

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

13 September 2022

Title:	Childhood Immunisations Report
Report of the Director of Public Health	
Open Report	For Information
Wards Affected: All	Key Decision: No
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Sponsor: Matthew Cole, Director of Public Health, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	
Summary: <p>Coverage of childhood immunisations in the borough is well below the 95% WHO target, particularly MMR. Uptake of seasonal influenza vaccinations were also very low last year. As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic with physical interactions returning to pre-pandemic levels and more relaxed infection prevention and control practices, there is increased risk of outbreaks of seasonal flu and other vaccine preventable illness like measles.</p> <p>This report highlights what is being done at different levels to help increase uptake of immunisations and minimise the risk of outbreaks.</p>	
Recommendation(s) <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to review and provide feedback on the report.2. A multi-agency approach is needed involving the NHS, local authority, schools, community and faith groups, working with residents, to increase uptake of immunisations.3. The enhanced infection prevention and control (IPC) measures implemented in various settings during the pandemic need to be maintained in the coming months to minimise the risk of outbreaks. This includes ensuring adequate IPC support to high risk settings like care homes and education settings.	
Reason(s) <p>Immunisation is a simple and effective way of protecting children from serious illnesses. As well as helping protect individuals, it also protects the broader community by minimising the spread of infections.</p> <p>The Director of Public Health has a statutory responsibility under the Health Protection (LA powers) Regulations 2010 and Health Protection (part 2A orders) Regulations 2010 to ensure effective arrangements are in place for communicable disease control with local</p>	

authorities and others including the NHS. Keeping the Health and Wellbeing Board informed of the current immunisation and vaccination situation in the borough helps the Board have oversight of these arrangements.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The UK is considered by the World Health Organization (WHO) to be polio-free, with low-risk for polio transmission due to the high level of vaccine coverage across the population. However, coverage for childhood vaccines has decreased nationally and especially in parts of London over the past few years. Childhood immunisations rates in London are below the WHO's target of 95%, with lower uptake in areas of high deprivation and for some ethnicities. This perpetuates existing inequalities.
- 1.2 Earlier this year, genetically related polio virus was found in sewage samples, which suggests that it is likely there has been some spread between closely linked individuals in North and East London. So far, the virus has only been detected in sewage samples and no associated cases of paralysis have been reported. There are ongoing investigations to establish if any community transmission is occurring. Even though the risk to the public is very low, vaccine-derived poliovirus has the potential to spread, particularly in communities where vaccine uptake is lower.
- 1.3 There is a need, therefore, for immediate and long-term actions to improve overall immunisation uptake and reduce inequalities. The report provides an update on the current picture of immunisations in Barking and Dagenham, and actions being taken to improve uptake. It will cover childhood immunisations, seasonal influenza and COVID-19 vaccinations.

2. Proposal and Issues

2.1 Where are we now?

Childhood immunisation coverage

Table 1 shows childhood immunisations in Barking and Dagenham, London and England. Coverage in the borough is generally below London and England averages, apart from the 6-in-1 vaccine (DTaP/IPV/Hib/Hep B) where our coverage is similar to London.

Table 1: Childhood immunisation coverage

Vaccine	Barking & Dagenham				London	England
	2021/22				2021/22	2021/22
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q4	Q4
12 Month DTaP/IPV/Hib/Hep B	83.4%	84.8%	83.8%	87.0%	87.1%	91.9%
2-year MMR dose 1	74.2%	75.2%	78.2%	77.5%	80.7%	89.7%
5-year MMR dose 2	69.9%	67.9%	68.6%	67.7%	74.8%	85.9%
5-year DTaP/IPV Booster	68.1%	66.6%	67.3%	67.4%	72.8%	84.6%

School-aged vaccination uptake

As set out in Table 2, uptake of school-aged vaccination is generally higher in Barking and Dagenham compared to both London and England, with the exception of the tetanus, diphtheria and polio (Td/IPV) vaccine where uptake is below England.

Table 2: School-aged vaccination uptake – September 2020 to August 2021

Vaccine	Barking & Dagenham	London	England
Td/IPV	78.3%	71.7%	83.3%
Men ACWY	77.9%	71.1%	76.5%
HPV1 Girls	88.4%	71.0%	76.7%
HPV2 Girls	83.5%	33.7%	60.6%
HPV1 Boys	84.9%	67.0%	71.0%
HPV2 Boys	79.5%	32.2%	54.7%

Seasonal influenza vaccine uptake

Last year's uptake of the seasonal influenza vaccine was very low in all cohorts (see Table 3), well below the national ambitions. The lowest ambition was to achieve 70% uptake for 2-3 year olds and school-aged children.

Table 3: Seasonal influenza vaccine uptake – 2021/22

GP patients			
Cohort	Barking & Dagenham	London	England
2-year olds	36.9%	40.9%	48.7%
3-year olds	38.8%	42.3%	51.4%
65 and over	70.2%	70.8%	82.3%
Under 65 at risk	44.6%	42.5%	52.9%
50-64-year olds	38.5%	38.0%	52.5%
Pregnant	29.1%	30.2%	37.9%
School-aged children			
Reception	58.6%	52.2%	56.9%
Year 1	54.9%	52.5%	58.9%
Year 2	52.6%	52.1%	58.8%
Year 3	55.2%	50.9%	58.0%
Year 4	46.5%	49.9%	57.3%
Year 5	51.9%	48.3%	56.2%
Year 6	49.0%	47.1%	55.8%
Year 7	38.7%	41.4%	48.5%
Year 8	42.5%	38.0%	45.8%
Year 9	35.1%	34.1%	42.2%
Year 10	34.0%	33.6%	42.0%
Year 11	27.0%	28.9%	38.9%

COVID-19 vaccine

Uptake of the COVID-19 vaccination reduces with age, with children and young people having the lowest uptake. As at 15 August 2022, only 30% of 12-15 year-olds and 4.9% of 5-11 year-olds in the borough had been vaccinated, compared to 40.4% and 8.5% respectively in London. This low uptake may be a reflection of parents' (both vaccinated and unvaccinated parents) mistrust of the COVID-19 vaccination for children.

2.2 **What is being done to improve uptake?**

Response to poliovirus detection

A London Region Polio Vaccination Urgent Response Management Group has been convened to provide system leadership and to support collaboration on actions to protect public health by implementing control measures to prevent any possible transmission of poliovirus.

Actions underway include GP Practices contacting parents of children aged under 5 in London who are not up to date with their polio vaccinations to invite them to get protected. Immunisation Coordinators have been providing support to practices with this work. System partners are supporting this effort by sharing communications, particularly to those communities with low vaccine coverage. Materials such as a template letter to send to parents who have previously declined immunisations and communications assets have been shared with partners. Child Health Information Service (CHIS) have also provided details of children who are not registered with a GP practice and have incomplete polio immunisations with health visiting and school nursing services to support with getting these children registered with a GP practice and up to date with immunisations.

A polio booster campaign for children aged 1 to 9 years has recently been launched in London, with City and Hackney and Waltham Forest being prioritised in NEL due to poliovirus detection in these areas. All 1 to 9-year olds are to be offered a polio vaccination by 26 September. The Integrated Care Board (previously CCG) is working with local partners to develop delivery plans. Delivery across a range of providers and locations including primary care, Covid Vaccination Centres, School Aged Vaccination providers as well as outreach provision for communities with low vaccine coverage is being explored. Local intelligence and links with the voluntary and community sector will underpin much of this work. NHS England are progressing developments with enablers to support the programme, such as data flows, communications and engagement, financing, workforce and training.

Initial indications in Barking and Dagenham are that practices would be best placed to deliver this programme for younger children – either as part of 1 year old or the pre-school booster programme.

With approximately 30,000 children in Barking and Dagenham in the 1-9 year age range, this is potentially a big programme of work. Consideration will need to be given to other providers supporting delivery. There are risks and issues including vaccine supply, ordering logistics, storage of vaccine, workforce and workload implications.

Measles communications campaign

Between February and March 2022, a national MMR communications campaign was launched to encourage parents of children aged 1-5 years to come forward for their child's vaccination and to boost parents' confidence in getting their children vaccinated. Local partners supported with the dissemination of these messages.

A follow up campaign had been planned to take place this summer, but this has been delayed until mid-September due to prioritisation of the polio response.

School Immunisation Programmes

Provisional uptake figures for HPV, Men ACWY and the school leavers booster indicate that uptake for the academic year 2021/22 has decreased compared to previous years. This trend has also been seen across London and England. School Aged Immunisation Providers have reported poorer engagement and support from schools this year and vaccination programmes have been impacted by the 12-15-year-old COVID-19 vaccination programme being delivered in schools. Furthermore, issues previously reported, such as high numbers of non-returned consent forms and parental declines also persist and affect the ability to meet vaccine uptake targets.

Vaccination UK have developed an improvement plan to increase uptake which includes actions such as contacting parents of children with overdue vaccinations and/or refusals to invite them to community-based catch-up clinics being held over the summer. Vaccination UK have also been working closely with the Council to improve engagement with schools, promote walk-in catch-up clinics by displaying posters in public spaces such as libraries and GP practices and sharing promotional material via social media channels. Vaccination UK have also planned health promotion sessions for pupils in year 7 to provide information on the immunisation programmes provided in school and to provide engagement opportunities in advance of delivery. Communications materials are being produced in most commonly spoken languages in the borough and using local intelligence to best align service delivery to meet local needs.

Where a child has missed offers of vaccination, there remains an evergreen offer with parents able to change their minds and access the offer at a later date.

Seasonal influenza immunisation

London Flu Operational Delivery Group meetings resumed in April to provide strategic and operational support to planning for the upcoming influenza vaccination programme. The initial focus was on lessons learned and strategic direction. Workstream-specific workshops took place with local stakeholders over the summer to support the sharing of lessons learned and recommendations for the upcoming flu season. These workshops covered health inequalities, and flu vaccination for health and care workers, 2- and 3-year olds, under 65 at risk, and school-aged children.

Integration and alignment with the Covid vaccination programme and planning for effective delivery has been considered in more recent London Flu Operational Delivery Group meetings. Workstream leads and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) have submitted their plans for review and comment. Vaccination UK have also completed flu plans in preparation for child flu vaccination programme delivery.

In July 2022, flu vaccination programme eligibility was extended to include 50-64-year olds and secondary school-aged children focusing on years 7, 8 and 9, with any remaining vaccine to be offered to years 10 and 11, subject to vaccine availability. As School Aged Immunisation Providers are also being considered to support the Polio booster campaign response, these additional asks within finite capacity will undoubtedly pose a continuing challenge for the delivery of school immunisation programmes for academic year 2022/23. Therefore, support from local stakeholders will be needed, especially in terms of helping with communications and engagement with schools.

To support vaccination of our under-served residents, Barking and Dagenham place team are commissioning housebound flu Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) for 2022/23. Practices have been asked to sign up to provide this service and there is a good response from practices. This LIS has been successful in previous years with 73% of housebound patients receiving their influenza vaccine via this route in 2021/22.

In line with Making Every Contact Count (MECC) a housebound visit for an influenza vaccination also includes other checks, such as those for Atrial Fibrillation, blood pressure monitoring and dementia checks.

By offering late evening and weekend appointments it is hoped to make the vaccine more accessible to those who previously felt unable to take time out of their work day to go and have the vaccine.

The Barking and Dagenham place team will review data on a weekly basis focusing on PCNs and practice level delivery to ascertain reasons for low uptake, then troubleshoot any concerns. Practices in the bottom 5% within Barking and Dagenham will be asked to develop an improvement plan.

As part of monitoring uptake the Barking and Dagenham place team will continue to monitor ICB, London and National trends to ensure that we are not under delivering in particular cohorts and ensure there is a proactive response to addressing concerns.

Our Public Health team has organised regular meetings with UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), Adult Social Care and other Council departments to share learning and troubleshoot any issues.

BCG/SCID Screening Pilot

From September 2020 neonatal BCG became a targeted vaccination programme provided to those who have an increased risk of coming into contact with tuberculosis. Because this vaccination is no longer offered universally, this brings London in line with the rest of England. In Barking and Dagenham vaccination is provided in community-based locations by NELFT.

Eligibility is determined using the question:

Does your baby, the baby's mother, father, grandparents or anyone who lives with you come from a country with a high rate of TB?

A national evaluative pilot to test babies for SCID (severe combined immune deficiency) went live in September 2021. SCID is an extremely rare condition and

babies who test positive should not be given live vaccines, which includes BCG. The test is a bloodspot taken at day 5 of life by community midwives. A baby who tests positive for SCID will not be offered a BCG or other live vaccine.

Hepatitis B

A standard operating procedure is in place to manage situations where there is a deviation from the Hepatitis B immunisation programme for babies born to hepatitis B positive mothers and therefore at risk of developing hepatitis B infection. North east London Child Health Information Services (CHIS) are instrumental in the follow up with practices where vaccination has been delayed. Delays in vaccination of more than 2 weeks are considered an incident and are reported as such.

Programme challenges include primary care capacity, parental hesitancy and declines, even following conversations with clinicians on the risks associated with the baby not receiving vaccination, and families abroad for prolonged periods. Support is sought from ICB colleagues where situations are more complex or require safeguarding input. All incidents are managed by a clinical team within the Public Health department at NHS England, London Region.

COVID-19 phase 5 autumn campaign

An autumn campaign for Covid-19 vaccination starts on 5 September 2022. It will focus on offering a further dose of COVID-19 vaccination to over 50 year olds, those who are clinically vulnerable and health and care workers. The two previous Local Vaccination Sites (LVS) at Parsloes Surgery and Vicarage Field Shopping Centre are no longer available as sites. With this in mind four sites are in the process of being assured to deliver the autumn campaign. These sites, along with Kry-Ba pharmacy, running from St Martins Church in Dagenham will be offering vaccinations.

The co-administration of COVID-19 and influenza vaccines is hoped to increase uptake across cohorts as patients will only need to attend one appointment.

Working with residents

As part of an NHS quality improvement initiative, Together First CIC (Barking and Dagenham GP Federation) have been exploring opportunities to enable local children to have the best start in life. Local parents, representatives from Barking and Dagenham toddler groups, and community groups with a reach to local parents have been engaged via two workshops designed to understand the following:

- Parents' barriers/concerns at accessing immunisations for their children
- Current experience
- What we don't know
- Suggestions to overcome the identified barriers/concerns
- What could work
- What is required to get there
- What we could test collectively

The qualitative evidence gained from those workshops will be used to pilot some different approaches in Autumn 2023. These will include building trust and understanding across a small number of local community-based toddler groups.

The viability of using local family hubs, community venues and pop-up clinics in areas of high deprivation and low uptake as vaccination delivery sites is being explored.

3. Risks

Issue	Risks	Mitigation
Delivery of flu vaccination from Mid-September	Workforce and clinic space being used for the Polio booster vaccine	Careful planning of sites and workforce being used for Polio rollout.
	Delay in start of vaccinations due to vaccine supply	Orders being placed early by practices to determine supply and demand needs.
Increasing uptake	Flu – people becoming unwell and requiring urgent care placing more pressure on the system. Polio – outbreak of polio within the borough impacting on pressures on urgent care and secondary care. COVID-19 – up surge of cases in the borough.	Linking with all local partners to ensure that vaccinations are publicised with the appropriate information and accessing local community groups to raise awareness.
Polio information leaflets	Current back order of polio leaflets meaning that leaflets cannot be given to the public. This in terms could mean that people do not come forward for their vaccine.	Escalate to NHS London Region.
Polio vaccination distribution	At present only GP practices can order the polio vaccine.	Careful planning of sites being used for Polio vaccines. Escalation to NHS London to see if amendments can be made to allow other sites to order vaccine or ability to transfer to another site.

Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report: None

List of Appendices: None