



## PRESS RELEASE

No: 426/2016

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> August 2016

### Vaccination against Meningitis & Measles

The GHA is making available additional opportunities to be immunised against Meningitis W and Measles, for all young people, particularly those going to university this year. This is on top of routine immunisation programmes provided by the GHA, through which the majority of young people in Gibraltar have already been immunised against these two serious diseases.

Prospective university students and persons aged 17 years and over,

- (a) who have not received their **Meningitis W** vaccine during the last year; or
- (b) who have not had two doses of **MMR** vaccine during their childhood,

should contact the Child Welfare & Immunisation clinic in the Primary Care Centre on 20078039 to make an appointment for vaccination, which is provided on Mondays (2:00 to 4:00 PM) and Wednesdays (9:00 to 11:00 AM).

Recently, the UK Public Health authorities have recommended that young people, particularly university entrants, should be immunised against these two diseases. This is because they are serious, are on the increase and tend to target young people.

**Meningitis W** is a particularly aggressive form of meningitis that is more prone to affect young people, such as first time University entrants. The number of cases reported in the UK in 2015 was nearly ten times that seen a decade ago. **Measles** is also a disease that has recently been causing outbreaks in the UK, with a significant number of cases being reported in the last two months, linked to music festivals and other large public events attended by young people. In the first six months of 2016, the number of cases of measles increased to more than four times the usual level in the UK.

The GHA already has robust programmes against these diseases. In September 2015, the GHA introduced a vaccination programme against Meningitis W (PR 631/2015) to several groups of young people, which included all Year 13 students who received the vaccine



through the schools and the Primary Care Centre, the programme completing by April 2016. It is now believed that all students going to University in September 2016 should have been covered by this programme.

Measles has been largely prevented by the MMR vaccination programme since 1989. However, following a large outbreak in 2009, the GHA carried out a successful campaign to reach out to those who were unimmunised. Again, it is believed that most, if not all, students should now be immune.

This additional programme aims to include any young people who missed out for whatever reason.