

COMMUNITY BRIEF

Why We Are Listening to Black Mums in Luton & Bedfordshire

Understanding experiences of maternal vaccines and pregnancy care



Why this project matters

Black women in the UK continue to face significant inequalities in pregnancy and early motherhood. Research and national reports have shown that Black mothers:

- Experience higher levels of anxiety and fear around pregnancy
- Are more likely to feel unheard or dismissed
- Face barriers to receiving clear, reassuring health information
- Report mixed or confusing messages about maternity care
- Lower levels of vaccination uptake

At the same time, many Black mothers have real and important questions about maternal vaccines — especially vaccines given during pregnancy and in the first year of a baby’s life. These questions are valid, but often not fully answered in routine care.

This project exists to create space for Black mothers’ voices, experiences, concerns and ideas to be heard clearly.

What we’ve learned so far

Early conversations with mums have shown that many:

- Want clearer explanations from health professionals
- Find online information confusing or contradictory
- Feel nervous about asking “too many questions”
- Want culturally-aware and respectful conversations
- Would benefit from seeing and hearing from people who look like them
- Prefer practical, plain-language information they can trust.

These insights show a gap between what mothers want to know and how information is currently communicated.

Our study aims to understand this gap more deeply — and do something meaningful with it.

What this project hopes to achieve

We are speaking directly with Black mothers to:

- Understand their experiences of vaccines during pregnancy
- Listen to their questions about vaccines given during and early childhood
- Explore where information feels unclear, missing, or confusing
- Learn what reassuring, culturally grounded conversations look like
- Co-create better communication resources with mothers

The goal is to produce a Maternal Vaccine Conversations Toolkit that reflects the voices, concerns and lived realities of Black mothers in Luton and Bedfordshire

Why Black mothers?

Because Black women’s experiences are under-researched, often misunderstood, and too often absent from the design of maternity services and health communication.

Listening to Black women directly is essential for:

- Building trust
- Improving communication
- Challenging assumptions
- Ensuring maternity support is culturally safe
- Reducing inequalities in maternal and infant health

This study centres Black mothers' experiences because they matter — and because their insights can lead to better care for everyone.

Who is leading this work?

This project is led by:

Dr Glory Aigbedion

Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at University of Bedfordshire

Founder PACE Initiative

Supported by:

- Research England
- Maternal & Child Health Research Centre (MCHRC)
- Community partners across Luton and Bedfordshire

The study has full ethical approval from the University of Bedfordshire(ref: IHREC1070).

What taking part involves

- An online group or one-to-one conversation OR
- An In-person group discussion and design workshop with other mums

Participants receive a small thank-you for their time

How this will make a difference

Your experiences and ideas will directly shape new communication tools that will:

- Help midwives, health visitors and GPs speak with mums more clearly
- Support families to make informed decisions
- Reduce confusion and anxiety during pregnancy
- Improve trust and connection between mothers and health services
- Ensure Black mothers' voices are reflected in local maternity care

This project is not about persuading anyone — it is about **listening, understanding,** and **working together** to make maternity care better for our community.

Want to learn more or get involved?

You can email or message us any time:
Dr Glory Aigbedion



glory@paceinitiative.org.uk
glory.aigbedion@beds.ac.uk



Instagram: @Pace_initiative

Sign-up link: [Maternal Vaccines Study Sign-up](#)

