Haemophilus influenzae, polio, tetanus, whooping cough (pertussis)) (23%, compared to 9% overall), Tetanus, diphtheria, and polio Td/IPV (Teenage booster or 3 in 1) (13%, compared to 6% overall), HPV vaccine (12%, compared to 8% overall), Pneumococcal (PCV) vaccine (12%, compared to 8% overall), MenB (meningitis B) (11%, compared to 5% overall), Hepatitis B (10%, compared to 5% overall), 4-in-1 pre-school booster (diphtheria, polio, tetanus, whooping cough (pertussis)) (10%, compared to 5% overall), Rotavirus vaccine (10%, compared to 4% overall), Hib/MenC (Haemophilus influenzae, meningitis C) (9%, compared to 4% overall), and MenACWY (6%, compared to 2% overall).

81% of parents who have seen or heard information about vaccination in the past 12 months say that the information about vaccination that they have seen or heard was in favour of vaccinations. Only 3% have seen or heard information against vaccination and 8% have heard a mixture of information for and against vaccines. The remainder say the information was either neutral (8%) or that they can't remember (1%). These results are in line with overall results.

Doctors, nurses or other healthcare professionals are the most common sources of information about vaccination among parents; with 41% of those who have seen information on vaccination saying that healthcare professionals provided this information to them, a proportion which is higher

than average (cf. 32% overall). Other channels mentioned more often than average by parents to find out about vaccinations are: social media (30%, compared to 22% overall), Health visitors/ school nurses/ practice nurses/ midwives (10%, compared to 5% overall), and YouTube (13%, compared to 9% overall). In contrast, parents are less likely than average to say that they have seen or heard information about vaccinations on television (30%, compared to 38% overall) and on NHS leaflets (9%, compared to 16% overall).

Key take outs:

- **Recommended channels for reaching out to parents: healthcare professionals, social media**
- **Less effective channels for reaching out to parents: television, leaflets**

Parents are more likely than average to have encountered misinformation about vaccinations, with a higher-than-average proportion saying that they have seen or heard something in the past 12 months that would make them worried or concerned about having vaccinations (35%, compared to 21% overall). This suggests that parents are more likely than other groups to need ‘myth-busting’ style information resources about vaccinations.

Key take out:

- **Parents are more likely than other groups to need ‘myth-busting’ style information resources about vaccinations.**

Awareness of vaccination programme

Awareness of the vaccination programme in Wales among parents is generally higher than average; however, parents are less likely to be aware of a minority of vaccines.

Vaccines parents are more likely than average to be aware of: Tetanus, diphtheria, and polio Td/IPV (Teenage booster or 3 in 1) (60%, compared to 53% overall), 6-in-1/DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB (diphtheria, hepatitis B, Haemophilus influenzae, polio, tetanus, whooping cough (pertussis)) (58%, compared to 43% overall), HPV vaccine (Cervical cancer, head and neck cancer, genital cancer and genital warts) (47%, compared to 40% overall), MenB (meningitis B) (42%, compared to 35% overall), Hib/MenC (Haemophilus influenzae, meningitis C) (40%, compared to 28% overall), Pneumococcal (PCV) vaccine (36%, compared to 29% overall), and Rotavirus vaccine (29%, compared to 16% overall).

Vaccines parents are less likely than average to be aware of: COVID-19 (78%, compared to 84% overall), flu (68%, compared to 76% overall), and Shingles/herpes zoster vaccine (26%, compared to 35% overall).

Key take out:

- **Awareness of childhood and teenage vaccinations is higher than average among parents. However, awareness of the following vaccines among parents could improve: COVID-19, flu and Shingles.**

Attitudes towards vaccinations

Views about the severity of diseases that the Welsh vaccination programme protects against are mixed among parents, with parents being more likely than average to say that several diseases are not serious but also more likely to say that some diseases are indeed serious.

Diseases parents are more likely to consider serious: Cervical cancer (93% of parents consider this disease serious, compared to 86% overall), Measles (not German) (73%, compared to 61% overall), and Mumps (73%, compared to 62% overall).

Diseases parents are more likely to consider not serious: Tetanus (22% of parents consider this disease not serious, compared to 14%), Rotavirus (21%, compared to 14% overall), Diphtheria (19%, compared to 11% overall), Hepatitis (17%, compared to 11% overall), Polio (14%, compared to 9% overall), Tuberculosis (11%, compared to 6% overall), Meningitis (8%, compared to 4% overall), Pneumonia (8%, compared to 5% overall), and head and neck cancer (6%, compared to 3% overall).

Parents are less likely than average to say that all vaccines are a lower risk to them than the diseases they protect from (66%, compared to 73% overall). While only a minority say that each vaccine of the Welsh national vaccination programme is worse to them than the disease (between 3% and 7% for each vaccine), this proportions are significantly higher than the average results for most vaccines.

Additionally, general attitudes towards vaccination among parents tend to be in line with the overall results. 84% think vaccines are safe (cf. 84% overall), 82% think vaccines work (cf. 86% overall), 82% believe that getting vaccinated is the right thing to do for themselves (cf. 82% overall) and 81% believe getting vaccinated is the right thing to do for society (cf. 82% overall), 80% trust vaccines (cf. 83% overall), 79% agree that it is normal for people their age to get vaccinated (cf. 81% overall), and 76% think vaccines are properly tested (cf. 79% overall). However, parents are more likely than average to be concerned about the ingredients of vaccines (49%, compared to 34% overall). Moreover, 45% of parents are worried about the side effects of vaccines (in line with the overall result: 46%).

Key take out:

- **Attitudes towards vaccinations among parents are mixed. While there are high levels of agreement that vaccines work and that getting vaccinated is the right thing to do for oneself and for society, parents are more likely to say that several diseases that the Welsh vaccination programme protects from are not serious and there are also concerns in relation to the ingredients of vaccines and side effects. Additionally, parents are less likely to agree that all vaccines pose a lower risk than the diseases they protect against. These findings suggest that information resources for parents should focus on the severity of diseases and the safety of vaccines (incl. addressing concerns about ingredients and side effects) to encourage vaccine uptake.**

Access to information and decision-making

Most parents feel knowledgeable about vaccinations; with 88% saying that they know how vaccines work, 82% saying that they know where to find information about vaccines and 90% saying that they have had enough information to make a decision about whether or not to have all the vaccines they have been offered so far. These results are in line with the overall results.

When it comes to the sources of information used to find out about vaccinations, the most common sources of information for parents are: doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals (53%), and the NHS website (40%). These results are in line with the average result. Nonetheless, parents are more likely than average to have used the following sources to find out about vaccinations: Red Book / child's Personal Child Health Record (PCHR) (6%, compared to 3% overall), NHS 111 / NHS Direct Wales telephone service (12%, compared to 8% overall), Health visitors/ school nurses/ practice nurses/ midwives (16%, compared to 8% overall), social media (17%, compared to 10% overall), and

people in healthcare settings (other than healthcare professionals) (20%, compared to 11% overall). Conversely, parents are less likely than average to have used the following sources of information: NHS leaflets (21%, compared to 29% overall), newspapers (3%, compared to 8% overall), and radio (3%, compared to 7% overall).

In terms of decision-making, 53% of parents say that they automatically have all the immunisations they are offered while 29% say they normally have all the vaccines offered to them but that they like to check information before having them. 13% say they weigh up pros and cons of vaccinations before deciding whether to have them or not and small minorities say that they check information on vaccinations but they usually don't have them (1%) or that they know they don't want to have vaccinations so they don't need to check information (2%). These results are in line with overall results.

Key take outs:

- **Most parents feel knowledgeable about vaccines; however, just around half say that they make automatic decisions to get vaccinated, with the remainder preferring to check information before making a decision. Information resources should, therefore, target this group and explain the benefits of vaccine to support the decision-making process.**
- **Recommended channels for reaching out to parents: healthcare professionals and settings, social media**
- **Less effective channels for reaching out to parents: newspapers, radio.**

Vaccine uptake, barriers and motivations

When asked whether they had refused or delayed any vaccines offered to them, most parents (70%) say that they have had all the vaccinations offered to them (cf. 73% overall), 19% say they have refused one or more vaccinations (cf. 17% overall), and 10% have delayed one or more vaccines (cf. 7% overall). These results are in line with overall results.

In line with average results, protection of oneself is the most prominent motivation among parents to get vaccinated.

When it comes to barriers to vaccine uptake, a lack of trust, a perception that vaccines are not needed and hearing about other people having side effects are the most commonly cited barriers among parents, in line with overall results.

Key take outs:

- **Claimed vaccine uptake among parents is in line with the average result, with protection of oneself being the most prominent motivation to get vaccinated (in line with average results). Information resources for this group should, therefore, draw on protection as a motivator to encourage vaccination uptake/draw attention to information resources.**
- **Information resources for parents should reassure them about side effects and justify the necessity of vaccines, as these are some of the most prominent barriers to uptake among parents (in line with the average results).**

Awareness and views of PHW publicity

Awareness of PHW publicity is higher than average among parents (64%, compared to 41% overall). Awareness of the *Mae Brechu yn achub bywydau/Vaccination saves lives* logo among parents is in line with the average result (35%, compared to 39% overall).

GP surgeries (22%) and vaccination centres (20%) are the most common places where parents have seen or heard PHW publicity, in line with overall results.

Views of PHW publicity are in line with average results, with 84% being satisfied with the materials overall, 89% being satisfied with the amount of information, 86% agreeing that the information is clear, 81% positively rating the design/layout, and 86% agreeing that the materials are relevant to them.

Key take outs:

- **As for other groups, information resources for parents should clearly indicate the target audience so that parents continue to agree that information resources are relevant to them.**
- **Given the positive views of PHW publicity among parents, with eight in 10 being satisfied with the materials overall, similar resources should be produced for this group going forward.**
- **While leaflets are an important source of information about vaccines for parents, usage of leaflets to find out about vaccines is lower than average among this group while usage of social media for this purpose is higher than average. Information resources for parents should, therefore, be available both in paper format and digitally (in a way that they can be shared on social media).**