

### Dear reader,

Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board and its partners wanted to provide organisations who may have an interest with an update on the measles outbreak currently centred on the Swansea area.

This information sheet will provide details of cases and spread of measles in the area, the actions that ABMU LHB and its partners have taken to combat the spread of infection and the next steps to slow down and control the outbreak.

Your organisation can support the effort in combating the outbreak by encouraging vaccination of those who need it.

On the reverse there are also some frequently asked questions which you may find useful for you, your colleagues, families and service users/customers.

Dr Sara Hayes

Director of Public Health

### What is measles?

Measles is a highly infectious viral illness caught through direct contact with an infected person or through the air via droplets from coughs or sneezes. Symptoms include fever, cold-like symptoms, fatigue, conjunctivitis and a distinctive red-brown rash which starts around 4 days after the cold like symptoms.



### Current Situation

There are currently nearly one thousand cases of measles associated with this outbreak. The epicentre of the outbreak continues to be the Swansea area but there are cases in the two other ABM localities, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend.

The outbreak shows no signs of going away with large numbers of cases reported daily. Experts warn that the outbreak may continue for some time and the only effective way for parents to protect their children is to ensure that

### Actions taken

There have previously been ad hoc vaccination sessions held in some schools.

During the Easter break community drop in vaccination sessions were held in 4 locations (2 in Swansea, 1 in NPT and 1 in Bridgend) on two consecutive weekends. These were extremely successful with 2500 vaccinations given during the sessions.

These sessions will be followed by vaccination sessions in high schools who have not already had them, starting in Swansea, moving to NPT then Bridgend.

The best way to protect against measles is through 2 MMR vaccinations – anyone born after 1970 who has not had either measles infection or 2 MMR vaccinations should be vaccinated.

	they are vaccinated.	
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## Frequently Asked Questions - MMR and Measles

**1. What are the symptoms of measles?**

Symptoms include fever, cold-like symptoms, fatigue, conjunctivitis and a distinctive red-brown rash.

**2. What if someone associated with my organisation think they have measles?**

They need to contact their GP to get a diagnosis but it is advised that they telephone them before attending so that arrangements can be made in advance for minimising contact with other patients.

**3. Will everyone get measles?**

Measles is only spread to those who are susceptible to it so if people have had measles disease or 2 MMR vaccinations they are not at risk of catching it. If someone has not or cannot remember and were born after 1970 then they should check with their GP, but if in doubt they should get vaccinated either at the GP, at a community drop in centre or at a school vaccination session.

**4. Why 1970?**

That's the date before which we know that measles was circulating widely and the vast majority of people born before this time would have been exposed to and had the disease.

**5. Who is most at risk in this outbreak?**

The largest number of cases are in children under 3 years who are too young to have previously had 2MMR's and children between the ages of 10 to 18 years whose parents opted out of getting them vaccinated. Any child who is not up to date with their vaccinations should have an MMR vaccination as soon as possible.

**6. Can adults be vaccinated with MMR?**

Yes, the MMR vaccine can be given to individuals of any age over 6 months.

**7. How many MMR vaccinations should a child/adult have?**

In order to ensure maximum protection against measles they should have 2 MMR injections. Both these injections are identical but one dose will only provide 90% protection. If both vaccinations have been received there is 99% protection.

**8. What if someone can't remember whether they have been vaccinated and end up having 3 or 4 doses of the MMR vaccine?**

It will do them no harm. Only two are needed to provide 99% protection but if in doubt of previous vaccinations, they should have the two doses.

**9. What is the treatment for measles?**

There is no specific treatment for measles. Treatments are aimed at relieving the symptoms. Antibiotics are not effective as measles is caused by a virus.

**10.If someone associated with my organisation contracts measles how long should they stay off work?**

Children/adults should stay off school/work for 4 days after the rash first appeared.

**11.What can my organisation do to help?**

Encourage your own staff to check their vaccination status – those born after 1970 who have not had either measles or 2 MMR vaccinations should get vaccinated. Encourage those customers/service users that your organisation comes into contact with to ensure they and their children are vaccinated. Measles is a very serious illness which can be fatal. The most effective way to protect people is through 2 MMR vaccinations.

Further information can be found at; [www.abm.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.abm.wales.nhs.uk)