



11th April 2011

To:

- Local Education Authority
- Directors of Children's Services

Health Protection Agency

Cheshire & Merseyside
Health Protection Unit

Moorgate Point
Moorgate Road
Knowsley Industrial Park
Kirkby L33 7XW

Tel +44 (0)151 290 8360
Fax +44 (0)151 290 8366

www.hpa-nw.org.uk
www.hpa.org.uk

Dear Colleagues

RE: Current Measles Situation - UK and Europe

I am writing to update you on recent issues in relation to measles and to advise you of specific actions that *should* be taken by schools to reduce the chance of spread within the UK

Current situation:

- The number of measles cases in England is increasing with 135 confirmed in the first 3 months of 2011.
- The age profile of current cases is mainly older children and young adults. There has been a university outbreak as well as *several small secondary school and boarding school outbreaks*.
- There is an ongoing outbreak in France where there have been over 3000 cases already this year. The French outbreak has been associated with clusters in several other European countries, including Switzerland and Belgium
- The cases are mainly unimmunised or partially immunised students (who have only had one dose of MMR). Some of the school aged cases are in the 'Wakefield Cohorts' – those groups where MMR coverage was most seriously affected by the adverse publicity.
- The most likely explanation for the current epidemiology is that the index cases are imported from Europe or import-related, with some limited spread within England.

I would strongly recommend that, if schools are proposing trips to France or bordering countries, then as part of their Health and Safety Risk Assessment, parents should be advised to ensure that their children are fully protected with 2 doses of MMR.

In addition, if schools are planning to send end of term newsletters to parents, it may be worth highlighting the measles issues in these countries and advising parents to ensure their children have had 2 doses of MMR at appropriate intervals before travelling.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sam Ghebrehewet', written over a horizontal line.

Sam Ghebrehewet, CCDC
Acting Unit Director