



Stop press: Annual uptake of MMR at all-time high

The percentage of children immunised in 2012/13 against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) by the age of two is the highest annual figure since the vaccine was first introduced in England in 1988, new figures show. The previous high of 91.8% has been exceeded, and now stands at 92.3% - a remarkable achievement by all concerned, see [web link 11](#).

Amongst the other highlights in the report (see [web link 12](#)) are increases in the uptake of several vaccinations to levels above the WHO recommended threshold of 95 per cent. These include primary:

- DTaP/IPV/Hib immunisation by age one (95.1 per cent)
- MenC immunisation by age two (95.1 per cent)
- Hib immunisation by age five (95.4 per cent)

If these trends continue we can all look forward to a time when the measles outbreaks we have seen in the recent past will, like smallpox and soon, we hope, polio, be consigned to the history of medicine textbooks.

Stop press: Vaccine uptake in children continues its upward trend throughout the UK

UK vaccine coverage continues to improve and all childhood vaccines evaluated for children reaching 12 months, 24 months and five years of age in the quarter April to June 2013 increased marginally compared to levels reported in the previous quarter, with the exception of third dose DTaP/IPV/Hib coverage at 24 months and five years which remain the same.

Another positive story is that the number of confirmed cases of measles in England has fallen for the fourth successive month from over 300 in March to 21 in August.

But it's not all good news. After reaching an uptake of pertussis vaccine of 60% in pregnant women in February this year, uptake had dropped back to 50% by June. This is of particular concern because the incidence of whooping cough in the general population shows no sign of abating.

See [web link 15](#) and [web link 16](#) more information on these stories.

Influenza – a few coughs and sneezes it is not

Unsurprisingly, this month's issue concentrates on influenza – a disease that many people think is a bit like having a heavy cold. If you think this, take a few minutes to watch Louise's story at [web link 1](#). Of course, flu is not always this bad and some people will get off lightly. But you never know. So if you're eligible, and especially if you're a frontline health or social care worker, get the vaccination. For those administering the vaccination this winter there's a chart summarising the advice on page 5 which can also be seen in the new Green Book influenza chapter at [web link 2](#).

Frontline health and social care workers encouraged to get vaccinated

The flu season will soon be upon us and all eligible people are being encouraged to be vaccinated.

A communications campaign will raise awareness of the importance of flu vaccination and the Chief Medical Officer has written to a range of voluntary organisations representing people in clinical at-risk and other groups encouraging their members to get vaccinated.

Flu can severely impact the health of frail and vulnerable patients. In addition to their being immunised, it is important that those who care for them are also immunised to prevent them spreading infection to their patients.

Last year a disappointing 45.6% of health and social care workers were vaccinated against flu. PHE, NHS England and the DH have written to the NHS and local authorities setting out how important it is that health and social care staff get vaccinated, see [web link 3](#). The letter follows an announcement by the Secretary of State for Health in September that all Trusts are expected to reach at least 75% uptake, and Trusts eligible for a share of the £250m A&E funding will not receive a portion of the money in future years if they do not reach this target.

Flu vaccination protects you, your family and your patients. Contact your occupational health team today and get vaccinated.

A question for this winter's flu vaccination programme

If someone with liver disease catches flu, how much more likely are they to die than someone with no risk factors?

Twice as likely? Twenty times? Fifty times? One hundred times?

The answer is in Table 19.1 of the Green Book at [web link 2](#).

Immunisation news

Flu vaccination media campaign

Public Health England (PHE) will be launching a national seasonal flu campaign on 11 October 2013 to encourage uptake of the flu vaccine amongst the most at-risk groups. The campaign is specifically aimed at adults (under 65) and parents of children (4-17) with long-term health conditions and pregnant women. We are also targeting parents of two- and three-year-olds encouraging them to get their children vaccinated with the new nasal spray vaccine. Media channels include radio, national press, magazines, online display and search accompanied by a PR push. In addition, we will be including messaging for adults with long-term health conditions on pharmacy bags in around 1500 pharmacies.

This is a very important public health intervention and we would value your support in this messaging. If you would like to order flu posters they can be viewed at [web link 14](#) and ordered at [web link 13](#)

Confirmation of eligibility for the flu vaccination in two- and three-year-olds

Some people have requested clarification of the ages at which children are eligible for the nasal flu vaccine being introduced this year. The following should help in arriving at a decision.

- Was the child aged two or three years on 1 September 2013, i.e. they were born between 2 September 2009 and 1 September 2011 inclusive?

If yes, offer the vaccine - their age on 1 September 2013 is the key to eligibility – see the table below.

Remember that only one dose of nasal vaccine is needed, unless the child is in a risk group (see Green Book).

And also remember that some children are contraindicated for the nasal vaccine in which case they should be offered the inactivated flu vaccine. The algorithm on page 5 summarises the programme.

We recognise that some children who are initially unable to receive the vaccine (because they are under two years of age on 1 September) will reach two years of age during the flu season. At this stage, although they are able to receive the flu vaccine under the product licence, they are not eligible for the new programme. This is because, unfortunately, a line has to be drawn somewhere in the interests of protecting the optimum number of children early enough in the season whilst making the most effective use of the vaccine. Children who are at risk, however, may still benefit from the vaccine when given later in the season, in which case - providing they are over two years of age and are not contraindicated - Fluenz is the vaccine of choice.

Childhood flu programme Q&A for healthcare professionals

This Q&A is now available at [web link 17](#)

Flu vaccination for children age range eligibility

Born	Age on 1 Sept 2013	Eligible?
On or before 1 Sept 2009	4 or >4	No
Between 2 Sept 2009 and 1 Sept 2010 inclusive	3	Yes
Between 2 Sept 2010 and 1 Sept 2011 inclusive	2	Yes
On or after 2 Sept 2011	1 or <2	No

Which flu vaccine should children have and how many doses?

Fluenz, the live attenuated nasal vaccine now being used to vaccinate two- and three-year-old children, as well as those aged four to ten in the pilot geographical areas, has several advantages over the inactivated trivalent flu vaccine used in children who are at-risk and/or for whom Fluenz is contraindicated. One advantage is that, in the majority of cases, only one dose is needed. But there are exceptions and vaccinators should refer to Table 19.4 on p.194 of the Green Book at [web link 2](#) for guidance.

There's also a lot of useful information about the childhood flu vaccination programme in a Q and A format for those healthcare professionals involved in administering the vaccines on the NHS Employers website at [web link 4](#).

Who should get the flu vaccination this year?

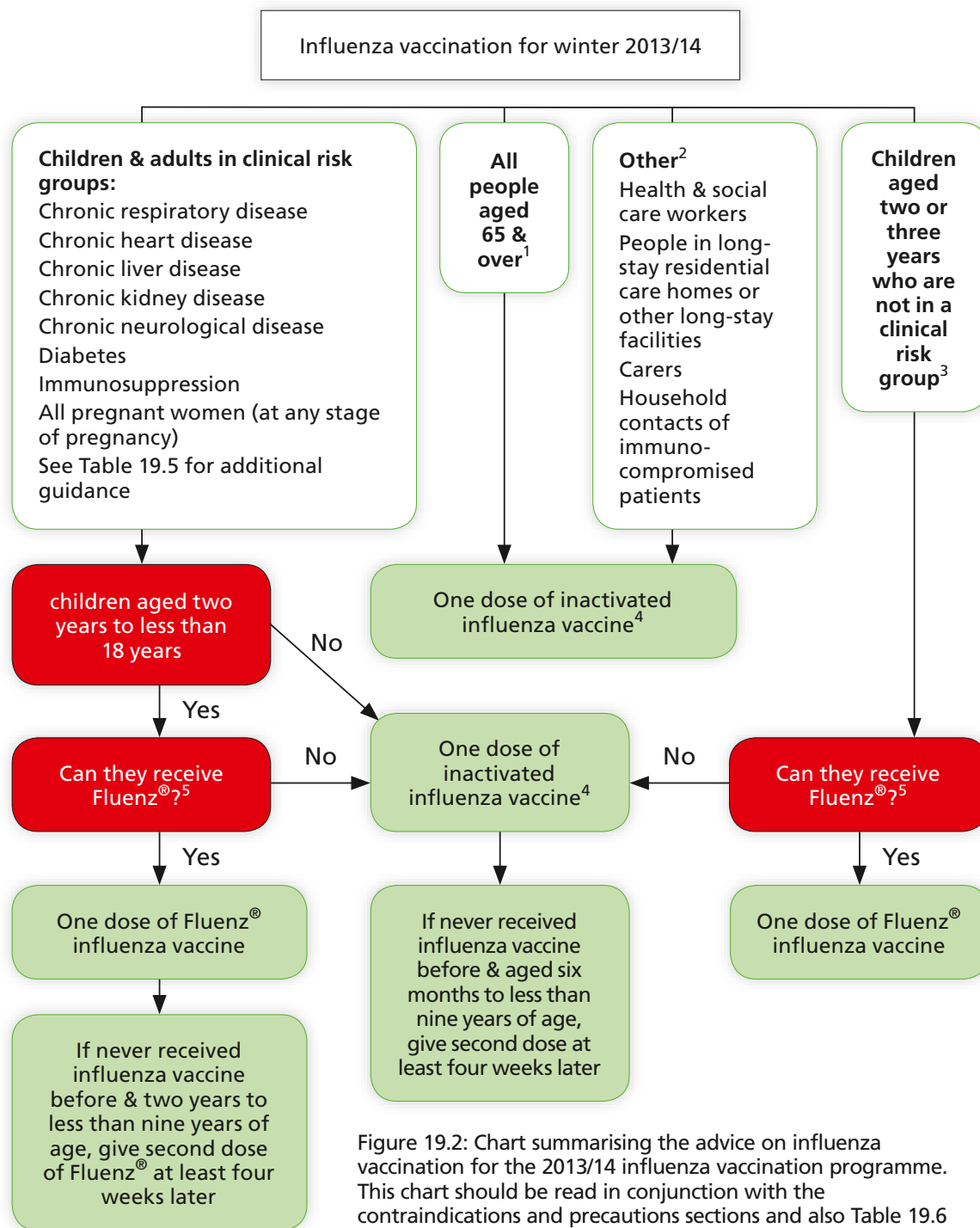
The chart on the next page summarises the advice on the influenza vaccination for winter 2013/14.

You may wish to print it out for easy reference.

See page 203 of the new Green Book chapter 19 at [web link 2](#) for details.

Inviting patients to attend surgery for their flu vaccinations

We have had several requests for a template letter inviting patients to attend surgeries for their flu vaccinations. Although it's preferable that surgeries draft their own letters because they know their local populations better than anybody, we have decided to provide a template that may prove useful and save valuable time. It can be viewed at [web link 5](#) where it can be downloaded, adapted to local needs if necessary, and printed out.



- 1 all those aged 65 years or older including all those aged 65 years on or before 1 March 2014
- 2 follow additional guidance from UK health departments
- 3 all children aged two or three years (but not four years or older) on or before 1 Sept 2013
- 4 if quadrivalent inactivated vaccine available, consider for **children age three years and older only**.
If quadrivalent unavailable, offer suitable trivalent inactivated influenza vaccine. See table 19.6 which lists the vaccines that can be used in young children - **some are not suitable for young children**.
- 5 cannot receive if: under age of two years; 18 years and older; have severe asthma (BTS SIGN step 4 or above); active wheezing at time of vaccination; egg allergy; certain immunodeficiencies; or pregnant - see contraindications and precautions for full list.

Flu vaccine strategic reserve in England

Public Health England will be holding a strategic reserve of 400,000 doses of inactivated trivalent injectable flu vaccine for use in England for the 2013/14 flu immunisation programme.

GPs and other providers should have ordered sufficient flu vaccine for their at-risk patients, and the stockpile is an 'insurance policy', in case there are problems with supply.

The reserve will be available through ImmForm only if manufacturers have no supplies available to order. Updates will be posted on the ImmForm website. NHS health professionals should follow the steps below to access the vaccines.

More detailed information and answers to questions can be found here (add link to reserve document)

The strategic reserve is separate from the flu vaccine (Fluenz) which has been centrally procured for the extension of the flu programme to two- and three-year-old children, which has been available to order via ImmForm from Monday 9 September, see [web link 6](#)

Accessing the flu vaccine strategic reserve in England

If your practice has no stock or is running out:

1. First try contacting all suppliers to buy additional stock.
2. If none is available, find out if it is temporary or permanent. If temporary then place an order.
3. If no further stock is available from the suppliers, then speak to local colleagues and the NHS England area team screening and immunisation manager or co-ordinator to see if any supplies are available locally.
4. If no stock is available locally, you can order flu vaccine from www.ImmForm.dh.gov.uk
5. Vaccine suppliers advise Public Health England on their stock levels and the strategic reserve will only be accessible when there is no vaccine available to order from suppliers. Vaccines should be ordered sparingly to ensure equitable distribution. Vaccines will usually be delivered in one to two working days, once orders have been placed on ImmForm.

London seasonal influenza bulletin

This weekly update, aimed at health professionals in London, is published by PHE London and NHS England (London). It includes information that health professionals nationally may find useful. If you wish to subscribe to the bulletin please contact Erika.Huszar@PHE.gov.uk

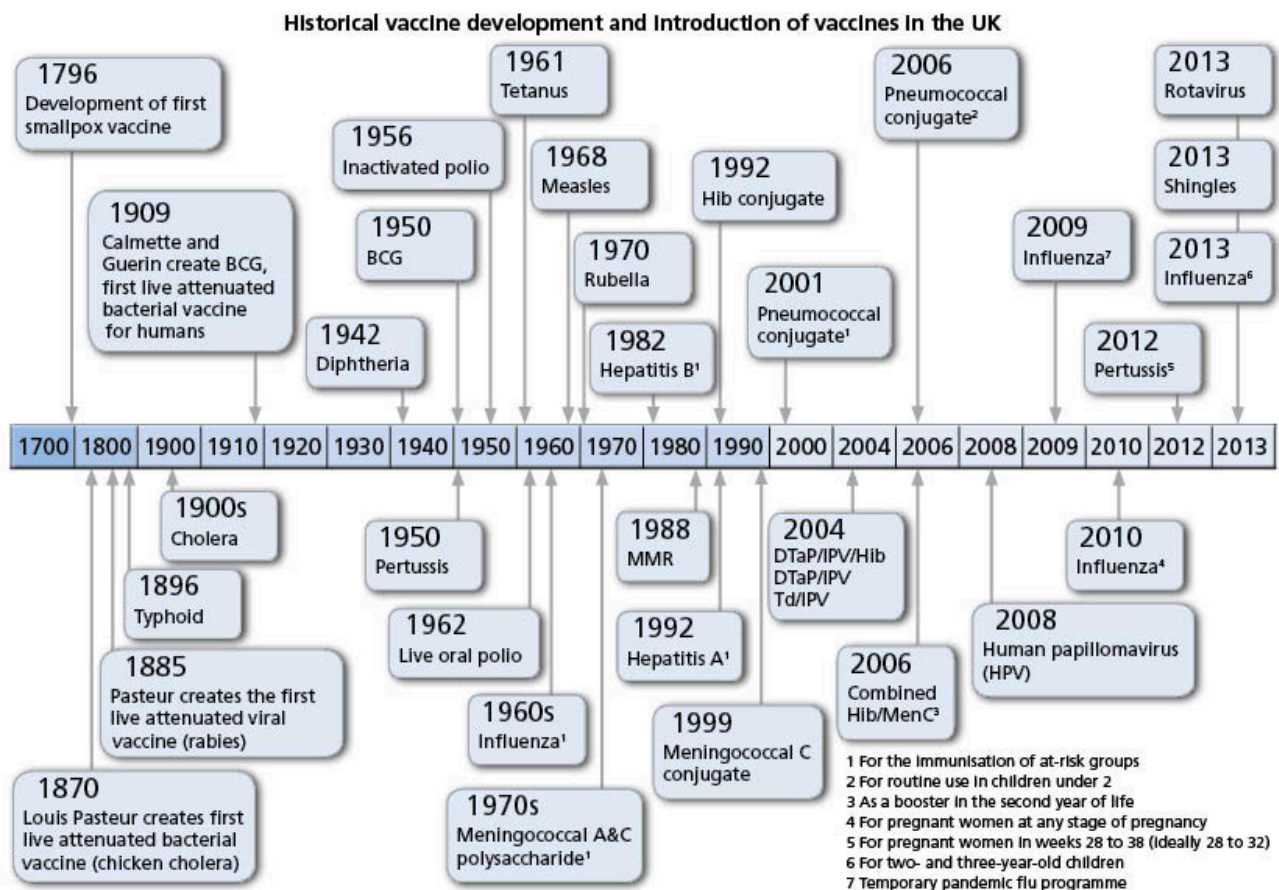
Vaccination of individuals with uncertain or incomplete immunisation histories

This algorithm, which can be viewed at [web link 7](#), has been updated to reflect the recent changes to the MenC vaccine schedule and the introduction of the shingles and childhood influenza vaccine programmes.

A history of vaccine introductions

As many, if not all, of you will be aware, there has been a flurry of activity this year in introducing two new vaccine programmes and extending or revising others. This has required a monumental effort by all concerned and everybody involved deserves high praise especially when all this work is put in an historical context, as the timeline below shows. As one would hope, and indeed expect, in the last 30 years there have been almost as many vaccine introductions as there were in the previous 180 years.

This is a great achievement by the NHS and one can only guess at the numbers of lives saved and disabilities prevented over the last 30 years let alone the 200. As we move further along the timeline so more vaccine programmes will be added to the list and we can be confident that they will be implemented with all the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing ones.



PHE launches free dried blood spot testing service for infants born to hepatitis B positive mothers

Public Health England (PHE) has launched a new dried blood spot (DBS) testing service for infants born to hepatitis B positive mothers. The service is free of charge and has been designed to improve the coverage of vaccination and follow-up testing in primary care* of all infants born to hepatitis B positive mothers.

Infants born to hepatitis B positive mothers are at risk of infection and are routinely offered four doses of hepatitis B vaccine, which are administered at birth and at one, two and twelve months. Testing infants for hepatitis B surface antigen at the age of 12 months (whilst administering the fourth dose of the hepatitis B vaccine at the same visit), will identify any infants for whom hepatitis B vaccination has not been successful and who have become chronically infected. Testing at-risk infants at this age will allow those who have developed hepatitis B infection to be referred for early assessment and specialist management.

To improve ease and uptake of testing, particularly in primary care, PHE has developed a DBS test that has been validated for detecting hepatitis B surface antigen.

The DBS test uses a single-use safety lancet to prick the heel of the infant allowing healthcare professionals in GP surgeries, community hospitals and clinics to obtain several drops of blood, which is then applied to a filter paper with speed and little discomfort. Simple standard infection control precautions prevent any risk of cross-infection and allowing the blood to air dry onto the filter paper renders it safe for posting to the laboratory at Public Health England, Colindale.

Screening and immunisation leads in local area teams who feel this free-of-charge service could help to increase the uptake of testing of at-risk infants at 12 months of age are encouraged to express their interest in the service.

Further information on the DBS service, training resources and information on how to express your interest can be found at [web link 18](#).

*It is important to note that the DBS service is designed to increase testing in primary care of all at risk infants aged 12 months who are born to hepatitis B positive mothers. It is not intended to replace specialist hospital services that are already established within the local area teams and who continue to offer a timely and efficient testing service.

Resources

Green Book

As noted above, the revised influenza chapter is now available at [web link 2](#).

Shingles and children's influenza vaccination leaflets

After the initial huge surge in demand both these leaflets are back in stock and available through the Publications Orderline at [web link 8](#).

Vaccine wastage

The feature on good practice in the storage and distribution of vaccines in last month's Vaccine Update was well received. Accordingly, we will be running a series of tips and advice on maintaining the cold chain in future issues of Vaccine Update starting with a reminder that there's a poster at [web link 9](#) that you can download and print out and stick on or near your vaccine fridge and/or its electric socket.

Vaccine supply

Zostavax update

PHE remains subject to a temporary delay with the supply of the shingles vaccine, Zostavax, into the UK. The disruption to supply will continue until normal supplies are restored by the manufacturer, Sanofi Pasteur MSD (SPMSD). This is expected to be in November and we are working closely with the manufacturers to restore supplies as quickly as possible. During this time, a restriction on the quantity of vaccine that can be ordered will remain in place while the vaccine is in stock. It is likely that there will be periods of no stock.

National distribution of the Zostavax vaccine began on 1 August, based on assurances of continuity of supply from SPMSD. A large quantity of vaccine has already been distributed throughout the UK to start the programme. We do not expect this temporary supply issue to affect the overall programme to immunise 70- and 79-year-olds over the coming year. NHS customers should refer to the ImmForm website for the latest information on vaccine availability.

Zostavax is the vaccine being used for the new immunisation programme to protect against shingles that started on 1 September 2013, in line with the advice of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. Initially it is being provided to 70- and 79-year-olds.

Cervarix

No further stocks of Cervarix are available to order on the ImmForm website. Gardasil is available and can continue to be ordered for the HPV programme. Please refer to the Green Book at [web link 2](#) for advice on previous incomplete vaccination with Cervarix.

Typhoid vaccine

Sanofi Pasteur MSD has limited stock of their typhoid vaccine, Typhim Vi. To ensure as much coverage as possible with the current stock, the number of doses per customer is being restricted until further notice.

Janssen is currently supplying Vivotif, on a normal delivery basis. Orders can be placed on 0844 800 3907.

Men C vaccines

A reminder that NeisVac-C is available to order for the single dose for the infant programme.

In infants, Meningitec should only be used as a second dose for those who received Meningitec at three months of age prior to 1 June 2013. All other infants should receive NeisVac-C as the single Men C dose at three months.

Currently Meningitec is available to order for the adolescent dose for the academic year 2013/14.

Menjugate Kit is no longer available to be ordered on the ImmForm website.

Please email Vaccinesupply@phe.gov.uk if you are unsure which vaccine to order.

For further information please see, MenC vaccination schedule: planned changes from June 2013 at [web link 10](#).

Web links

- web link 1** www.publichealthwales.org/louises-story
- web link 2** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/influenza-the-green-book-chapter-19>
- web link 3** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccination-increasing-uptake-by-health-and-social-care-workers>
- web link 4** [http://www.nhsemployers.org/PayAndContracts/GeneralMedicalServicesContract/vaccination_and_immunisation/pandemic-flu/Childhood_\(two_and_three_year_old\)_influenza_vaccination_programme/Pages/ChildhoodseasonalinfluenzavaccinationprogrammeFAQs.aspx](http://www.nhsemployers.org/PayAndContracts/GeneralMedicalServicesContract/vaccination_and_immunisation/pandemic-flu/Childhood_(two_and_three_year_old)_influenza_vaccination_programme/Pages/ChildhoodseasonalinfluenzavaccinationprogrammeFAQs.aspx)
- web link 5** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccination-invitation-template-letter>
- web link 6** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vaccine-update-issue-204>
- web link 7** http://www.hpa.org.uk/webc/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1194947406156
- web link 8** http://www.orderline.dh.gov.uk/ecom_dh/public/home.jsf
- web link 9** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keep-your-vaccines-healthy-poster>
- web link 10** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/menc-vaccination-schedule-planned-changes-from-june-2013>
- web link 11** <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/highest-mmr-vaccine-coverage-in-25-years>
- web link 12** <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB11665>
- web link 13** <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england/series/annual-flu-programme>
- web link 14** http://www.orderline.dh.gov.uk/ecom_dh/public/home.jsf
- web link 15** <http://www.hpa.org.uk/hpr/archives/2013/hpr4013.pdf>
- web link 16** http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb_C/1211441442288
- web link 17** <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england/series/annual-flu-programme>
- web link 18** <http://www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/HepatitisB/NationalHepatitisBDriedBloodSpotService/>
- Vaccine update subscriptions:** <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKHPA/subscribers/new?preferences=true>