

Friday 12 August 2022

## Polio vaccine reminder

Parents and carers are being urged to check the vaccination status of their children following more reports of polio being found in London sewage. There have been no cases of polio reported in the UK in relation to this and the last case was reported in 1984.

As a precaution, a polio booster programme for children aged 1-9 years of age is being undertaken in London because their vaccine uptake is less than the World Health Organisation's (WHO) target of 95%. Surveillance outside of London is now taking place to see if polio in sewage can be detected outside the capital. However, the risk is low and is considered to be in the London area only.

The polio vaccine is given alongside routine immunisations at eight, 12, and 16 weeks old, with boosters at three years and four months, and 13 or 14 years old.

Most people who get polio do not show symptoms and won't know they are infected. Some may get flu like symptoms and a very small number may suffer muscle paralysis, usually starting in the legs.

Jersey's polio vaccine uptake has remained high and above the WHO's target of 95% since 2008. In 2020, 98% of one-year-olds had received the modern dead virus polio vaccine.

The vaccines used in Jersey, the UK, and Europe, are dead vaccines which protect against polio and cannot cause or revert to disease causing virus. The polio viruses seen in London sewage are thought to be mutations derived from the live polio vaccines still used in some countries outside Europe.

Deputy Medical Officer of Health, Dr Ivan Muscat, said: "Although the threat of Polio remains very low, it is vital that children are vaccinated against the virus. I urge all parents to check their children's vaccination status. Those that are unsure of their child's vaccination status, or who know that they have not had the polio vaccine, should contact their GP or [childhealthadmin@health.gov.je](mailto:childhealthadmin@health.gov.je) by email or by telephone 443741.

"Vaccination remains the best way to prevent infection and protect yourselves and others."

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### **Notes to Editors**

1. For further information, please contact the Press Office on 01534 440430 or [pressoffice@gov.je](mailto:pressoffice@gov.je)