

Students told to get up to date with vaccinations ahead of Freshers' Week

Students heading to university in September are being encouraged to ensure they are up to date with their vaccinations ahead of Freshers' Week to protect themselves against a range of life-threatening illnesses.

First year or returning students can be at increased risk of serious diseases such as meningitis, septicaemia and measles as they mix with large numbers of other students from around the country and overseas.

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and meningitis charities are urging parents and students to ensure they are protected before the term begins as many of these illnesses arise at the start of the academic year.

The 3 vaccines students should get up to date with are:

1. MenACWY – protecting against 4 common strains causing meningitis and septicaemia
2. MMR – protecting against measles, mumps, rubella
3. HPV (for female students) – protecting against cervical and other cancers caused by the human papilloma virus (HPV) together with genital warts

Dr Shamez Ladhani, Consultant Epidemiologist at UKHSA, said:

We know that colleges and universities can be hotspots for the spread of diseases such as meningitis and measles.

At the top of any list of essential things to get for college should be any missed vaccines – it could save your life. If unsure check with your GP to make sure that you are up to date with the MenACWY, MMR and HPV vaccinations before term starts.

And all students need to be aware of the signs and symptoms of meningitis and septicaemia. Don't assume it's just a hangover or freshers' flu. If you're poorly make sure a friend knows and stay in touch regularly with friends who are ill. These diseases can progress rapidly so urgent action in getting medical attention is critical – call NHS 111 straight away.

Anyone who is unsure about their vaccine status can check with their GP practice to see if they are up to date and fully protected. Ideally, students should have any vaccines they have missed at least 2 weeks before leaving for university. If that's not possible, they should arrange to have any missed vaccines as soon as possible with their current GP or their new GP practice if they are moving to a new university.

The MenACWY vaccine is routinely offered to those in school years 9 and 10 but some students will have missed out. Anyone who has missed out can still get a free jab with their GP until their 25th birthday.

The vaccine provides high protection against 4 common strains that cause meningococcal disease (meningitis and septicaemia) – MenA, MenC, MenW and MenY – but does not protect against all strains, like MenB.

Although numbers of cases have remained at relatively low levels across the country, there has been a small increase in meningococcal disease due to MenB among young adults (60 confirmed cases in 19 to 22 year-olds during the 2021 to 2022 academic year in England) since the easing of coronavirus (COVID-19) social restrictions in July 2021.

The UK began offering routine vaccination against MenB to infants in 2015, but teenagers and current university students will not have received this vaccine so it is important they are aware of the signs and symptoms of meningitis and septicaemia so they can urgently seek medical care if needed.

Meningitis and septicaemia can develop suddenly. Symptoms include a blotchy rash that doesn't fade when a glass is rolled over it, fever, headache, aching muscles and joints and a stiff neck. The MenW strain can also cause vomiting and diarrhoea in teenagers and young adults. Urgent antibiotic treatment and hospitalisation are critical.

Measles is a highly infectious viral illness that can also have serious consequences. It can be more severe in teenagers and young adults, often leading to hospital admissions. Measles starts with cold-like symptoms and sore red eyes, followed by a high temperature and a red-brown blotchy rash.

Claire Wright, Head of Evidence and Policy at Meningitis Research Foundation, said:

Meningitis can kill healthy people within hours and is difficult to distinguish from a bad hangover or more common milder illnesses in the early stages.

By taking up the free MenACWY vaccine, school leavers are not only protecting themselves but also protecting others by stopping the bacteria from being passed on.

For those who have already been vaccinated it remains important to be aware of the signs and symptoms of meningitis because the free vaccine does not protect against MenB, which is the most common cause of life-threatening meningitis amongst this age group.

Michelle Bresnahan, who founded meningitis awareness charity A Life for a Cure following the sudden death of her son Ryan to MenB, said:

It's important to make sure that getting up to date with your

vaccinations is on your to-do list as you begin your preparations for university.

No-one wants to fall ill in the first few months and checking with your GP that you have these 3 vaccines is a quick and easy way to keep yourself safe.

Remember though, not all types of meningococcal disease are covered by the vaccine, including MenB. So it's vital you get to know the signs and symptoms, including a blotchy rash that doesn't fade when a glass is rolled over it, fever, aching muscles and joints and a stiff neck. Doing so could save your life or that of a friend.

Meningitis Now chief executive, Dr Tom Nutt, said:

It's vital that young people take up the opportunity to get vaccinated against MenACWY while at school. In addition, very few young people will have been vaccinated against MenB, which is the strain that causes the most cases of bacterial meningitis in the UK.

Although many young people will have been vaccinated against MenACWY at school, our estimates show that up to half a million under-25s may have missed this important vaccination. If that's you, contact your GP and see if you can get up to date with your vaccinations. This is particularly important if you are going on to higher education and university halls of residence. You can find out more information about the signs and symptoms of meningitis at meningitisnow.org.

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[Russia's continued war increases collective outrage: UK statement to the OSCE](#)

Mr. Chair, today we should solely be celebrating with Ukraine as they mark 31 years of independence. Instead, we have also gathered here at this Special Council to once again condemn Russia's unprovoked, full-scale and illegal invasion of Ukraine. These have been six long, dark months. The Russian government anticipated a three-day war – it is fitting that exactly six months on, we celebrate the indomitable spirit of the proud nation of Ukraine that refuses to yield to President Putin's imperialism. We congratulate our Ukrainian colleagues and all the people of Ukraine on their national day, and look forward to many more to come.

Yesterday, politicians met for the International Crimea Platform. Since 2014, the people of Crimea have endured a brutal and systematic campaign of human rights abuses by the Russian authorities, including the persecution of the Tatars, arbitrary arrests, and the restriction of land ownership. Let us remember that the 24th February was an escalation in Putin's hostilities against Ukraine; not the beginning. It has never been more important to emphasise that Crimea is Ukraine.

We reaffirm our solidarity with the people of Ukraine, pay tribute to all those who have sacrificed their lives in the face of evil and tyranny, and express our deepest sympathy to the families of the victims of the ongoing aggression against Ukraine. 6.5 million people have become refugees across Europe, with one third of Ukrainians forced from their homes. As of Monday, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights recorded 13,477 civilian casualties, of which over 5,500 are fatalities. Behind each of these numbers is a human being – with a name, a face and family and friends who love them. And the true figure is almost certainly significantly higher,

rising every day as Russia continues to target civilians and critical infrastructure – including recent indiscriminate shelling in Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, Dnipro and Donetsk.

Russia's disregard for international law, and its lack of humanity has appalled the international community. The world was horrified to learn of reports of war crimes and atrocities committed by Russian forces in places such as Irpin and Bucha. I and many of my colleagues here have repeatedly emphasised the callousness and blatant illegality of Russia's tactics. Tactics which include the exploitation of prisoners of war and civilian detainees for political purposes; we've heard reports of torture and mistreatment, and the use of sham trials – all in a clear breach of the Geneva conventions. By continuing to wage this war of brutality, Russia does not make us accustomed to its inhuman methods – it only increases our collective outrage. The UK is committed to ensuring that those who commit war crimes in Ukraine are brought to justice.

Having been humiliated militarily and failing in his initial war aims, President Putin has shown his true colours and resorted to the use of food and energy as weapons, threatening global food security and pushing some of the world's most vulnerable populations to the brink of famine. We remain gravely concerned about the implications of Russia's illegal invasion for nuclear safety and security. Since February, nuclear facilities in Ukraine have experienced significant disruptions to operations, posing a grave threat to the populations of Ukraine and wider Europe. Specifically, Russia must immediately restore full control of Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant to the competent Ukrainian authorities and ensure that the International Atomic Energy Agency has appropriate access to address critical safety, security and safeguard concerns. Failure to comply would be an exceptionally costly act of desperation. Though let us be clear – the quickest path to restoring nuclear safety and security in Ukraine is the immediate and complete withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukraine's sovereign territory.

Since the invasion started, the [UK has provided economic, humanitarian and military assistance totalling over £3 billion](#), including towards holding those responsible for war crimes to account and an unprecedented package of sanctions on those facilitating this invasion. We will continue to use all the tools available to ensure that Ukraine succeeds in the face of President Putin's unprovoked, premeditated and unjustified war.

On this Ukrainian Independence Day, we resolutely reaffirm that we remain committed to the sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, extending to its territorial waters. Today, once again, we reiterate our demand for the immediate cessation of hostilities by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, of all attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, and the full, immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Russian forces and military equipment from the territory of Ukraine. Ukraine – we stand with you.

Thousands more leaseholders to get money back

- Over 20,000 leaseholders helped by CMA's investigation to date.
- Interim CMA CEO: "People now have a new lease of life, freed from issues like costly doubling ground rent terms".

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has secured undertakings from 9 companies that bought freeholds from leading housing developer Taylor Wimpey. A further 4 national developers – Crest Nicholson, Redrow, Miller Homes and Vistry – have also agreed to work with the companies who purchased their freeholds to remove doubling terms. The move will impact over 5,000 households throughout the UK, with many who paid a doubled rent receiving a refund.

All 9 firms must now remove problematic contract terms that cause ground rents to double in price every 10 years. These terms can lead to people being trapped in homes they cannot sell or mortgage. The firms will also remove contract terms which were originally doubling clauses, but were converted so the ground rent increased in line with the Retail Price Index (RPI). The CMA believes that the original doubling clauses were unfair and should therefore have been fully removed – not replaced with another term that still increases the rent.

This action brings the total number of homeowners that have benefitted from the CMA's investigation to over 20,000.

All affected leaseholders will now see their ground rents remain at the original amount – i.e. when the property was first sold – and this will not increase over time. The 9 freeholders have also agreed to refund residential leaseholders who had already paid out under doubled ground rent terms.

Sarah Cardell, interim Chief Executive of the CMA, said:

For years leaseholders have been plagued by what we believe are unfair practices. That's why we sought to tackle the problem by launching action against some of the biggest names in the business.

As a result of our work, over 20,000 people now have a new lease of life, freed from issues like costly doubling ground rent terms.

Secretary of State for Levelling Up Greg Clark said:

This is good news that will see thousands of leaseholders get the

refunds they are entitled to.

Levelling up home ownership and creating a fairer, more transparent leasehold system is a top priority for this government, and these agreements are an example of this in action.

We will work with the CMA to continue challenging industry on its practices, so we can ensure more leaseholders get the fair deal they deserve.

Since 2019, the CMA has sought to tackle issues around the possible mis-selling of leasehold homes and contract terms it believes are unfair. Its investigations involving 7 leading housing developers – and businesses who purchased freeholds from these firms – have led to landmark changes:

- August 2022: 9 businesses who purchased freeholds from Taylor Wimpey commit to remove problematic doubling terms. Developers Crest Nicholson, Miller Homes, Redrow and Vistry agree to help remove doubling terms from leasehold contracts they sold on.
- March 2022: [15 businesses who bought freeholds from Countryside](#) remove doubling ground rent terms.
- December 2021: [Taylor Wimpey](#) removes doubling ground rent terms, and RPI-based terms that were originally doublers, from all its contracts.
- September 2021: [Countryside Properties](#) removes doubling ground rent terms in relation to freeholds it owns.
- June 2021: [Persimmon](#) offers leasehold house owners the opportunity to buy the freehold of their property at a discounted price that better reflects what they expected when they originally bought their home.
- June 2021: [Aviva](#) removes doubling ground rent terms in relation to freeholds it bought.

As the investigation moves into the final stages, the CMA is engaging with additional firms, including the Abacus Land and Adriatic Land investment group, which bought freeholds from Taylor Wimpey.

Notes to editors

1. The undertakings have been provided to the CMA voluntarily and without any admission of wrongdoing or liability. It should not be assumed that any of the 9 businesses have breached the law – only a court can decide whether a breach has occurred.
2. Crest Nicholson, Redrow, Miller and Vistry are cooperating with the CMA by working with freeholders to remove doubling clauses from their leases. Vistry PLC includes Galliford Try, Linden and Bovis Homes, which it acquired in 2020.
3. The 9 businesses who purchased freeholds from Taylor Wimpey and have provided undertakings are: a) BDP Freehold Limited; b) Mortgage Incentive Funds Limited; c) The Bridges (Darlington) Management Company Limited; d) Bessant Properties Limited; e) Brigante Properties Limited; f) Furatto Limited and Long Term Reversions No 1 Limited; g) SF Ground

Rents No18 Limited, SF Ground Rents No 15 Limited and RMB 102 Limited;
h) Sarum Properties Limited; i) Taylor Court Limited

4. The businesses who purchased freeholds from Taylor Wimpey and have not provided undertakings yet are listed below. The CMA is continuing to engage with these firms: a) Island Apartments Freehold Limited; b) Madison Close Freeholders Limited; c) Elmdon Real Estate LLP; d) Abacus Land 1 (Holdco 1) Limited, Abacus Land 4 Limited and Adriatic Land 1 (GR3) Limited (part of the Abacus Land and Adriatic Land investment group); e) Plaza 2 Surbiton Limited
5. Following our [update on 18 March 2022](#), the CMA has now concluded its discussions with 2 remaining freeholders who had purchased Countryside leases. Freeholders D.A.T.S. (Holdings) Limited and Wallace Estates Limited have now both given similar commitments to make changes for the benefit of leaseholders.
6. The main provisions of consumer protection legislation relevant to the CMA's concerns about ground rent terms are the Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations 1999 (UTCCRs), for contracts entered into before 1 October 2015, and Part 2 of the Consumer Rights Act 2015 (CRA), for contracts entered into on or after 1 October 2015. The UTCCRs and Part 2 of the CRA aim to protect consumers against unfair contract terms, and require contract terms to be fair and transparent.
7. All enquiries from journalists should be directed to the CMA press office by email on press@cma.gov.uk or by phone on 020 3738 6460.
8. All enquiries from the general public should be directed to the CMA's General Enquiries team on general.enquiries@cma.gov.uk or 020 3738 6000.

[New joint patrolling partnership between Thames Valley Police and the Civil Nuclear Constabulary](#)

News story

The new partnership with police officers from the Civil Nuclear Constabulary (CNC) will increase the policing presence within the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse local area.



L-R: Insp Nick Cain, Supt Dave Horsburgh, Chief Supt Graham Bell, Insp Chris Logan

The CNC is currently responsible for the protection of civil nuclear sites and has jurisdiction over the surrounding area of the Harwell Magnox site. Officers from each force will regularly patrol together to respond to calls received by Thames Valley Police, as well as undertake proactive duties and local neighbourhood patrols, whilst ensuring that the CNC's primary and critical role of protecting national infrastructure from any threat is maintained.

The initiative will give Thames Valley Police a greater range of resources to help keep the local area safe and enhance the already close and effective working relationship between both forces. The CNC officers bring a wealth of experience with them and are trained as medics, who can provide initial emergency medical care at a scene, should the situation arise.

Local Police Area Commander for South & Vale, Supt Dave Horsburgh said: "This enhanced collaboration will provide additional support to Thames Valley officers in protecting the public and increasing visibility provided by both forces to the local community. It will also enable officers from CNC to develop their proactive working relationships and utilise their valuable specialist skills within the local area.

"I know the public are often keen to see more officers on the streets and I hope this provides some reassurance that we are listening to their feedback and putting practical solutions in place to address their concerns."

Southern Divisional Commander, Ch Supt Graham Bell said: "I very much welcome this initiative, which will provide excellent opportunities for our officers from Harwell whilst also supporting our colleagues from TVP and through this, offer improved levels of cover for the local community. Although our priority remains the security of the Harwell Magnox site, I look forward to us supporting these joint patrols as often as possible."

Published 24 August 2022