



England

MMR call / recall Communications Toolkit

Primary Care

February 2024



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Summary

This month NHS England is launching a call / recall for children to catch up on any missed MMR doses.

- The NHS is asking for Primary Care team as support in amplifying the message
- Over a million children (6-11 years) are currently not fully protected against measles
- Measles cases are rising across England and the NHS are asking for all teams to help support the campaign to encourage unvaccinated and partially vaccinated patients to get up to date.
- This pack includes more information and assets to support the campaign



What is the background?

Measles cases are on the rise, with unvaccinated children and young adults at risk of becoming seriously unwell.

UKHSA announced a national measles incident in January 2024 following an increase in confirmed cases. All regions have measles cases with London and the West Midlands highlighted as having more cases. Without an increase in vaccination rates UKHSA modelled that there could be over 160,000 cases in London alone.

The uptake figures of the MMR vaccination has been in decline for over ten years, with on average at least one in ten children unvaccinated and at risk of becoming seriously unwell. In some areas this is as high as four in ten children.

NHSE are launching a national call / recall inviting those not fully vaccinated to come forward to catch up on missed doses of the MMR vaccination.

The risk of measles is perceived by some parents as low, citing it being 'just a rash'. The media are calling the virus a 'Victorian disease', the return of an old virus.



MMR Vaccine uptake

Lower than the WHO recommended 95% vaccine uptake and the measles virus circulating is creating the perfect storm for infection to spread.

- The MMR vaccine has been in decline for over ten years with COVID-19 and misinformation exacerbating the problem. This in line with other childhood vaccinations.
- The vaccination rate for both MMR doses at age 5 years is 84.5% for England, lower than the 95% target set by the WHO and as low as 60% in some areas of London. (data from UHKSA published uptake stats)
- There are almost 3 million children under the age of 16 who are not fully protected against measles. This is the number of children who have missed one or both doses of the MMR vaccine. (source: figure taken from NHS foundry data, according to GP records available to NHS England)



MMR national call / recall – February 2024

Call / recall will target those unvaccinated and partially vaccinated

To target those not fully protected against measles (missing one or both of their MMR vaccine) NHSE are launching a call / recall inviting the following cohorts to book an appointment to catch up on their MMR vaccinations;

- Cohort one (One to five-year-olds) parents / carers already being contacted through their GP surgeries between November 2023 and March 2024
- Cohort two (Six to 11-year-olds) parents / carers in England to receive a communication in February and March 2024
- Cohort three (11 to 16-year-olds) parents / carers in London and West Midlands will receive a communication in February and March 2024. Greater Manchester will receive a recall in March only.
- Cohort four and five (17 to 25-year-olds) in London, Greater Manchester and West Midlands to receive communications in February and March 2024.

The campaign will see communications sent via text message, email and letters, and for those over 16 years the NHS app will also send a communication.

The communication invites all those contacted to book a catch-up appointment at their GP surgery to receive their next dose of the MMR vaccine. In London, school age children can also contact their School Aged Immunisation Service to arrange a catch up in school or through a clinic.

An MMR invites web page for more information, including translated materials has been launched [here](#)



Objectives

To increase awareness of the seriousness of measles and the offer of the MMR vaccine as the best preventative

- Increase awareness of ‘measles is more than just a rash’. There is no medical ‘treatment’ for measles, only symptomatic relief, and it can be life threatening and / or life limiting.
- Educate communities of the benefits of the MMR vaccine to prevent children becoming seriously unwell.
- To dispel misinformation;
 - Gelatine - there is a non-porcine MMR vaccine option
 - Natural immunity - building immunity ‘naturally’ risks children being seriously unwell
 - Autism – where this is an issue, reiterate there is no link between the MMR vaccine and autism. (National Autism Society state ‘There is no link between autism and vaccines.’)
- Remind people the MMR vaccine needs 2 doses; at one year and three years and four months
- Increase awareness that young adults also need to catch up on any missed MMR vaccines



Key messages

- Measles cases continue to rise in England
- Over one in ten children across England remain at risk of catching measles without both doses of the MMR vaccine
- Measles is not just a childhood disease; adults can become seriously unwell
- Measles in pregnancy is serious and can cause stillbirth, premature labour and miscarriage.
- One in 15 measles cases can have complications such as meningitis, sepsis and blindness
- The MMR vaccine is also available in a non-porcine version. Ask your GP surgery when booking your appointment if you would prefer this option.
- Measles is one of the world's most infectious diseases, with one infected person giving it to approximately 15 other unvaccinated people.
- One in five children will require a hospital visit if they become unwell with measles ([source](#))
- The Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine is safe and has been used since the early 1980s.
- There is no medical treatment for measles; MMR vaccination is the best protection against becoming seriously unwell
- MMR vaccination is free on the NHS with the first dose being offered when a child is one year and the second at 3 years and 4 months old. This provides long lasting protection against measles, mumps and rubella
- The evidence is clear; there is no link between the MMR vaccine and autism

Call to action

- If you have missed any of your MMR vaccines contact your GP surgery to book an appointment
 - If your child / children have missed any of their MMR vaccines, contact their GP surgery to book an appointment
 - If you are unsure if your child / children are up to date with their vaccines check their red book (Child's health record).
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- If you are unsure if you are up to date with your vaccines contact the GP surgery
 - For more information on the MMR vaccine visit the [NHS website](#)



Action for Primary Care

To support the MMR call / recall campaign it would be great if Primary Care teams could;

- Invite registered patients who have missed any does of the MMR vaccine to book an appointment and catch up. This can be by letter, email, text message or phone call. New call / recall templates are now available for use.
- Discuss missed MMR doses with patients when they are in the surgery / clinic, where suitable
- Where possible amplify the MMR key messages in this pack in practices and in clinic settings
- Share content, including assets in this pack, on social media - new assets available
- Local outreach work with key demographics in your community who are vaccine hesitant. Resources available in this pack, and examples of work undertaken.



Oral measles testing

WHO require at least 80% of all suspected cases to be confirmed or discarded using the oral fluid kit.

In May UKHSA reshared the information on oral testing for measles identifying that it is essential for an oral fluid kit (OFK) is sent out to every notified case of measles, mumps and rubella, regardless of any other additional investigations ordered.

- Form to complete for measles oral fluid testing kit is [here](#)
- Oral Fluid testing kit information for HCP is [here](#)
- How to take an oral fluid test is [here](#)
- Letter sent to patients [here](#)

- Video on how to take the test and further information can be viewed [here](#)



MMR inequalities

Examples of innovation in low uptake communities

In some communities where the uptake of the MMR vaccine has been lower, some GP surgeries, primary care teams and the inequalities teams have tried new initiatives to try and increase engagement and intimate uptake of the MMR vaccine. This has included;

- Calls to parents of unvaccinated children
- Local outreach to key communities
- Clinics in religious settings
- Working with local community leaders and religious leaders
- Health events in communities

[Here are some case study examples](#) of what has been achieved in some communities, such as in Sandwell and London.

More information on shared learning, inequalities and innovation for MMR uptake can be found [here](#)

Communications Assets

Social Media Assets

Child focused

- The following assets can be used to support the call / recall for children
- These assets, suggested lines and previous MMR social media assets can be found on Futures [here](#)



Social Media Assets

Adult focused

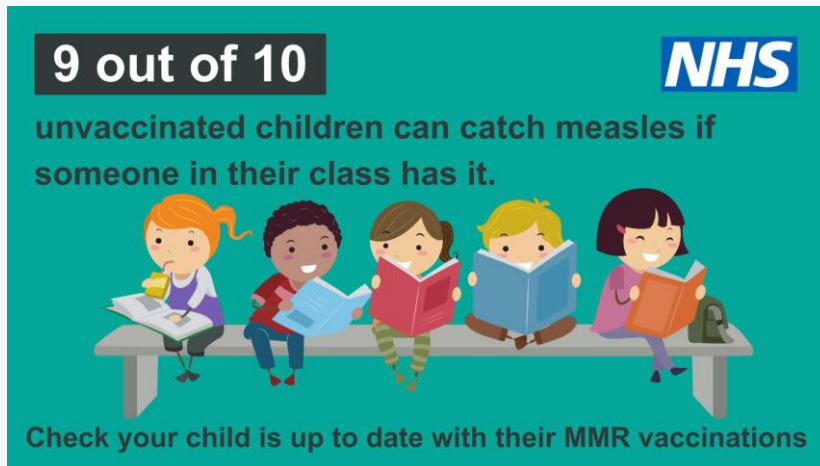
- The national call / recall will focus on young adults up to the age of 26 years in London, Greater Manchester and the West Midlands.
- Any region can also encourage young adults to come forward and catch up on any missed MMR doses at their GP surgery.
- These assets, suggested lines and previous MMR social media assets can be found on Futures [here](#)



Other assets

More MMR assets have been created to help increase awareness of measles and the MMR vaccine

Digital Screens



All can be found on Futures [here](#)

Email footers



Other assets

Further useful information, reports, shared learning and assets are available on [Futures](#) for ordering, printing and sharing. This includes;

[MMR posters \(various languages\)](#)



[UKHSA carousel videos](#)





Press activity

Measles is expected to continue being high profile into 2024

- Following the high profile of measles in the media, on 22nd January NHSE launched a press release around the call / recall and the number of children at risk of catching measles.
- The full press release is [here](#) and can be used and tailored for regional media / bulletins / communications.
- The published number for children in regions that are not fully protected can be found [here](#). These are published stats and can be used in communications with press and social media.
- Further press activity will continue as the measles cases rise with further calls to action for parents and those unvaccinated.



NHSE call / recall materials

Template assets available for use in communications

- The NHSE national call / recall materials used in the current campaign can be found [here](#). You will also find translated key messages, easy reads and other additional materials. Templates for use locally are also available from the call / recall including;

Under 16 years

- SMS message to parents
- Email template to parents
- Letter to parents

Over 16 years

- SMS message to unvaccinated individual
- Emails template to unvaccinated individual
- Letter template to unvaccinated individual
- App template to unvaccinated individual

- Translated key MMR messages for children can be [downloaded here](#)
- Translated key MMR messages for adults can be [downloaded here](#)



Bulletin / website copy

Please add this content to your practice / PCN or pharmacy website / news

NHS England urges those unprotected against measles to come forward for their vaccinations

Measles cases are continuing to rise across England, with a number of unvaccinated children and adults requiring hospital as infections take hold.

This month, millions of parents and carers in England are being contacted by the NHS to book their children in for their missed measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine as part of a major new campaign to protect children from becoming seriously unwell.

NHS figures show almost 3 million children under the age of 16 years are either unprotected or not fully protected and at risk of catching these serious and completely preventable diseases.

Measles is not just a childhood disease and can be serious at any age. If caught during pregnancy it can be very serious causing stillbirth, miscarriage and low birth weight and NHS bosses are also urging young adults to catch up on any missed doses before thinking about starting a family.

Two doses of the safe and effective MMR vaccine are needed for maximum life-long protection, with the first dose given around the child's first birthday, and the second dose given at around three years and four months old.

However, anyone can catch up at any age on any missed doses and it's never too late to protect yourself.

If you or your child have not had both dose of the MMR vaccine contact the GP surgery to book an appointment as soon as possible and catch up.



Information for professionals from UKHSA

Further useful information on MMR / measles has been published by UKHSA and may be of use for health care professionals

- A [letter was sent to health professionals](#), was published last year which reminds them about what to do in a suspected case of measles; details of the MMR vaccine and how best to reach under-vaccinated communities.
- UKHSA has published a [risk assessment for a measles resurgence](#) in UK.
- [A new poster](#) for health professionals in identifying measles, what to do if they suspect measles and ensuring staff are fully vaccinated. Health professionals can download and order the poster for free via the health publications website.
- Other publications and assets on MMR for can be downloaded and ordered for free by healthcare professionals on the [health publications website](#).
- UKHSA [resources on immunisation can be found on our website](#)

Useful Links

Social Media Handles

NHS UK

[Facebook account: @NHSWebsite](#)

[Twitter / X account: @NHSuk](#)

[Instagram account: @NHS](#)

NHS England

[Facebook account: @NHSEngland](#)

[Twitter / X account: @nhsengland](#)

[Instagram account: @nhsengland](#)

Department of Health and Social Care

[Facebook account: @DHSCgovuk](#)

[Twitter / X account: @DHSCgovuk](#)

UK Health Security Agency

[Facebook account: @UKHealthSecurityAgency](#)

[Twitter / X account: @UKHSA](#)

Weblinks

[Sign up to Future here for access to all materials in this pack](#)

[NHS vaccination schedule](#)

[Quarterly Childhood Vaccination Coverage – 2022/23 \(Source: Gov.uk\)](#)

[MMR Shared Learning, Inequalities & Innovation - Vaccinations and Screening - FutureNHS Collaboration Platform](#)

[UKHSA Measles leaflets and posters](#)

Thank You



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england.nhs.uk