



News Release

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Devon, Cornwall and Somerset - latest measles cases published as part of national catch-up programme

The first monthly confirmed case data for Devon, Cornwall and Somerset PHE Centre is published today, as part of the national MMR catch –up programme. The figures show a further two cases of the preventable, infectious disease, on top of four 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 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.

In line with trends across the country, the number of cases of measles has seen a small rise in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset. Up to the end of April, 6 cases were confirmed, following a total of 31 cases in 2012. (See notes in 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. 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 band who need another dose.

This age group are 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.

During this period, vaccination uptake fell to as low as 80 per cent in 2005, with lower rates in some parts of the country. Today MMR coverage among five year olds in England is at its highest recorded levels, with 94 per cent receiving one dose and 90 per cent receiving two doses.

Professor Deb Lapthorne, Centre Director for Devon, Cornwall and Somerset said: “Our ambition is to ensure that 95 per cent of 10-16 year olds are vaccinated in time for the next school year. We know that local public health teams have been working hard to encourage uptake with children and teenagers across the patch and we are encouraged by the very high levels of engagement by local GP practices and we are getting regular feedback from the local NHS teams.

“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.

“And of course the MMR vaccine not only protects against measles but also offers protection for mumps and rubella which can also have serious consequences.”

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Notes to editors

1. Devon, Cornwall and Somerset measles data: Table here by LA breakdown
2. Table 1: Confirmed cases of measles by month and year with a comparison to the previous years by Local Authority for Devon, Cornwall and Somerset
- 3.

Rate - Cases per 100,000 Person Years No – Number of confirmed cases	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	
					Annualised rate per 100,00 person years		Annualised rate per 100,00 person years			
					No	Rate	No	Rate	No	Rate
Devon, Cornwall & Somerset	2	0	1	3	6	0.83	1	0.14	31	1.41
Cornwall	0	0	1	0	1	0.57	0	0	0	0
Devon	1	0	0	3	4	1.63	0	0	15	2.01
Isles of Scilly	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Plymouth	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Somerset	1	0	0	0	1	0.57	1	0.57	16	3.01
Torbay	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

*Based upon onset date where available. Data correct as at 29/05/2013.
Rates are calculated using ONS 2011 mid-year population estimates.*

4. The number of vaccinations ordered cannot be broken down to a regional / local level.
5. 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.
6. PHE estimates that there are approximately one third of a million 10-16 year olds (around eight per cent) who are unvaccinated and another third of a million who need at least one further dose of MMR to give them full protection. It is also estimated that there are around another one third of a million children below and above this age band who need at least one further dose of MMR. The target population for this catch-up programme is therefore of the

order of one million doses. MMR vaccination provides 95 per cent protection against measles. A second dose is then needed to provide almost complete protection.

7. For more information on measles and MMR, please visit: or <http://www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/Measles/>
8. 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>.
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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