

“If you need them to explain everything on the vaccine label, they will do that” – two young women speak out about why they decided to say yes to the Covid vaccine

Two young women, who this week will be able to book their first doses of the Covid-19 vaccination have opened up about why they will be booking their appointments as soon as they are eligible.

Elizabeth Alogba, 26 and Gode Bolefo, 29 both initially had questions about the vaccine and heard similar queries from within their family, friends and communities. Both have recorded short video clips for NHS and other partners to use, to help reach people from different ethnic backgrounds.

There has been a rise in the number of people from Black and African communities saying yes to the lifesaving Covid-19 jab, with confidence in the jab growing, with uptake across the North West amongst eligible people in this group now at 63%, a rise of 23% since March. Overall, more than half of adults across England are now fully vaccinated giving them maximum possible protection from coronavirus.

Elizabeth, a recent graduate who now lives in Manchester, said, “I remember when we first heard about a vaccination had been created, my first thought was ‘okay, that’s good news’. She had some initial questions about the content of the vaccine.

Elizabeth who works for Manchester organisation Caribbean African Health Network (CAHN), said there were a number of things that helped change her mind.

“Having worked with CAHN for the last year, we’ve had a number of qualified senior NHS Consultants actually talk to us about the vaccine. That reassurance is what I needed. Having black professionals was important to me too.”



Gode Bolefo, who is also known as Flore, 29, has four daughters and moved to the UK when she was 13 years old from Congo DRC, said, "From what I hear, the younger generation believe they are less likely to be affected, and or become seriously ill so the vaccine doesn't concern them so much; and the older generation seem to be more concerned about what is in the vaccine."



"I think the best expression that I've seen that I can relate to is that every single vaccine gives hope. I'm protecting myself, my children, my family and every single person I come into contact with."

Flore, who recently volunteered at a vaccination site in Manchester and talked to doctors and vaccinators on the day, spoke of the importance of talking through any concerns you have with healthcare professionals.

"You can ask any question and there is someone to guide you every single step of the way. If you need them to explain every single terminology on the vaccine label, they will. Get in there, do your research. There are so many doctors you can speak to if you're worried."

Both Elizabeth and Flore also ask that people consider their family, friends and their communities when they make their decisions about taking the vaccine. They are excited about having the vaccine and the hope it gives them of returning to a normal life.

"We are all surrounded by the noise but the way I took this decision for myself was thinking about my loved ones and the effect it would have on them", Elizabeth said. "Having the vaccine will allow me to socialise with my colleagues, friends and family members."

Flore said; "Keep doing the little bit that we can for our families and hopefully we can find some kind of normality. That's what we all hope for."

Those aged between 25 and 29 started to receive their invitations to book their first dose with texts being sent from Tuesday this week.

When invited, people will be able to book at one of the 1,600 vaccination centres, pharmacies or general practice sites across the country that are available through the national booking service. Vaccination centres are also available in convenient locations such as mosques, museums and rugby grounds.

Text invitations, which do not expire, appear as an alert from 'NHSvaccine' and include a web link to the NHS website to reserve an appointment.

People who cannot go online can call the service on 119 instead to book their jab.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

If you would like to speak to either Elizabeth or Flore, they are available for interview.

You can also see and download two minutes interviews with Elizabeth and Flore [here](#).

For further information please contact the NHS England and NHS Improvement – North West media team on england.nwmedia@nhs.net or 07736 484 533.

Additional Background

People aged 39 and under who are eligible and pregnant women will be offered the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine in line with updated JCVI guidance.

Caribbean and African Health Network (CAHN) is a Black-led organisation set up to address the wider social determinants to reduce health inequalities for people of Caribbean and African origins in Greater Manchester and beyond. They work with the Black community and cross-sector organisations to build community resilience, relationships and a social movement to reduce health inequalities. [Learn more about them here](#).