



Measles cases in London: briefing for MPs

Current situation

Since 1 October 2023 there has been a rapid increase in measles cases with over 200 confirmed cases nationally, but London has also seen an increase in cases since December.

1. Measles is a serious illness; between 20 and 40% of affected cases can require hospital admission.
2. In 2023, there were [104 confirmed cases](#) in London. Almost 80% of cases are in children aged 18 and under.
3. Two doses of MMR vaccine will offer over 99% lifelong protection against measles.
4. London remains the [most vulnerable region](#) for large outbreaks of measles due to the lower uptake of MMR vaccination in the population.
5. The principal control measure for measles outbreaks is vaccination.

Actions underway

6. The UKHSA, NHSE and ADPH formed the London Measles Coordination Group in 2023 to bring together senior London partners to coordinate a regional response to prepare, prevent and respond to the threat of measles in London.
7. Health partners have delivered MMR catch-ups, provided additional vaccination checks, contacted unvaccinated children, and conducted outreach in under-vaccinated communities or areas of low vaccine coverage.
8. A UKHSA exercise will take place on the 24th January, rehearsing a significant measles outbreak in London and stress-testing the health system wide response across partner agencies and government departments although the primary focus of activity remains to prevent such an occurrence.
9. Significant communications and engagement to raise the profile of the measles threat and improve MMR vaccine uptake have taken place since last summer, including press releases, broadcast media interviews, social media activity new video content, letters to schools and communities, translated materials, webinars and local advertising.
10. Ongoing, targeted engagement to support uptake in under-vaccinated communities:
 - A communications MMR campaign for the Romanian community.
 - The London Muslim Health Network are leading on a festival in February with a focus on measles and MMR.
 - A partnership with the London Jewish Health Partnership, the Charedi Women's Health Alliance and the London Jewish Forum to deliver an MMR uptake campaign.
 - A new community communications campaign is being developed to be launched to health system partners, co-produced with communities across London. This will reduce the threat of communicable diseases across all communities.
11. NHS England launched a national MMR vaccine call-recall campaign on the 22 January with an expanded focus for West Midlands and London.

Message for MPs

12. Please **support the NHS** and our health protection teams in **getting the message out**:
 - Measles can be very serious but is completely preventable
 - Current MMR uptake levels in London are the lowest in a decade, with a high risk of outbreaks in under-vaccinated communities.
 - **Ensure your children are vaccinated.**
 - It is never too late to catch up. You can get both doses of your MMR vaccine for free on the NHS whatever your age
 - Animal-product free / porcine-free vaccines are available on request

For further information and support please contact incident022.nrc@ukhsa.gov.uk. This is the national incident mailbox established by UKHSA to manage rising cases of measles.