

Webinar Reflections: Immunisations: A Safety Essential for Every Newborn and Child

17th September 2025

Chair: Kath Evans, Director of Children's Nursing, Barts Health; BCYP Clinical Lead, NEL ICB; CYP Participation Champion, NHS England (London)

Welcome & Scene Setting – Kath Evans

- Framed immunisation as a **cornerstone of patient safety**.
- Icebreaker highlighted common challenges: **staff confidence, time pressures, parental concerns, and misinformation**.

Policy & Public Health Lens – Helen Donovan, Independent nurse consultant and immunisation specialist nurse

- **Vaccines save lives:** 154 million lives saved in 50 years (WHO 2024).
- **Inequalities persist:** lower uptake in deprived communities, younger mothers, and Black/Black British families.
- **Barriers:** complacency, convenience, confidence, communication, and context.
- **What works:** life-course approach, making every contact count, equity-focused services, and training staff in person-centred conversations.
- **Reminder:** HCPs are the most trusted source of information.

Emergency Care Perspective – Becky Platt, Children's Nurse and Advanced Clinical Practitioner, Emergency Department, Royal London Hospital

- Global outbreaks (measles in Samoa, diphtheria in Bangladesh) show devastating impacts of low vaccine coverage.
- In UK EDs, conversations must be **child-focused and non-judgemental**.
- Best opportunities: minor illness, incidental attendances, or relevant presentations.
- **Approach:** curiosity ("Can I ask how you came to that decision?"), affirm positive intent, avoid confrontation.
- Goal is to **open the door, not win the argument in one go**.

Hospital & Family Experience – Josephine Bakar, Ward Manager, Rainbow Ward, Newham Hospital

- In Newham, **diverse, multi-generational households** make immunisation vital.
- **Opportunistic approach:**
 - Check Red Book / local records at admission.
 - Engage families with reassurance, information in community languages, and flexible consent.
 - Vaccinate during admission if possible, or arrange follow-up clinics (including weekends).
 - Update GP records.
- **Case study:** 3-year-old caught up on missed MMR and preschool booster through admission process.
- **Key insight:** Most barriers are practical (time, housing, work), not "anti-vax" beliefs.
- Admissions are powerful "**teachable moments**" to build trust.

Panel Discussion

- Staff hesitancy since COVID remains a challenge — confusion between COVID, flu, and MMR messaging needs addressing.
- Support colleagues with **motivational interviewing techniques**, accessible resources, and peer-to-peer reassurance.
- ABPN can help by:
 - Showcasing good practice (outside primary care as well as within).
 - Providing trusted, shareable resources for staff and families.
 - Normalising vaccination as routine across all disciplines (including AHPs and play specialists).

Key Takeaways

- **Jo:** Keep championing vaccination and build staff confidence.
- **Becky:** Normalise vaccine conversations in everyday practice with curiosity, not judgement.
- **Helen:** Don't be afraid to ask; give clear professional advice; avoid unnecessary barriers like duplicate consent.

Closing Reflections – Kath Evans

- Immunisation is a **safety essential** for every newborn and child.
- Every healthcare professional has a role in encouraging uptake.
- Signposted to further resources and invited colleagues to **join ABPN** for continued learning and support.

👉 Call to Action for Children's Nurses & Students:

Tomorrow, take one small step — **check a child's vaccination status, ask the question, and offer clear reassurance.**

Key References/tools

Childhood Immunisation information [Immunisation - GOV.UK](#)

Oxford Vaccine Knowledge Project [Home | Vaccine Knowledge Project](#)

Parent/Carer information to signpost to [NHS vaccinations and when to have them - NHS](#)

WHO Training on motivational techniques/immunisation conversations [trainingmodule-conversationguide-final.pptx](#)