



## News Release

**Strict embargo 00.01: Friday 7 June, 2013**

### **Latest London measles cases published as part of national MMR catch-up programme**

The first monthly confirmed case data for measles in London is published today (Friday 7 June) as part of the national MMR catch-up programme. For London, the new figures show that a further 29 cases of the preventable, infectious disease have been confirmed in April 2013, taking the total to 103 cases in the capital so far 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 of England where there have been measles outbreaks.

In line with trends across the country, the number of measles cases has continued to rise in London. Cases have nearly doubled compared to the same period last year when there were 52 cases (January-April 2012) and London is expected to exceed the 2012 whole-year total of 139 cases. London is not however experiencing an outbreak like other parts of the country.

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 and the Department of Health, 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.

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 including London. Today MMR coverage among five year olds in London has increased greatly with over 90% receiving one dose, 80% two doses, and some London boroughs have much higher rates of uptake.

Dr Yvonne Doyle, regional director for PHE London, said: "It is reassuring that London is not currently in an outbreak situation although cases of measles do continue to increase. Our ambition is to vaccinate 95 per cent of 10-16 year olds at risk in time for the next school year. We will shortly be getting results from a new monitoring system that will tell us the number of vaccines given to children.

“Our health protection teams are continuing to work closely with our NHS partners to ensure we have accurate records of children who have missed vaccination; particularly in areas where we have seen more cases.”

“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.

Dr Alison Frater, head of commissioning for public health for NHS England, London, said: “In London we are continuing to work with GPs and local directors of public health to ensure that we are able to offer vaccinations to everyone in the 10 to 16 year old age group who hasn’t already been vaccinated. Local public health teams have been working hard to promote uptake among children and teenagers across London and we are encouraged by the very high levels of engagement by local GP practices. The only way to prevent measles outbreaks is to ensure good uptake of the MMR vaccine across all age groups and having accurate healthcare records of who is at risk is absolutely crucial to the success of this programme.”

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors**

1. Table: Confirmed cases of measles in London by local authority:

Local Authority	April 2013	2013 Year to date
<b>London</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>103</b>
Barking & Dagenham	0	0
Barnet	0	8
Bexley	0	1
Brent	0	1
Bromley	1	12
Camden	3	4
City of London	0	0
Croydon	0	2
Ealing	0	0
Enfield	5	6
Greenwich	1	5
Hackney	6	36
Hammersmith & Fulham	0	0
Haringey	7	13
Harrow	0	0
Havering	0	0
Hillingdon	0	0
Hounslow	0	1
Islington	2	2
Kingston upon Thames	0	1
Lewisham	0	2
Merton	0	1
Newham	0	1

Redbridge	0	0
Richmond upon Thames	0	0
Southwark	1	1
Sutton	0	0
Tower Hamlets	0	0
Waltham Forest	3	3
Wandsworth	0	2
Westminster	0	1

2. NB: The number of vaccinations ordered cannot be broken down to a regional / local level. 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.
3. Latest MMR uptake data:  
[www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb\\_C/1211441442288](http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb_C/1211441442288)
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 other 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. 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.
6. For more information on measles and MMR, please visit:  
<http://www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/Measles/> or  
[www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Measles/Pages/Introduction.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Measles/Pages/Introduction.aspx)
7. 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>.
8. 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](http://www.gov.uk/phe), follow us on Twitter: @PHE\_London and @PHE\_uk

**Issued by:**

**Public Health England**

**London press office**

**Tel: 020 7811 7243 / 7242**

**Out of hours telephone 020 8200 4400**

**[www.gov.uk/phe](http://www.gov.uk/phe)**