

6 February 2024

## Parents and carers in H&F

Dear parents and carers,

### Measles outbreaks - MMR vaccination available at your GP practice

You may be concerned to hear the news about the increase in measles cases across the country, with outbreaks in the West Midlands and London. Two-thirds (67%) of cases were in children under ten years old, with the vast majority of measles cases unvaccinated.

Measles spreads very easily among those who are unvaccinated, especially in nurseries and schools. It can be a very unpleasant illness, [Measles - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk) and in some children can be very serious, leading to hospitalisation and tragically even death in rare cases. People in certain at-risk groups including babies and young children, pregnant women, and people with weakened immunity, are at increased risk of complications from measles. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/measles-outbreak-could-spread-warns-ukhsa-chief-executive>

The **MMR vaccine** is the best way of preventing measles, and the level we need for herd immunity is 95% coverage. Worryingly, in H&F, we have a very low vaccine uptake, with only 66% (two thirds) of children having had both MMR jabs-that means that **one in every three children in H&F is unprotected.**

- Some people worry that the MMR vaccination contains pork. There are actually two vaccines available, both equally effective: one has a pork component, the other **MMR vaccine called 'Priorix'** does not, and you can ask for this vaccine;
- Some people also worry that the vaccine causes autism in children: that's not true, it's safe.

If you have any queries, you're welcome to contact our friendly Public Health team at [dean.linzey@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:dean.linzey@lbhf.gov.uk) or talk with your GP practice.

**Two doses of the MMR vaccine give lifelong protection, and it's never too late to catch up.** Your GP will be happy to provide a vaccination for your child if required, it's free and there's no age limit.

Yours sincerely

