

By the Vaccine Divided – Part 2 – Off the Charts

By Professor John Clancy

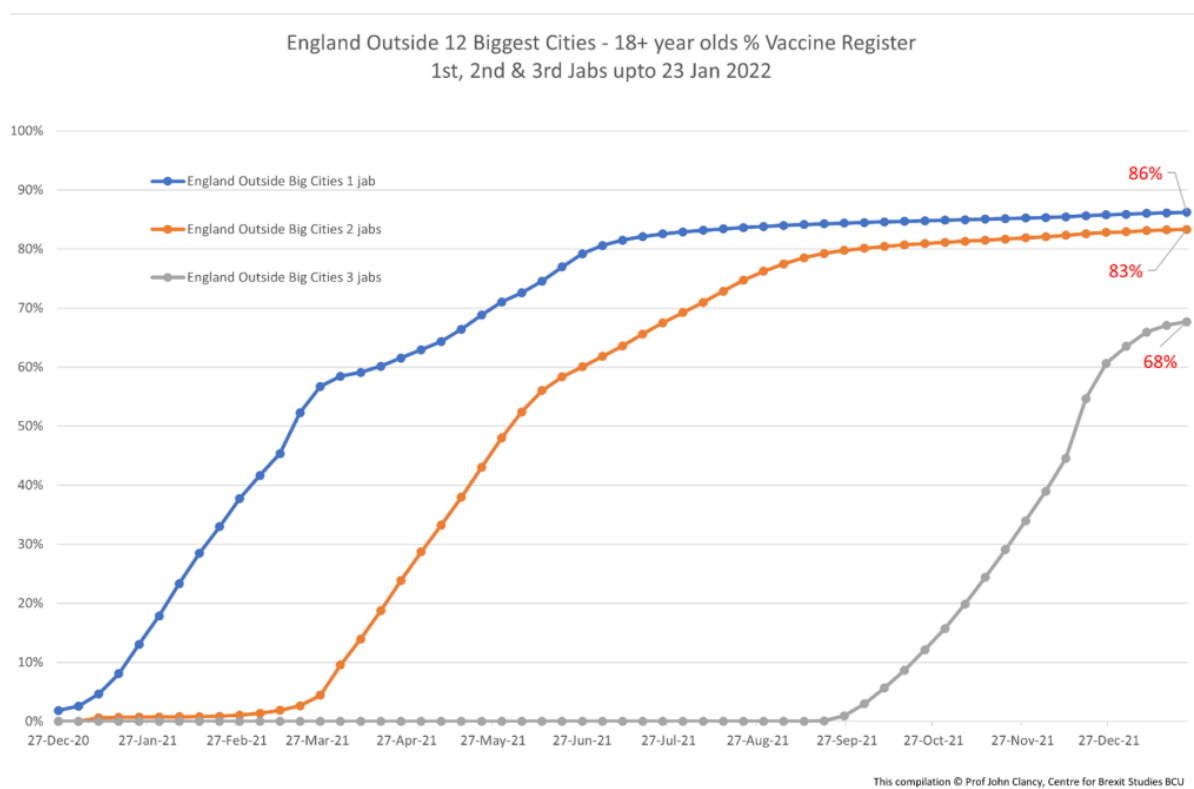
Big Towns and Cities still falling well short on Covid-19 vaccination and shunned the booster too, whilst the rest of the country still just got on with it, again.

Young adult city dwellers avoid vaccination, with 30% entirely unvaccinated throughout the pandemic and now, with 80% ignoring the booster in Birmingham and Bradford

In my last blog I pointed out the Two Nations that exist in England, as between our 12 biggest cities and the rest of the country. As with Brexit, the metropolitans seem to view the world, and behave, differently in many ways to those in small towns, rural counties and coastal communities. Covid-19 vaccination has become a strong indicator of this.

And when it comes to vaccination, the younger an adult you are in the cities, the starker the differences.

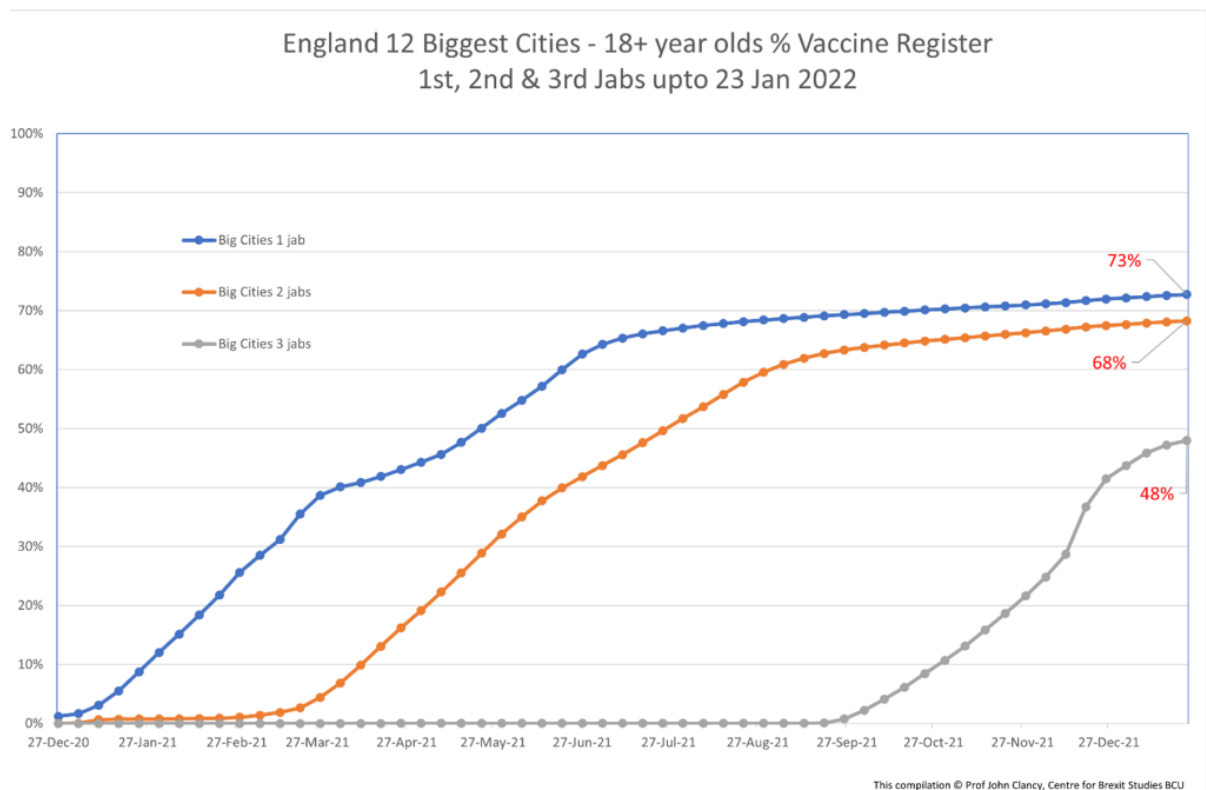
Throughout the three Covid-19 vaccination campaign, adults in England outside the big cities just got on with getting their jabs, with 86% and 83% getting their 1st and 2nd jabs, respectively. In the first four months of the 3rd jab campaign, 68% of adults have so far got jab number 3, a slightly higher rate than the first two.



It is a completely different story in the 12 biggest cities in England.

With only 73% getting their 1st jab, well over a quarter of adults in our 12 biggest cities are completely unvaccinated, never even getting the first jab.

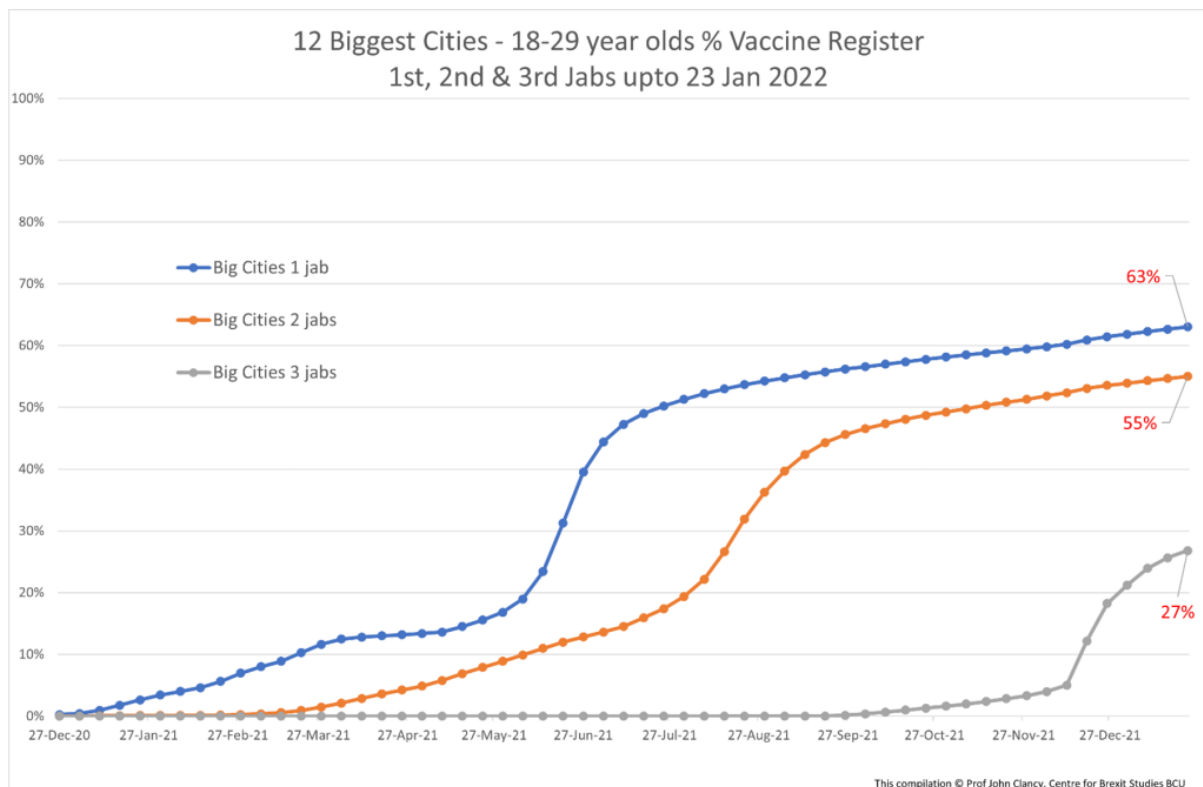
Still fewer (68%) got their 2nd jab, meaning that at the beginning of last autumn when the booster campaign started, almost a third of adults in our cities were not fully vaccinated. Then the Booster was, and still is, heavily shunned there, with over half of adults not bothering upto last weekend.



Young adults aged 18-29 in the cities are even less likely to have got their jabs.

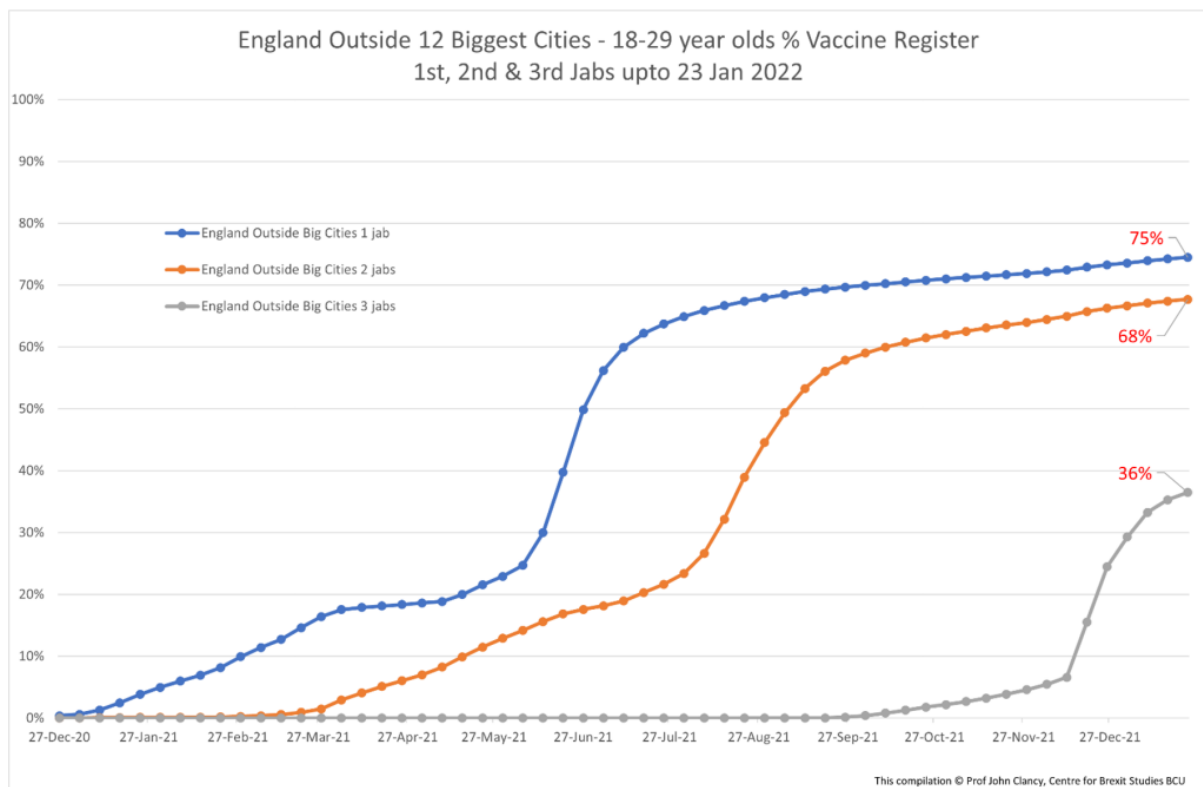
In the 12 biggest English cities there are **3.4 million 18-29 year olds** on the Vaccine Register. It seems the Anti-Vax campaigns have got through to the 3.4 million. Fewer than two-thirds (62%) got the first jab, just over a half (55%) got two, and only 27% have bothered with a third so far.

This means nearly a half (45%) of 18-29 year olds in the big cities never got their 2nd jab, and well over a third (37%) never got any jab in the first place there. Almost three quarters (73%) of them shunned the booster.

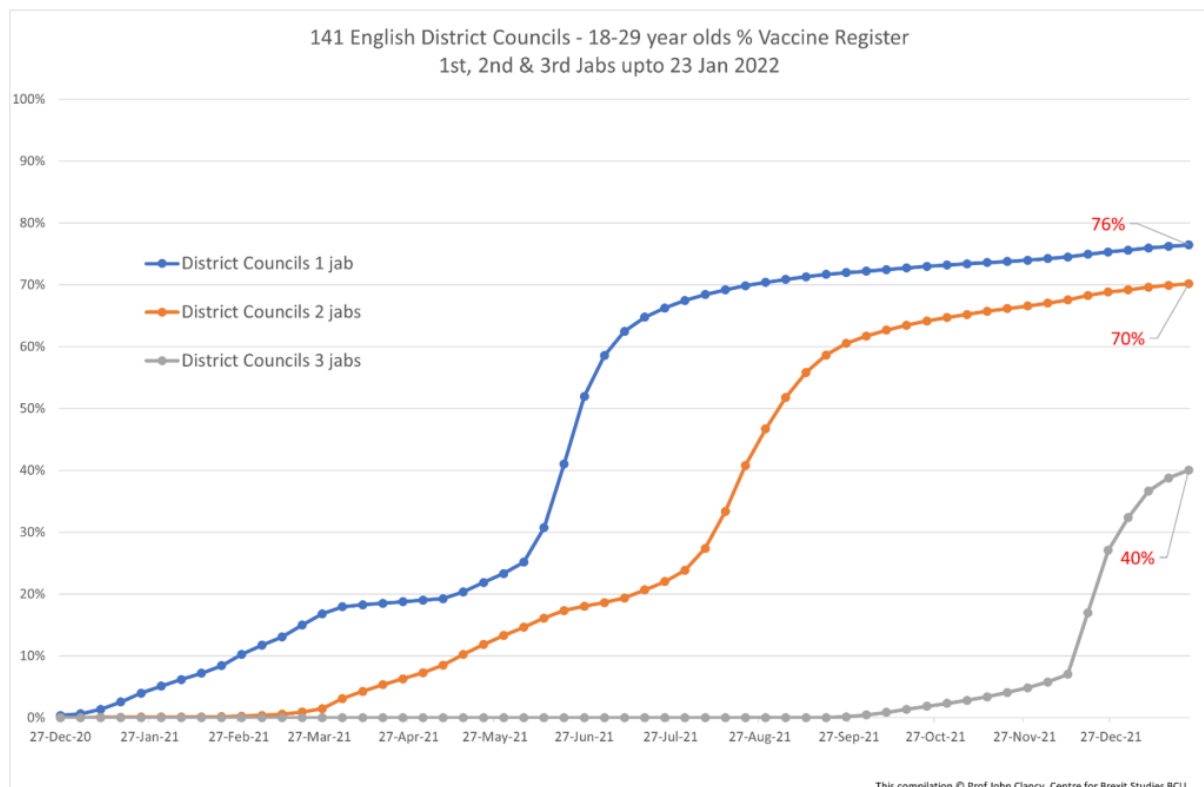


Outside the biggest 12 cities 18-29 year olds do not take the same approach to Covid-19 vaccination.

Three quarters of 18-29 year olds got their first jab, when fewer than two thirds of their counterparts in the cities did. 68% got their second, when only 55% did in the cities. The booster gives not quite as pronounced a difference, but well over a third (37%) getting the 3rd jab outside the cities, when just over a quarter did in the cities.



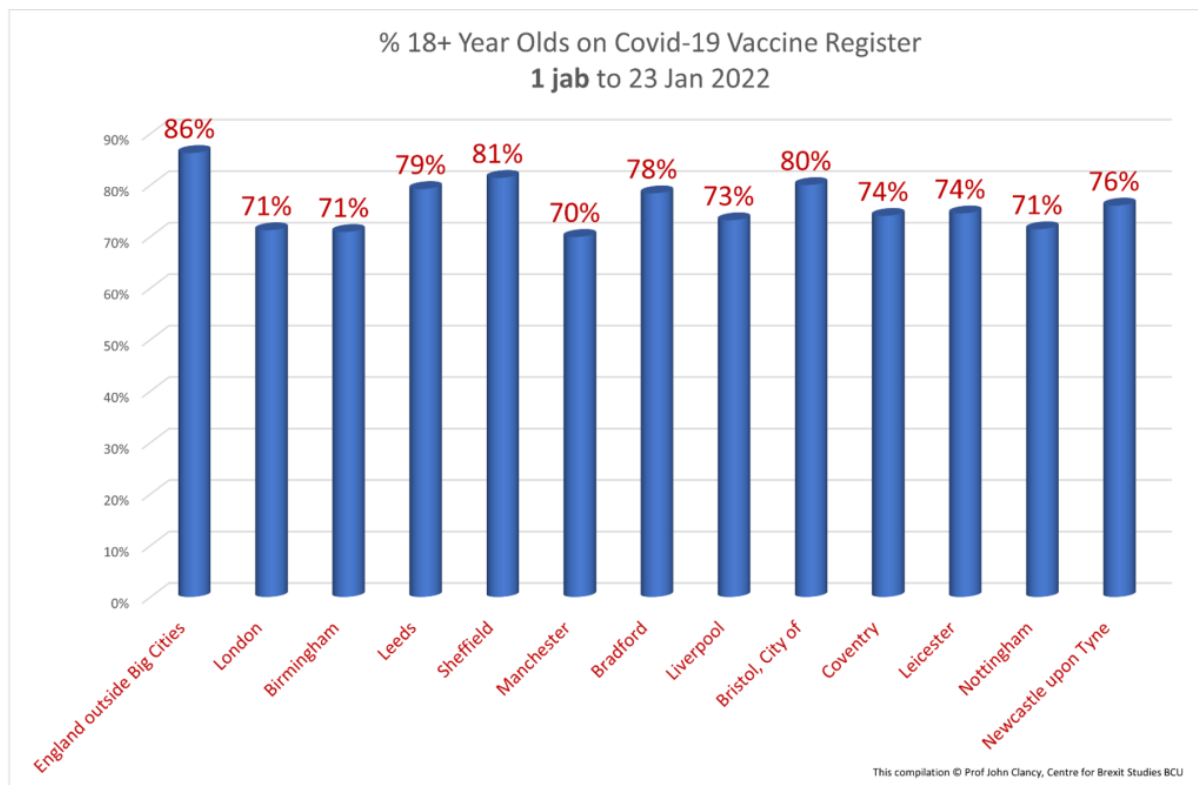
As I pointed out in the last blog, it is not a symptom of the cities being particularly younger places; if we look at a similar cohort of the **3 million** 18-29 year olds in England's 141 district councils spread around the country, they have behaved very differently throughout the vaccination campaigns.



So how do the big cities compare individually with England outside the cities?

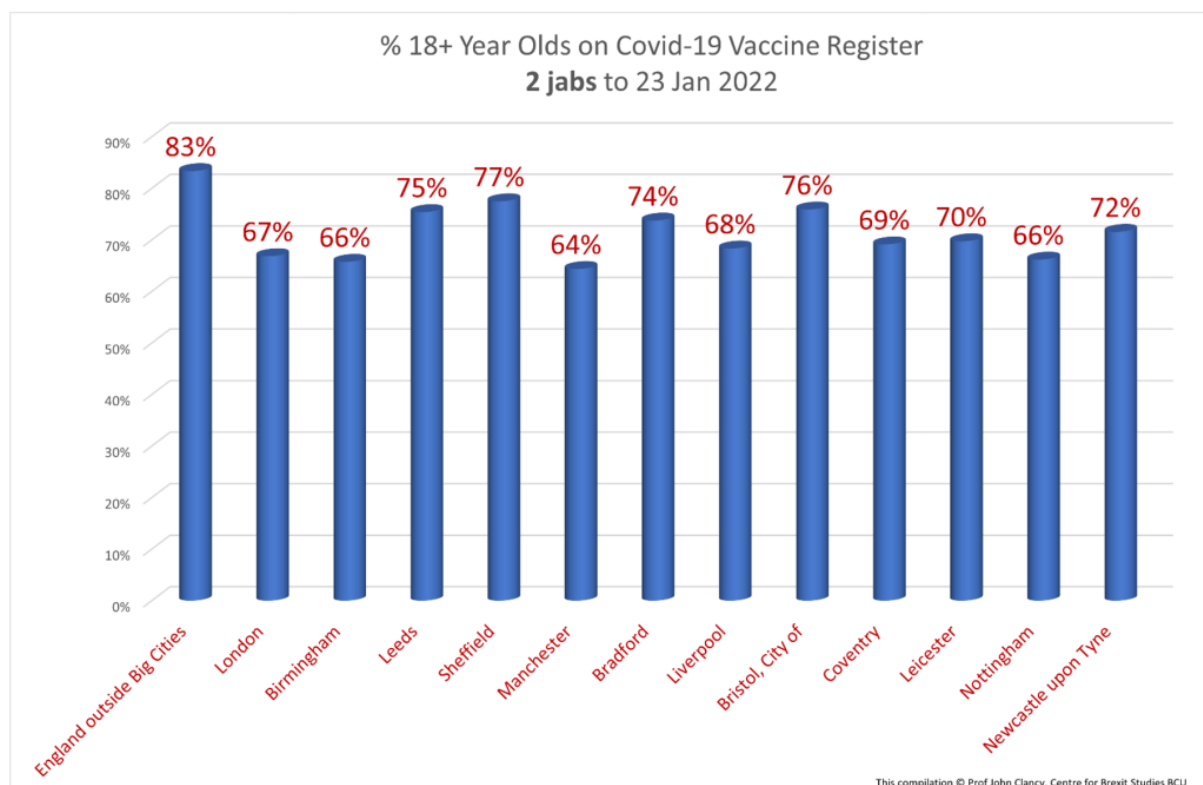
Well the biggest cities are obviously skewed by the big 3 of London (8.5 million adults), Birmingham (980,000 adults) and Leeds 710,000 adults). So 75% of all of the adults in the 12 biggest cities live in London, Birmingham and Leeds; and 62% in London. Consequently, their performance radically skews the wider 12 city cohort.

The 1st Jab had a more level performance with Leeds, Bristol and Sheffield not far behind the rest of the country. Nevertheless London, Birmingham and Manchester were 15 percentage points behind the rest of the country with about **30% of adults still completely unvaccinated as of the 23rd January 2022**.



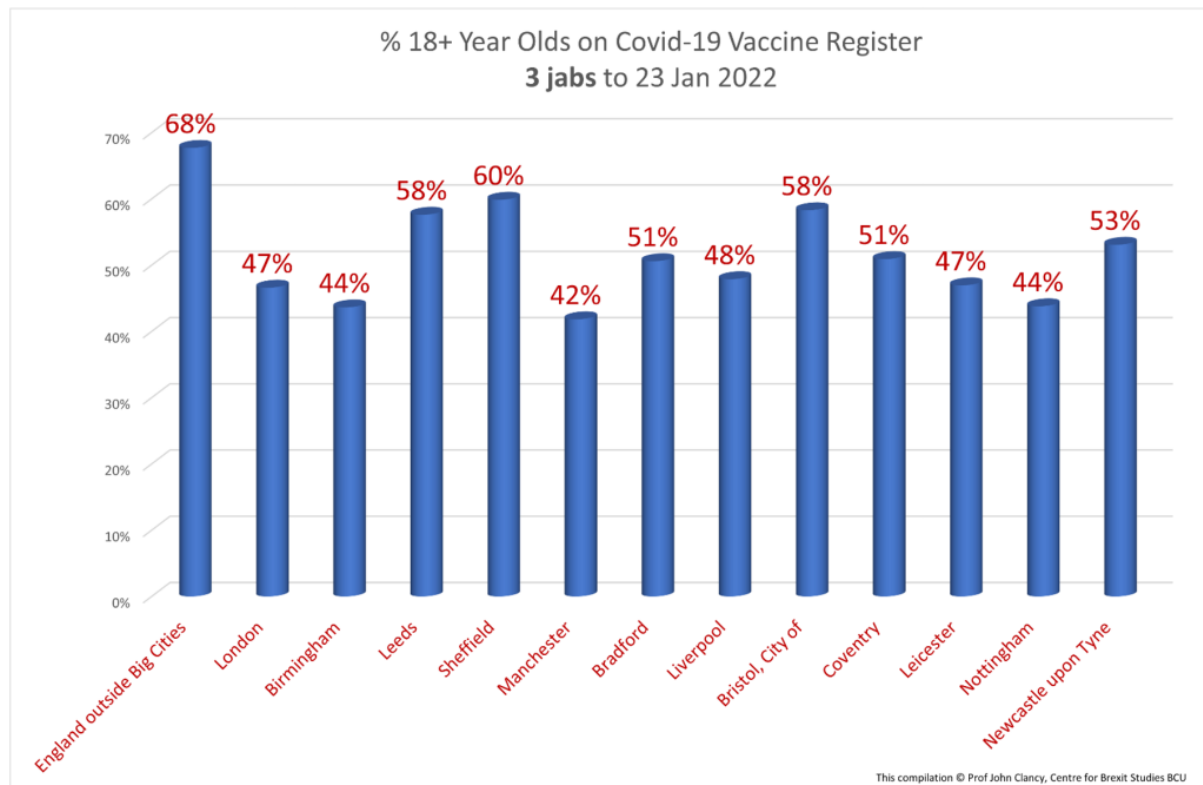
When it came to the second vaccination, there is a considerable difference in % uptake.

London, Birmingham and Manchester again were 18 percentage points behind the rest of England with ***over a third of all adults not then fully vaccinated by last autumn*** when the Booster campaign started. Leeds, Bristol and Sheffield were again the better performers, only about 8 percentage points behind.



When it came to the 3rd Jab, some cities are massively behind.

Over half of adults have not yet taken the Booster in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leicester and Nottingham. Leeds, Bristol and Sheffield again manage to perform better with approaching 60%. Birmingham and Manchester are at only 44% and 42% respectively.

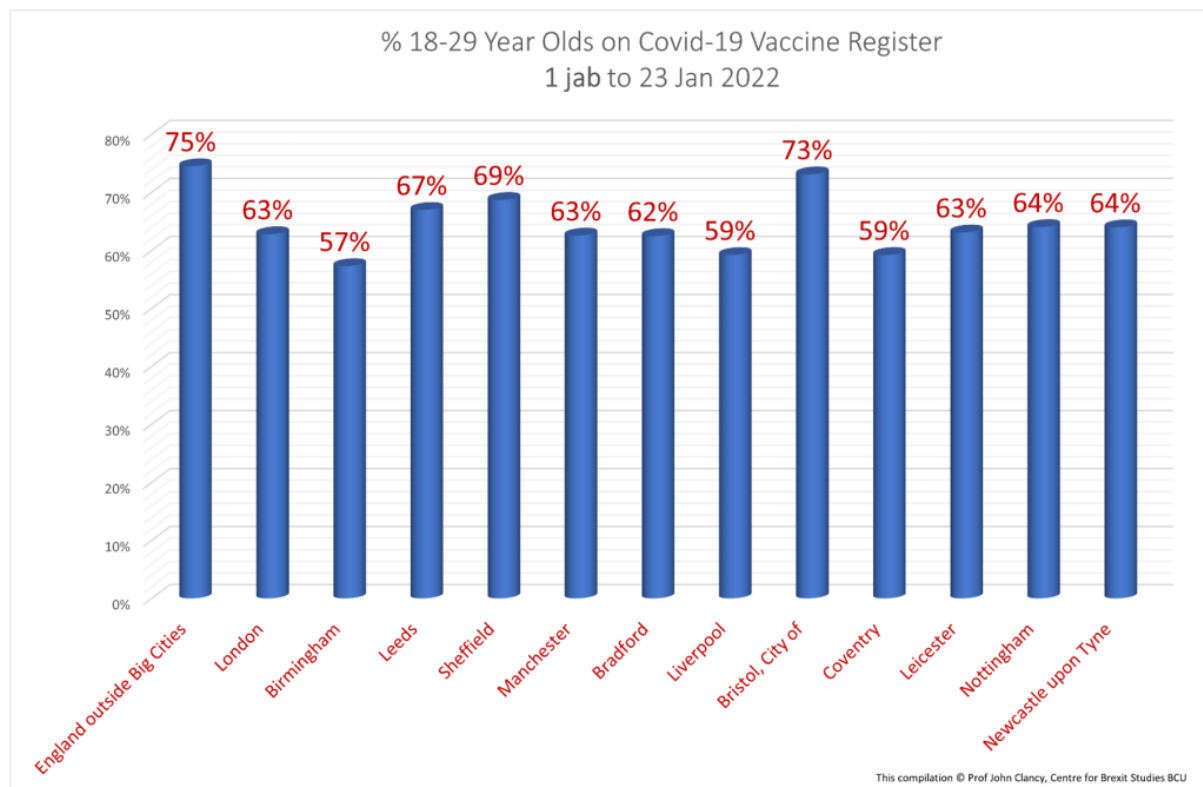


Looking at how young adults aged 18-29 fared in the individual cities with getting their jabs the variances become very stark as the 3 vaccination campaigns progressed.

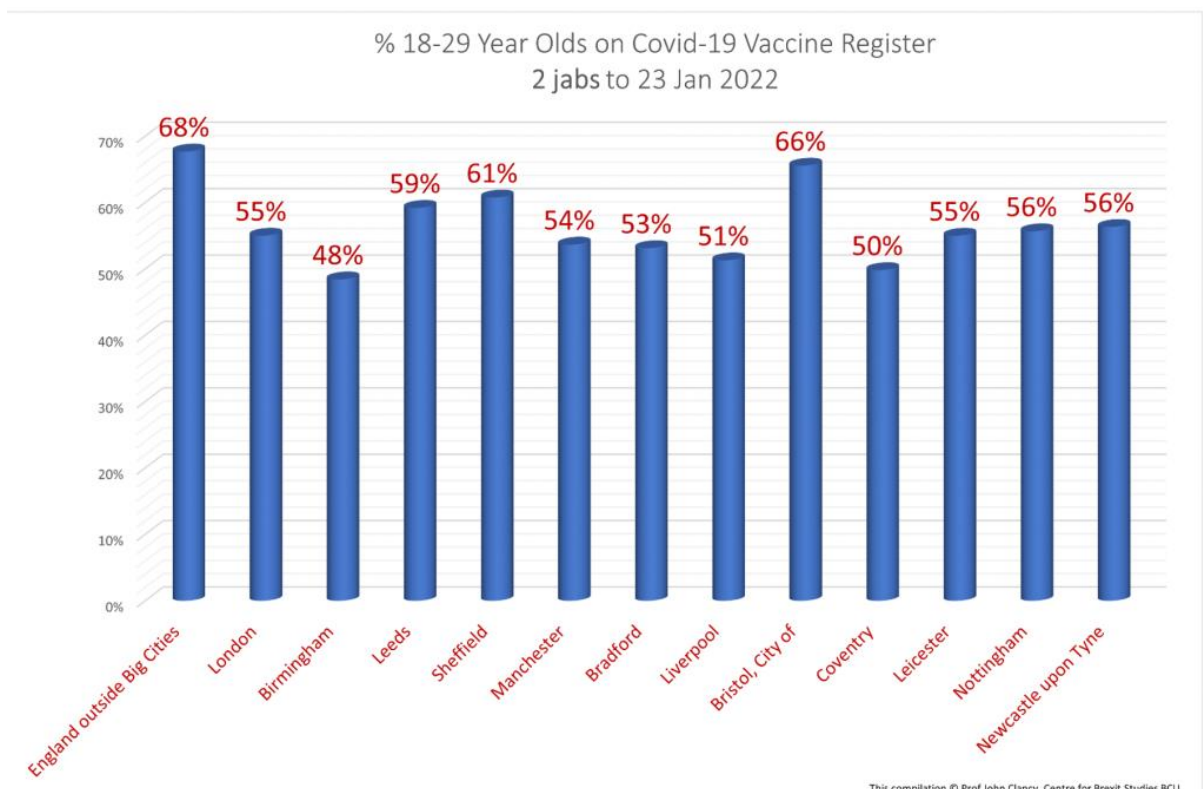
The most concern comes in Birmingham, however. As I pointed out in my last blog, the city takes the wooden spoon with only 57% of 18-29 year olds still only having had one jab, never mind two or boosters.

So more than 4 in 10 of 18-29 year olds are completely unvaccinated in Birmingham.

Leeds, Sheffield and Bristol managed to get two-thirds of their 18-29 year olds to have their first jab. Something else happened in Birmingham.

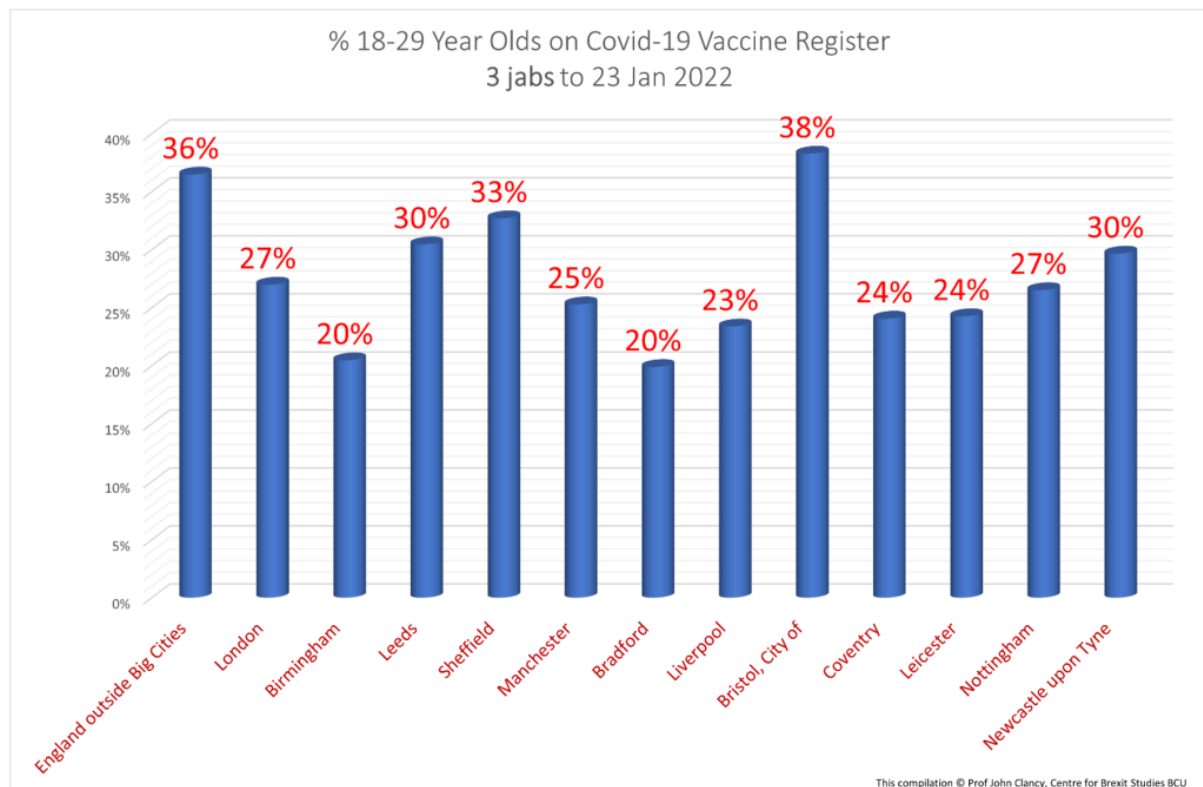


Similarly, more than half of 18-29 year olds in Birmingham have still not had a 2nd or 3rd jab. The city is 20 percentage points behind the rest of the country outside the big cities and is 11 or more percentage points behind Leeds, Sheffield (not vastly different places) and Bristol.

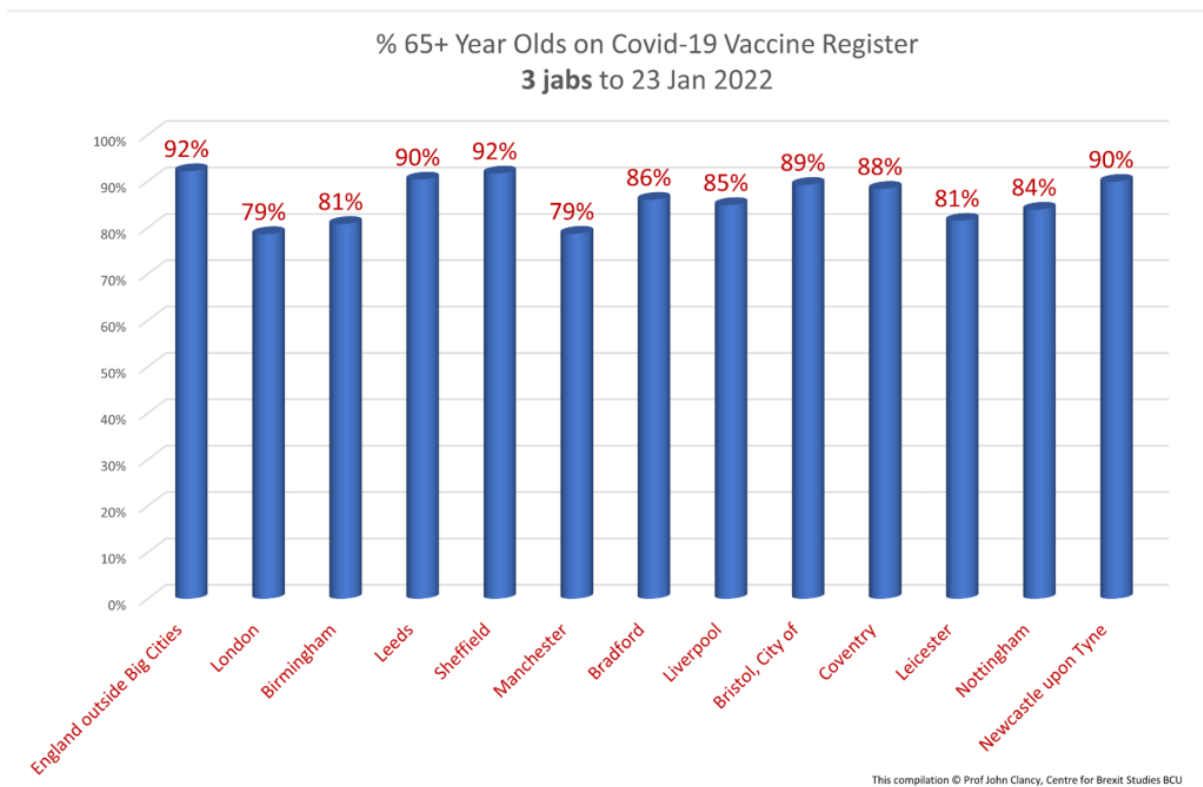


Clearly the booster programme came late for 18-29 year olds and has clearly been a struggle to get ongoing, as even outside the big cities only 36% of adults under 30 have got their booster.

But in Birmingham and Bradford 80% of 18-29 year olds have not had the booster. Interestingly, Bristol has outperformed even the rest of the country outside the big cities.



The good news is that for vaccination of the 65+ age range there is greater success and the differences in and outside the cities not so stark.



So as England exits the restrictions and we hope that Omicron becomes the “exit wave”, we have to ask a few questions.

As I posed in the last blog, was it right to start the campaign of vaccinating 12-17 year olds last September when the age cohort above was still so far behind in 1st and 2nd jabs? Did attention turn too quickly away from the under-30 adults? Were they let go too soon? Was the surge of Omicron actually down to this?

If Omicron is to be the exit wave, shouldn't we go back to getting 1st 2nd and 3rd jabs into the arms of adults in cities and those of the still poorly protected 18-29 year olds?

For any future vaccination campaigns in any future pandemics, we need to think more carefully about how we vaccinate in our cities and the young people there – how might we plan to do it differently?

Did the Anti Vax campaign impact on young metro-adults? Some further research polling is needed here.

What is it about the 13 million adults in our biggest 12 Cities which has made the choice to vaccinate so seemingly different from the 35 million adults in the rest of the country? The answers to that question will go deep, and as with Brexit, might well show how two nations exist in one country with very different attitudes, values and beliefs to each other.