

***“We might not have been in hospital, but we were frontline workers in the community”*: A qualitative study exploring unmet need and local community-based responses for marginalised groups in Greater Manchester during the COVID-19 pandemic**

### **Lay summary**

**What was the study about?** This study was about how local groups and organisations (like charities, community groups, and faith groups) helped people in Greater Manchester during the COVID-19 pandemic. These groups did a lot of work, like helping with the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. However, their work is not always recognised.

**What did they want to find out?** The researchers wanted to understand how these groups helped people living locally in Greater Manchester during the pandemic, and how these groups and organisations helped during the COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

**How did they do the study?** The researchers worked with a Community Research Advisory Group to design the study. They talked to 35 people from local communities, health and care system workers, and representatives from these local groups. These talks happened online between September and November 2021.

**What did they find out?** They found that government and public services didn't support local communities enough during the pandemic. This put more pressure on these local groups to help. These groups were really important for the success of the vaccine rollout and for supporting local communities during the pandemic. They were able to reach diverse communities to help more people get the vaccine. But, their work is still not fully recognised or valued by the health system and decision-makers.

**What does this mean for the future?** The study found that there were some challenges when these local groups worked with the health system to deliver the vaccine program. There's a need for a better working relationship between the health system and local community groups and organisations, to allow these sectors to work better together. Being flexible and adaptable in how services are delivered in the future should be championed for better working together.

Read the full paper available here:

<https://bmchealthservres.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12913-024-10921-4>