



News Release

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Latest measles cases published as part of national catch-up programme

The first national monthly measles data is published today (Friday 7 June), as part of the national MMR catch-up programme.

The figures for the North East Public Health England (PHE) Centre show 111 cases of the preventable, infectious disease were reported in the North East this April, on top of 209 cases from January to March this year.

In England there were 288 cases in April, bringing the total number so far in 2013 to 962. This continues the upward trend seen since early 2012 with monthly totals around the highest recorded levels seen since 1994. The regions most affected continue to be the North West and North East where there have been outbreaks of the infection. The North East reported the highest number of confirmed cases in April, reflecting the on-going outbreak in Teesside.

In line with trends across the country, the number of cases of measles has continued to rise in the region. Up to the end of April, 320 cases were confirmed in the North East, compared with a total of 49 cases reported in 2012. (See notes to editors for breakdown by local authority).

The national catch-up programme to increase MMR vaccination uptake in children and teenagers has so far resulted in more than 95 per cent of GP practices across England ordering extra doses of the vaccine – over 200,000 extra in total.

The catch-up programme, run by Public Health England, NHS England, the Department of Health, and local authorities, aims to prevent measles outbreaks by giving MMR to as many unvaccinated and partially vaccinated 10-16 year olds as possible in time for the next school year.

This age group is most at risk of measles due to the fall in coverage of MMR that occurred in the late 1990s and early 2000s when concern around the discredited link between autism and the vaccine was widespread.

The catch-up programme aims to ensure that at least 95 per cent of 10-16 year olds have received at least one dose of MMR. This is estimated to be around 300,000 children (eight per cent). The programme is also keen to reach another third of a million in this age group who need a second dose of MMR to give them full protection, and a further third of a million children below and above this age band who need another dose.

Dr Roberta Marshall, Centre Director for the North East PHE Centre said: “Our ambition is to vaccinate 95 per cent of 10-16 year olds in time for the next school year. Local public health teams have been working hard to encourage uptake with children and teenagers in the region.

“The message to parents who think their child may not be fully immunised is to check today and book an appointment with your GP. The vaccine is there ready to be used and could save your child’s life. Measles is a serious illness and can lead to serious complications, including hospitalisation in more than one in five cases among teens this year.

“We are encouraged by the very high levels of engagement by local GP practices across the North East and we are getting regular feedback from the local NHS teams.

“And in response to the ongoing outbreak in Teesside, school based vaccination clinics have already been held in over 120 schools, vaccinating more than 2,000 primary and secondary school age children,

“We will shortly be implementing a new monitoring system that will allow us to know the number of vaccines actually received. We are continuing to work closely with NHS partners to ensure we have accurate records of children who have missed vaccination, to help guide effective local decision making about possible additional targeted activity.

“The only way to prevent measles outbreaks is to ensure good uptake of the MMR vaccine across all age groups, and having accurate records of who is at risk is absolutely crucial to the success of this programme.”

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. North East measles data broken down by Local Authority.

	Number by Month				Year					
	Apr	Mar	Feb	Jan	Year to date (up to 30 th April)		Previous year (2012 up to 30 th April)		Previous year – total 2012	
					No	Rate	No	Rate	No	Rate
North East	111	80	73	56	320	37.5	1	0.12	49	1.89
County Durham	2	1	1	1	5	2.96	0	0	14	2.73
Darlington	1	1	1	3	6	17.3	0	0	24	22.7
Gateshead	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.50
Hartlepool	20	11	2	0	33	109.0	0	0	0	0
Middlesbrough	57	54	24	21	156	342.9	1	2.19	2	1.45
Newcastle Upon Tyne	2	1	0	0	3	3.27	0	0	0	0
North Tyneside	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northumberland	0	0	0	3	3	2.89	0	0	1	0.32
Redcar and Cleveland	17	5	5	1	28	63.0	0	0	2	1.48
South Tyneside	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stockton-on-Tees	9	7	40	25	81	128.4	0	0	5	2.61
Sunderland	3	0	0	2	5	5.52	0	0	0	0

2. The number of vaccinations ordered cannot be broken down to a regional / local level.
3. The number of extra doses of the vaccine being ordered by GPs across England comes from ImmForm, the vaccine ordering website. It details the number of orders for MMR which have been taken since the catch-up programme was announced, minus the number that would have been ordered for the routine programme.
4. The catch-up programme sets out a national framework within which local teams – led by NHS England Area Teams, working alongside Directors of Public Health in Local Government, and supported by PHE Centres – are producing tailored plans to identify and give MMR to unvaccinated and partially vaccinated 10-16 year olds through GPs and/or school programmes. Local intelligence may reveal the need to expand the focus of the catch-

up activity beyond the 10-16 year old age groups and where this is recognised, further local action will be taken.

5. Key resources for healthcare professionals involved in the MMR catch up vaccination programme are available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england/series/MMR-catch-up-programme-2013>.
6. A table of confirmed cases of Measles, Mumps and Rubella 1996-2012 is available from: http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb_C/1195733833790
The PHE Health Protection Report articles on measles cases in April 2013 (including cases by region and age group) and measles, mumps and rubella cases for quarter 1 (January-March 2013) are available from the press office under embargo.
7. For more information on measles and MMR, please visit:
<http://www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/Measles/>
or <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Measles/Pages/Introduction.aspx>
8. A Facebook page, www.facebook.com/getvaccinatedEngland has also been set up for parents with any questions about the MMR vaccine we are using #getthemmr with partners on Twitter.
9. Public Health England is a new executive agency of the Department of Health that took up its full responsibilities on 1 April, 2013. PHE works with national and local government, industry and the NHS to protect and improve the nation's health and support healthier choices and will be addressing inequalities by focusing on removing barriers to good health. To find out more visit our website www.gov.uk/phe, follow us on Twitter @PHE_uk.

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