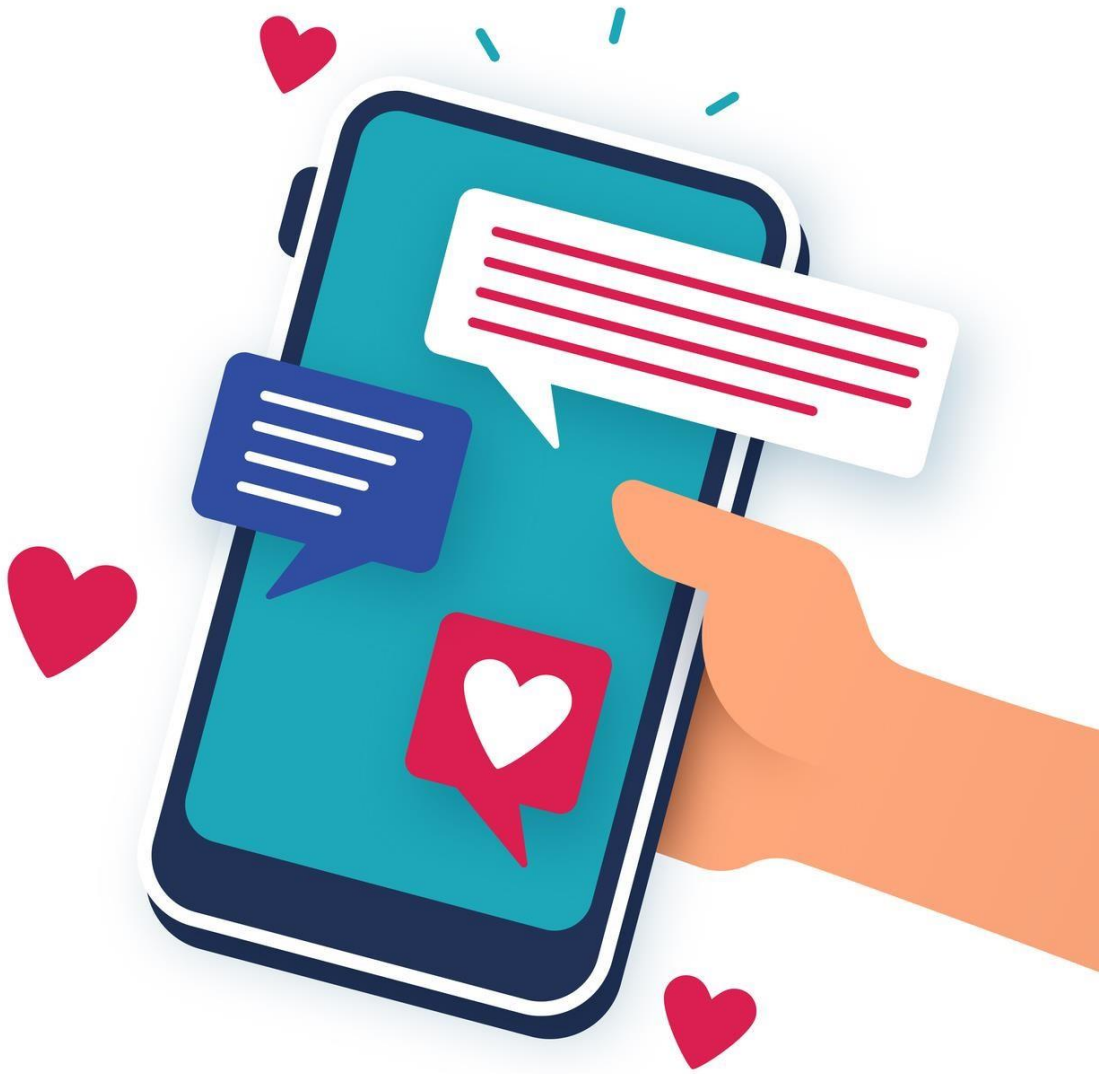
Back to school

Measles / MMR

-

Communications toolkit

What is the background?



Overview of campaign

Over 102,000 children in England will be starting primary school in the reception class (age 4-5 years old) without being fully protected against measles this September*.

Measles continues to circulate across England with all regions having cases or outbreaks. All children returning to school after a summer break without being up to date with their MMR vaccinations are at risk of catching measles in their classroom from an infected classmate.

- Nine out of ten unvaccinated children can catch measles from an infected classmate (source)
- One in five will require a hospital visit if they catch measles (source)
- One in 15 will experience complications from measles, such as meningitis and sepsis (source)

* This stat is taken from the published Gov.uk source for MMR uptake age 5 for the last four quarters results as a proxy for those starting primary school (source).

What is the background?

Overall measles risk

Measles cases are rising in England and have been seen in every region of the country. To date there have been 141 confirmed cases from 1st January – 31st July 2023, more than double the figure for the whole of 2022, with 65% of cases in children under the age of 10 years and a further 20% in teenagers and young people.

In July, UKHSA announced that the risk of large-scale outbreaks in London is high and cases could rise to between 40k and 160k due to low uptake of the MMR vaccine and the number of cases being imported and spread in the community.

The overall risk to the rest of England is classed as low, but there are cases of measles in every region and numbers of cases are rising. UKHSA suggests that without intervention cases will continue to rise in all regions.

The vaccination rate for MMR is at 85% for England, lower than the 95% target set by the WHO and as low as 60% in some areas of London.

Objectives/Aims

- Identify the current increased risk of catching measles (increase in cases) and becoming seriously unwell for those unvaccinated children starting school and returning to school this autumn term.

- Increase the awareness of the seriousness of measles as not just a rash. There is no medical treatment for measles, and it can be life threatening and / or life limiting.

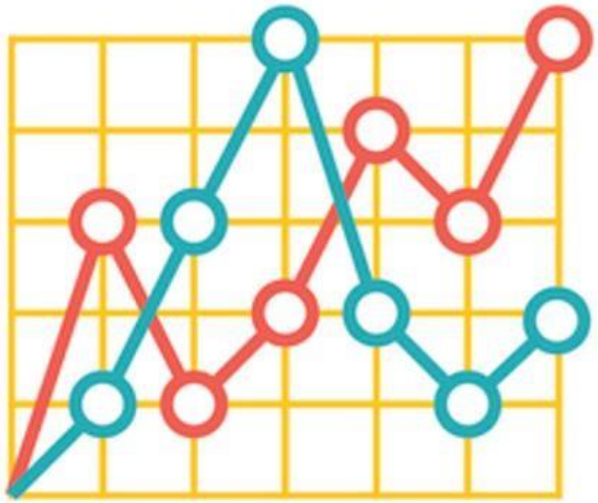
- Educate communities of the benefits of the MMR vaccine to prevent children becoming seriously unwell.

- Remind people the MMR vaccine needs 2 doses; at one year and three years and four months.

Audience and insights

Audiences

- Parents / guardians and carers of children aged 1-16 years
- Young adults from 18-26 years



Key stats and insights

- **Over 102,000 children** starting primary school are at risk of catching measles.
- **Nine out of ten** unvaccinated children can catch measles from an infected classmate
- **Over 1 in 10 children** are unvaccinated and unprotected against Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) in England
- **One in 15 children** with measles suffer serious complications such as meningitis and sepsis

- Vaccination for MMR has been in decline for over a decade and is **well below the 95%** WHO target needed to achieve and sustain measles elimination.

Key messages

General

- Over 102,000 children in England (or use regional stats) are starting primary school this term (aged 4-5 years old) at risk of catching measles and becoming seriously unwell (source)
- Nine out of ten children can catch measles from an infected classmate (source)
- One in five children will require a hospital visit if they become unwell with measles (source)
- Measles cases are rising across England and are over double the figures from last year
- One in 15 children develop serious complications from a measles infection, which can include meningitis and blindness • There is no medical treatment for measles; vaccination is the best protection against becoming seriously unwell
- The Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine is safe and has been used since the early 1980s.
- Over 20 million cases of measles have been prevented since the start of measles vaccination in the UK. Over 4,500 lives have been saved as a result (81 lives per year) *source is UKHSA blog.
- 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 which can cause long term health conditions such as blindness and asthma.
- The evidence is clear; there is no link between the MMR vaccine and autism

Call to action

- If your child has missed their first or second dose of MMR vaccine, contact your GP practice to book an appointment.

- If you are unsure if your child is due a vaccination or has missed a vaccination, check their red book or contact your GP practice.
- For adults, it is never too late to catch up on any missed MMR vaccinations, contact your GP practice to book an appointment
- For more information visit the **NHS website**