

The London Borough of Haringey
Civic Centre
High Road
Wood Green
London
N22 8LE
PublicHealth@haringey.gov.uk

23rd February 2026

Dear Parent / Carer / Guardian,

Re: Response to parents' queries about vaccination against measles for children under one year old

We sent out letters advising parents and carers about increasing measles cases in Enfield spreading into Haringey last week. In the previous letter we advised that MMRV vaccination is the best protection against measles.

We know that many parents are understandably concerned about the recent cases of measles in Haringey, following a significant increase in cases in Enfield. The number of cases in Haringey remains relatively low, so we are not at the level of a measles outbreak in Haringey.

A small number of parents have asked if their very young child can be vaccinated against measles before the recommended time (national guidance is for all children to be offered the first dose of the MMRV vaccination at 12 or 13 months of age).

Should children under the age of 12 months be vaccinated against measles?

The first dose of the MMRV vaccine (which has replaced the MMR vaccine in the UK childhood vaccination schedule) is routinely given after 12 months of age. This is based on evidence of when vaccination is most effective to protect children against measles.

It is not standard practice to offer MMRV vaccination to children younger than 12 months old, this is because:

- A child's immune system is still developing, so the vaccine is less effective with many children not responding to the vaccine at all.
- If a dose is provided early, an additional two doses of the vaccine will still be required at 12 and 18 months.

However, there may be individual cases where a GP decides that vaccination for a child under 12 months old is appropriate. Reasons may include:

- Upcoming travel to a country where measles is very common.
- Close contact of a child with someone confirmed as having measles.
- Where there are sufficiently high numbers of measles cases linked to each other and an outbreak has been declared.

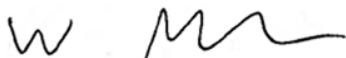
If you feel your child may need to be vaccinated early (before they are 12 months old), you should speak with your GP.

What can parents of children under 12 months do to reduce the chances of their child catching measles?

- To protect your infant, you need to make sure their siblings and close family members are **fully vaccinated as per the childhood routine vaccination schedule**. Two doses of the vaccine provide excellent lifelong protection against measles. Speak to your GP to check vaccination status and arrange an appointment to catch up on the vaccinations at any age.
- Avoid close contact with a person who has measles or anyone with suspected symptoms.

If your child is unwell with a high temperature, has cold-like symptoms, or a new rash, or your child has come into close contact with someone who has confirmed measles, please seek medical advice by phoning your GP or NHS 111.

Yours Sincerely,



Dr Will Maimaris,
Director of Public Health