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Date: 25 January 2024

Dear Manager (please share to your staff)

Important: Measles cases are rising in the UK

Measles cases in the UK have been rising since November 2023, with the West Midlands seeing multiple outbreaks. The UK Health Security Agency has declared the increase in cases of measles a national incident (19 January 2024). There is the potential for cases and outbreaks in Hertfordshire as uptake of the Measles Vaccination (MMR) in the county is lower than recommended.

Measles is a highly infectious viral disease that can have serious and sometimes fatal consequences. Measles is spread through coughing and sneezing, close personal contact or direct contact with infected nasal or throat secretions.

Spending more than 15 minutes in direct contact with someone infected with measles is sufficient to transmit the virus. For more information about measles and the symptoms, see [Measles - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

Important for staff and visitors

If someone thinks they have measles they should not come into work or visit in the care home for at least 4 days from when the rash first appears.

The social care sector could be impacted if unvaccinated staff or their children contract measles. Measles poses a risk to vulnerable individuals and can have a significant impact on the workforce. Unvaccinated staff are at risk of contracting measles and, if identified as a close contact of someone with measles, staff may be asked to self-isolate for up to 21 days.

We are urgently asking that you advise your staff to be alert to signs and symptoms of measles and urge staff to check that they and their families are fully vaccinated. If anyone has missed one or both doses of the MMR vaccine, **it is not too late to catch up**. We advise people to contact their GP practice to book an appointment as soon as possible. The MMR vaccine is free on the NHS, whatever your age. Our best protection against measles is MMR vaccination and this will help stop outbreaks occurring in the community.

Further advice and guidance can be found here:

[MEASLES - Protect yourself, protect others
\(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[Measles - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

[MMR \(measles, mumps and rubella\) vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

Yours sincerely



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Director of
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