



## Where I work Hannah Franklin

**A** ground-floor gallery space at the Francis Crick Institute in London, where I'm 18 months into my PhD, opened as a COVID-19 vaccination centre in January. It operates from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., 7 days a week. I signed up immediately as a part-time staff volunteer; we number more than 300.

Our training was 10 hours of online modules plus one in-person day, when we learnt vaccination techniques using a dummy arm, and how to don and doff personal protective equipment. We also learnt basic life-support skills and how to recognize signs of an anaphylactic reaction to the vaccine.

By early April, I'd given almost 300 vaccine doses. If I'm not vaccinating, I'm checking people in or marshalling them.

Some people haven't been out of the house in a year. One woman in her 80s brought us flowers from her garden. On another day, I saw my dad, who had come for his vaccination. That was nice, because lockdown restrictions mean I haven't been able to see my family much.

This picture was taken on a very cold day, when I spent most of the shift outside, checking people in. One of them said how kind and helpful the volunteers were – that warmed me up a little! The Crick is a beautiful modern building; it's not like a hospital environment, which I think helps to allay people's vaccine anxieties.

I'm doing my PhD in Rickie Patani's laboratory, which uses human stem cells to investigate neurodegenerative diseases such as motor neuron disease (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis).

Knowing how viruses mutate can make you feel less positive about tackling the COVID-19 situation, but the Crick is doing a fantastic job with its coronavirus research, and now with its vaccination centre. This whole time has been so shocking, but volunteering was a no-brainer: a perfect opportunity to do something useful.

**Hannah Franklin** is a PhD student in neuroscience at University College London, and is based at the Francis Crick Institute.

**Interview by David Payne.**

Photographed for *Nature* by  
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