

Briefing for MPs on actions being taken to increase uptake of measles vaccination in north east London

22 January 2024

1. Summary

Measles cases are on the rise across England. Vaccination is our best defence. This briefing sets out how the NHS in north east London has been, and will continue to be supporting communities to stay well. This has been through extensive activity to increase the uptake of the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccination, as well as through providing information about the risks, and symptoms of measles, and the importance of prevention through vaccination. Local council public health teams have also undertaken work to promote vaccination and engage communities who have lower rates of vaccination.

We have also provided you with information that you can share with your constituents to support the messaging and encourage them to get their children fully vaccinated.

2. Background

Two doses of the MMR vaccine provide the best protection against measles, mumps and rubella. Most children in north east London (77%) have had both doses of the MMR vaccine by the age of five (and are fully vaccinated). To achieve and maintain measles elimination (and prevent outbreaks) we need 95% uptake with two doses of the MMR vaccine by the time children turn five years old.

In 2023 NHS England launched a major national measles awareness drive, particularly supporting communities of lower uptake. We are supporting this by delivering a programme of enhanced vaccination activity and communications in north east London.

The NHS has an MMR action plan which includes work to improve data and digital technology and expand access and community engagement alongside targeted communication campaigns to encourage people to come forward.

3. Action being taken in north east London

Significant activity has been delivered over the last few months by the NHS to encourage uptake and increase access to the MMR and polio vaccines. This is set out below.

Increasing access to vaccination

To make it even easier for children to get the MMR vaccine a range of additional ways to get vaccinated have been running throughout our boroughs. This includes:

- Mobile clinics
- Additional clinics at GP practices
- Local clinics – in places such as libraries and community centres.
- Vaccination in schools – Vaccination UK have been running vaccination clinics in local schools.
- In addition to this we are analysing information at a hyper-local level to identify further areas where and how uptake of the vaccination can be supported.

Increasing awareness of the need to be vaccinated

As well as national NHS messaging and activity, coordinated and intensive work has been underway by the local NHS and our partners to contact the parent/carer of children aged 1-11 in north east London who are not fully vaccinated against measles and encourage them to take up the vaccine.

- GPs have been contacting parents of children aged 12 months to five years who are missing a first or second MMR vaccination to invite them to get fully vaccinated. This will be at least the third invite for some children in the last year.
- [Vaccination UK](#) have been calling every parent of a not fully vaccinated child aged four to 11 in north east London to invite them for catch up doses at a local clinic.
- We have provided schools with two letters for parents/carers about the MMR vaccination, via their school. One letter also included the potential need to isolate and these were translated into multiple community languages for use in community settings.
- Information has also gone out via schools and children's centres, including banners outside schools, posters, messages through school's communications channels, and in-school vaccination clinics.
- In February and March invite letters will also go out to people aged six to 25 who are not fully vaccinated.
- Paediatric clinicians are also working as advocates for the vaccine, and have been provided with information to encourage and remind parents how and why to vaccinate their child
- Direct engagement with communities, led by local council public health teams.

4. Raising awareness of symptoms, risks, and treatment of measles

We are supporting national messaging through our and our partner's communications channels to raise awareness of risks of measles, actions to take, and how it can be prevented through vaccination.

5. How you can help your constituents – please encourage them to get the vaccine

Please share information on the importance of the MMR vaccine and how to get it, in any way you can. We have prepared some suggested communications below to help with this. Information about the importance of the MMR vaccine and how to get it is available on our [website](#), and on the [NHS website](#).

You can share our social media posts, available here - twitter.com/NHS_NELondon,

The NHS in north east London is encouraging all parents/carers of children to make sure their child is up-to-date on their routine childhood vaccinations. To do this parents can search 'NHS child vaccines' online or visit nhs.uk/child-vaccines to see which vaccinations are given when. If you think your child might be behind on their MMR, polio or any other vaccination you can check your child's health record (red book) or contact your GP to see if they are up to date.

Suggested newsletter article:

Act now to vaccinate your child against measles

[Measles](#) cases are on the rise across England. There is no cure and vaccination is the only protection against becoming seriously unwell. To protect against measles your child needs two doses of the free [MMR vaccination](#). You can ask your GP practice to find out if your child is fully vaccinated, or to arrange to get the vaccine.

You can also get the vaccine at a local catch up clinic and find out more on the [NHS North East London website](#).

Suggested social media post:

Cases of measles are on the rise in England. Vaccinating your child against measles with the MMR vaccine can prevent serious illness. Speak to your GP surgery if you think you or your child has missed any vaccinations.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/mmr-vaccine/>

Key communications messages are below to prepare your own communications or to support discussions with communities:

- Measles cases are on the rise across England. Vaccination is our best defence.
- Measles is more than just a rash – it is a serious condition that spreads very easily and can lead to severe illness and even death.
- The MMR vaccine is recommended with the first dose at the age one year and a second dose at age three years four months.
- For maximum protection, you need both doses of the MMR vaccine.
- The MMR vaccine is our best protection against measles as well as from mumps and rubella, two other potentially unpleasant illnesses.
- Getting the NHS MMR vaccine is free and usually takes just a few minutes.
- You can book an appointment and catch up on the MMR vaccine at any age.
- If you or your child have missed any MMR vaccinations or are unsure if your child is up to date, contact your GP practice to check.
- For children approaching their MMR vaccination age, your GP practice will be in touch to invite you to book an appointment when they are due.
- Make sure your child is up-to-date on their routine childhood vaccinations. To do this search 'NHS child vaccines' online or visit [nhs.uk/child-vaccines](https://www.nhs.uk/child-vaccines) to see which vaccinations are given when.
- If you think your child might be behind on any vaccination you can check your child's health record (red book) or contact your GP to see if they are up to date.

Get in touch

If there is anything further you need, or that we can do to support you sharing the messaging on the vaccine please get in touch with us - nelondonicb.nelcommunications@nhs.net