

# [News story: Measles outbreaks across England](#)

## **Latest update**

Between 1 January 2018 and 6 July 2018 there have been 757 laboratory confirmed measles cases in England. Cases were reported in most areas with London (268), the South-East (161), South-West (118), West Midlands (85) and Yorkshire and Humberside (73) reporting the most cases (based on provisional figures).

## **Previous updates**

### **1 June 2018**

Between 1 January 2018 and 31 May 2018 there have been 587 laboratory confirmed measles cases in England. Cases were reported in most areas with London (213), the South-East (128), West Midlands (81), South-West (62), and Yorkshire and Humberside (53) reporting the most cases (based on provisional figures).

### **11 May 2018**

Between 1 January 2018 and 9 May 2018 there have been 440 laboratory confirmed measles cases in England, with London (164), the South-East (86), West Midlands (78), South-West (42) and West Yorkshire (37) reporting the most cases.

The increase in measles circulation is mainly associated with travel to and from Europe where there are large ongoing measles outbreaks.

Young people and adults aged 15 and over who missed out on MMR vaccine when they were younger and some under-vaccinated communities have been particularly affected.

Measles is a highly infectious viral illness that can sometimes lead to serious complications and can be fatal in very rare cases.

Anyone who has not received 2 doses of MMR vaccine is at risk, but young people in environments with close mixing such as festivals are more at risk, as well as unvaccinated people travelling to Romania and Italy, where there are currently large outbreaks. Anyone planning to travel to Europe should check [NaTHNaC travel health advice](#).

PHE local health protection teams are working closely with the NHS and local authorities to raise awareness with health professionals and local communities.

The MMR vaccine is available to all adults and children who are not up to

date with their two doses.

Anyone who is not sure if they are fully vaccinated should check with their GP practice who can advise them.

Dr Mary Ramsay, Head of Immunisation at PHE, said:

The measles outbreaks we are currently seeing in England are linked to ongoing large outbreaks in Europe. The majority of cases we are seeing are in teenagers and young adults who missed out on their MMR vaccine when they were children.

Anyone who missed out on their MMR vaccine in the past or are unsure if they had 2 doses should contact their GP practice to catch-up.

This serves as an important reminder for parents to take up the offer of MMR vaccination for their children at 1 year of age and as a pre-school booster at 3 years and 4 months of age.

We'd also encourage people to ensure they are up to date with their MMR vaccine before travelling to countries with ongoing measles outbreaks.

The UK recently achieved WHO measles elimination status and so the overall risk of measles to the UK population is low, however, we will continue to see cases in unimmunised individuals and limited onward spread can occur in communities with low MMR coverage and in age groups with very close mixing.

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## **[Press release: £9.5 million Ulverston flood scheme officially opened by the Environment Agency](#)**

More than 500 homes and businesses in Cumbria will be better protected from flooding thanks to a new £9.5 million scheme completed by the Environment Agency.

The Town Beck Flood Alleviation Scheme in Ulverston, Cumbria, will reduce flood risk to more than 400 homes and more than 100 businesses, as well as critical tourism infrastructure. A maze of underground water channels (culverts) under the houses, roads and carparks in the town centre have been repaired and/or replaced using innovative techniques and flood defences have been constructed.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, officially opened the scheme, and said:

Cumbrian communities know well the devastation that flooding can cause. The Town Beck flood defence will better protect 500 homes and businesses in Ulverston and support England's tourist economy by improving protection for the railway that leads to the Lake District.

To achieve this, the Environment Agency has worked closely with local residents, Network Rail, United Utilities and the Council. It's a brilliant example of how partnership working benefits people, the national economy and the natural environment.

Town Beck lies within a steep catchment and predominantly runs underground through the town centre. The new scheme consists of a number of sections throughout the town centre including raising existing flood defence walls, installing new floodgates, repairing and refurbishing the underground water channels (culverts), and building a swale in the natural flood plain to ensure that there is no increase to flood risk in South Ulverston. A new wildflower meadow has also been created as part of the scheme, boosting biodiversity and improving the local environment.

Much of the scheme is underground, so different construction techniques known as 'trenchless technologies' were used. In some cases Environment Agency contractors installed reinforced plastic sleeves to repair pipes – or worked underground wearing specialist breathing apparatus to spray concrete on the inside of the culvert for extra strength.

While this means some of the work isn't visible, it avoided diverting major services – such as gas, water and electric – and allowed construction without having to dig up the road, avoiding unnecessary disruption to residents while the scheme was underway.

Alternative repair techniques were also used to speed up the completion of the project and to reduce disruption to the town. The potential option for the construction of a flood storage reservoir was replaced with an additional large pipe which runs through the railway embankment and a drainage channel to connect to the flood plain.

The scheme will provide a significant improvement in the standard of protection for the area, which has been affected by flooding several times in recent years – most recently in 2009 and in 2012.

Led by the Environment Agency, the project received strong support from partner organisations including Cumbria County Council, South Lakeland District Council, Network Rail and United Utilities, who provided more than £1 million of contributions towards the development.

Similarly, close links to Ulverston Town Council and local community groups have been vital to minimising the disruption to the Cumbrian town, which has

many small to medium businesses and is heavily reliant on the tourist economy.

Adrian Lythgo, Chair of the North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee said:

The Town Beck Flood Alleviation Scheme is a great example of how such important work can be completed with little disruption to a town so heavily reliant on the tourist trade.

Often people don't know a river is running beneath their feet or property and could cause such devastating results if flooded. This project has delivered a value for money, quality scheme which I am delighted that the North West Flood and Coastal Committee has supported.

The project was shortlisted for its innovative ways of working at the 2018 ICE North West Civil Engineers Awards.

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## **Open consultation: Environment: developing environmental principles and accountability**

We want to know what you think about plans to create a new independent environmental watchdog. What functions and powers should the watchdog have to oversee environmental law and policy?

We're also seeking views on what environmental principles we should apply in England to guide and shape environmental law and policy making.

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## **News story: New environment law to deliver a Green Brexit**

A new Environmental Principles and Governance Bill will ensure environmental protections will not be weakened as we leave the EU, the government has confirmed.

A [consultation has started today](#) on the contents of the Environmental Principles and Governance Bill, which will establish a world-leading body to hold government to account for environmental outcomes.

The body will support our commitment to be the first generation to leave our environment in a better state than that in which we inherited it. It will provide scrutiny and advice as we protect and enhance our precious landscapes, wildlife and natural assets and would be able to hold government to account on environmental legislation.

Subject to consultation, the new body could specifically be responsible for:

- providing independent scrutiny and advice on existing and future government environmental law and policy;
- responding to complaints about government's delivery of environmental law; and
- holding government to account publicly over its delivery of environmental law and exercising enforcement powers where necessary.

The Government is also consulting on its intention to require ministers to produce – and then have regard to – a statutory and comprehensive policy statement setting out how they will apply core environmental principles as they develop policy and discharge their responsibilities. Currently environmental decisions made in the UK – from improving air and water quality to protecting endangered species – are overseen by the European Commission and underpinned by a number of these principles, such as the precautionary principle, sustainable development and the 'polluter pays' principle.

While these principles are already central to government environmental policy, they are not set out in one place besides the EU treaties. The new Environmental Principles and Governance Bill will ensure governments continue to have regard to important environmental principles through the policy statement, which would be scrutinised by Parliament. The consultation seeks views on whether or not the principles to be contained in the policy statement should be listed in primary legislation.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

As the Prime Minister has made clear, we will not weaken environmental protections when we leave the EU. A new Environmental Principles and Governance Bill will ensure core environmental principles remain central to government policy and decision-making. This will help us to deliver a Green Brexit and the vision set out in our 25 Year Environment Plan.

But we will only achieve our aims by also creating a strong and objective voice that champions and enforces environmental standards. That's why our Environmental Principles and Governance Bill will also create an independent and statutory watchdog. This will hold governments to account for delivering their commitments to the natural world.

The consultation, which will run for 12 weeks, seeks views on the most effective way for the new body to hold government to account, which would include, as a minimum, the power to issue advisory notices. The consultation asks what further enforcement mechanisms may be necessary.

The Environmental Principles and Governance Bill will be published in draft in the autumn. Public consultation on the environmental principles policy statement will follow in due course. The Bill will be introduced early in the second session of this Parliament, ensuring these measures are introduced in time for the end of the implementation period in December 2020. EU

environmental governance structures will continue to apply during the implementation period.

The consultation is concerned with environmental governance in England and reserved matters throughout the UK, for which the UK government has responsibility. However, we are exploring with the devolved administrations whether they wish to take a similar approach. We would welcome the opportunity to co-design proposals with them to ensure they work across the whole UK, taking account of the different government and legal systems in the individual nations.

## **Background**

1. You can respond to our consultation on the [Citizen Space website](#)
2. Read [‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’](#)