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|  | News Release |

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**Families in London urged to prioritise vaccine catch-ups before children go back to school**

Parents in London are being urged to use the summer holidays to get children up to date with routine vaccinations before the new school term begins.

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is calling on families to make sure children are protected as latest data shows continued high levels of measles cases in some parts of the country, prompting fears of more outbreaks and a further surge in cases once children return to the classroom.

Regions with the lowest [rates of vaccine uptake](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2F685ac0a7e9509f1a908eb14e%2Fcover-data-tables-quarter-4-2024-to-2025.ods&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) are of particular concern, including in London, where the average uptake of two doses of the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine by age 5 is 71%, dropping as low as 57.2% in some boroughs. This means many thousands of children are unprotected against these diseases, and the risk of outbreaks occurring while measles is circulating around the country remains high.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that 95% uptake is needed to stop outbreaks occurring and protect the population.

The [most recent measles data](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measles-epidemiology-2023/confirmed-cases-of-measles-in-england-by-month-age-region-and-upper-tier-local-authority-2025) shows there have been 674 laboratory confirmed cases reported in England since 1 January, with 145 notified between 3 and 31 July 2025. Almost half of all cases (48%) have been seen in London (322/674), with 16% in the North West (111/674), and 10% in the East of England (65/674).

There have been 96 laboratory confirmed measles cases with symptom onset date in the 4 weeks since 30 June 2025. London saw the highest number of cases, accounting for 64% of cases (61/96) during this period, especially in boroughs of low vaccine uptake.

As there has been a rise in measles cases globally, including Europe, over the last year, there are concerns that anyone unvaccinated going on holiday abroad could easily pick up measles and bring it back home, potentially leading to further outbreaks in areas with low MMR uptake.

This year measles outbreaks have been seen in several other European countries, including France, Italy, Spain and Germany, and WHO recently reported that Romania, Pakistan, India, Thailand, Indonesia and Nigeria currently have some of the largest numbers of measles cases worldwide.

**Nalini Iyanger, Consultant in Health Protection for UKHSA London, said:** “Measles is a nasty virus which spreads very quickly amongst unvaccinated children and adults, especially in nurseries and schools. It can lead to serious health problems including ear and chest infections and inflammation of the brain. Some children need hospital admissions and can be left with permanent disabilities. Tragically, in rare cases, it can be fatal.

“As children under the age of one cannot be vaccinated against measles, it is important siblings are vaccinated to protect little ones and other vulnerable people – including those with weakened immune systems – who are unable to have the MMR vaccine and rely on the rest of us to protect them from measles.

“Before children start full-time school, they should have had two MMR vaccines, giving them the best protection against measles, mumps and rubella.

“Please take advantage of the summer break to check your children are up-to-date with all their vaccinations, including the MMR. If parents are unsure about their child’s vaccination record, they can check their Red Book, the NHS app or contact their GP surgery. It takes around two weeks, following vaccination to ensure strong protection, so please book an appointment as soon as possible.”

Further information on when to have MMR and other [childhood immunisations](https://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/nhs-vaccinations-and-when-to-have-them/) is available on the NHS website.

**Notes to Editors**

1. Latest number of lab confirmed measles cases: [Confirmed cases of measles in England by month, age, region and upper-tier local authority: 2025 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/measles-epidemiology-2023/confirmed-cases-of-measles-in-england-by-month-age-region-and-upper-tier-local-authority-2025)
2. Measles data dashboard: [Measles | UKHSA data dashboard](https://ukhsa-dashboard.data.gov.uk/vaccine-preventable-diseases/measles)
3. Latest quarterly COVER data for child vaccines up to 5 years old (last updated (30 July) [Quarterly vaccination coverage statistics for children aged up to 5 years in the UK (COVER programme): January to March 2025 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cover-of-vaccination-evaluated-rapidly-cover-programme-2024-to-2025-quarterly-data/quarterly-vaccination-coverage-statistics-for-children-aged-up-to-5-years-in-the-uk-cover-programme-january-to-march-2025)
4. The most recent annual COVER data is available here: [Childhood Vaccination Coverage Statistics, England, 2023-24 - NHS England Digital](https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-immunisation-statistics/england-2023-24) The annual data for 2024-25 will be released by UKHSA on 28 August 2025.
5. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is responsible for protecting every member of every community from the impact of infectious diseases, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents and other health threats. We provide intellectual, scientific and operational leadership at national and local level, as well as on the global stage, to make the nation’s health secure. UKHSA is an executive agency, sponsored by the [Department of Health and Social Care](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care).

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