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Dear Parent,

I am writing to you to give you information about measles and how it may affect people in Camden and particularly your child.

Measles is a highly infectious disease characterised by a high fever and a rash and can affect people of all ages. People with the virus are infectious for several days before and after the appearance of rash.

There is no specific treatment for measles. For the vast majority of healthy patients, measles is not serious, though it is a very unpleasant illness. In one in 15 cases it can lead to severe complications, such as pneumonia and inflammation of the brain, and can, rarely, lead to death.

The only way to prevent measles is to be immunised against the disease. Two doses of the MMR vaccine will provide greater than 95% protection against measles.

There is currently a large outbreak of measles in the Swansea area of South Wales. There has also been an increase in the number of cases of measles in England over the last year, but currently there is not an outbreak in Camden. There has only been one case of measles in the first three months of this year. However, it is possible that there will be spread from the outbreak in South Wales. This could affect London and Camden.

Though immunisation rates for young children against measles in Camden have improved over the last couple of years there were a number of years when the immunisation rates were very low. This means that there is large group of school age children in Camden who remain at risk of catching measles.

There is going to be a programme to target all children aged 10-16 years who missed, or only partially completed their earlier vaccinations, to ensure that they receive adequate protection.

Children of any age up to 18yrs who missed, or only partially completed, their earlier MMR vaccinations, can have 'catch-up' vaccinations on the NHS.

If you know, or suspect, that your child hasn't been fully immunised, I urge you to arrange with your GP for them to have a catch-up MMR vaccination. If you are not sure if your child has received two doses of MMR please check with your GP practice.

If you want further information about measles and/or MMR vaccination please visit www.NHS.uk

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie Billett', written in a cursive style.

Julie Billett
Director of Public Health
Camden and Islington Public Health