



Our ref: WQ91096 and WQ91099

Andrew RT Davies
Member of the Senedd for South Wales Central

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21 May 2024

Dear Andrew,

I am responding to your written questions WQ91096 and WQ91099:

Has the Minister had any discussions with Wales's Chief Medical Officer regarding a measles outbreak?

What action is the Minister taking to encourage the take up of the measles vaccine?

Measles is a notifiable disease and Public Health Wales (PHW) undertakes routine surveillance to rapidly identify and undertake public health actions to prevent its spread. PHW reports regularly to Welsh Government about this surveillance. I speak frequently to the Chief Medical Officer about a range of issues, including the threat posed by measles.

The MMR vaccination programme is highly effective. PHW's most recent surveillance report (up to December 2023) shows 89.3% of five-year-olds in Wales have had two doses of MMR. We need to do more to protect our communities from this highly virulent and potentially very dangerous disease. Our ambition is to see the uptake figure among five-year-olds to reach the World Health Organisation's target of 95%. We have some way to go to achieve that, particularly in certain areas and within certain communities in Wales. Our first priority is to ensure 90% of pupils in every school are fully vaccinated by 31 July 2024.

A Welsh Health Circular was issued in February instructing health boards to carry out targeted work to achieve this. The Deputy Chief Medical Officer also wrote to local authority directors of education seeking their support for this important catch-up work to be carried out. The letter also requested schools highlight to families the importance of being vaccinated, not only for health reasons, but to ensure students can continue to attend school, in the event measles is identified locally.

The Chief Medical Officer issued a public statement highlighting the increased risk of an outbreak if vaccination rates are not increased. PHW is also implementing a communications plan to ensure the importance of the MMR vaccination continues to be highlighted in the coming months.

I also draw your attention to my oral statement about the National Immunisation Framework on 21 May.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan'.

Eluned Morgan AS/MS

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol