



Childhood Immunisation

1. Introduction

The overall aim of the routine [childhood immunisation programme](#) in the UK is to protect all children against the preventable childhood infections of: diphtheria; tetanus; pertussis (whooping cough); *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib); polio; meningococcal serogroup C (MenC); measles; mumps; rubella and pneumococcal.

The national immunisation targets are part of the Department of Health's [Strategic Framework](#). The national target for childhood immunisations is 95% for each of the six vaccines of the under-fives childhood immunisation schedule and 90% coverage for HPV in school-aged girls. As Hounslow is considered a TB hotspot (i.e. has higher rates of TB), all babies born or resident in the Borough receive the BCG up to the age of one year. Infants born to infectious Hepatitis B mothers are vaccinated from birth with Hepatitis B vaccine.

The Health Protection Agency and [COVER](#) (Cover of Vaccination Evaluated Rapidly) monitor immunisation coverage data for children in the United Kingdom who reach their first, second or fifth birthday during each evaluation quarter. This information is promptly fed back to the local level, creating the opportunity to improve the uptake of childhood immunisation and to detect changes in vaccine coverage and take action quickly.

2. The Local Picture

Hounslow has a transient child population, similar to much of London. This has implications for the immunisation monitoring, as many children will move in and out of the Borough at ages when they would normally receive immunisations.

Overall, Hounslow's childhood immunisation rates are generally below the target 95% (herd immunity) levels. In 2009/10 and 2010/11, none of the vaccines achieved the 95% herd immunity level. ([Tables 1, 2](#) and [3](#))

For immunisations given under age one, coverage rates have improved from 2009/10 to 2010/11 and are similar to the London rate, but significantly below the England average. ([Table 1](#))

In 2010/11, the proportion of children who have received their primary immunisations by their second birthday is significantly below the England average across each of the vaccines given, and all also fall below the London average, except meningococcal C. ([Table 2](#))

At their fifth birthday, a lower proportion of Hounslow children have completed their immunisations compared to the London and England averages. The uptake for the two vaccines given between 3 and 5 years (MMR second dose and the 'Preschool Booster') only had a 68% and 67% uptake respectively ([Table 3](#)), meaning that a large proportion of Hounslow's children have an unfinished immunisation schedule and are vulnerable to infectious diseases.

Uptake for the HPV vaccination programme in 12-13 year old girls improved in 2010/11 compared with 2009/10, but is still below the target of 90%. In 2009/10, only 65% of eligible girls had the 3 doses of HPV. In 2011/12, this jumped to 81%.

Reporting of Hepatitis B vaccination coverage among at-risk infants is robust and work continues to ensure that this is maintained. A 12-month cohort of children in Hounslow who had mothers infected with Hepatitis B showed that the number of those children who reached their first birthday was 7 (5 received three doses of Hepatitis B vaccine). A 24-month cohort showed that only 3 of those children reached their second birthday, none of whom received the full four doses of Hepatitis B vaccine.

3. Strategic Leadership and Collaboration

Improving the uptake of immunisations in Hounslow is the remit of the Breastfeeding and Immunisation Steering Group. The group is chaired by the Consultant in Children's Public Health and consists of commissioners, public health, child health information team and National Childbirth Trust representatives. The group also includes the GP Champion for Immunisations, the Immunisation Co-ordinator at Hounslow and Richmond Community Care Trust and the school-based immunisation team (made up of the Hounslow School Nursing Service from Hounslow and Richmond Community Health). These members work together to implement the Immunisation Action Plan for Hounslow 2011/12. The Chair reports monthly to the Joint Clinical Executive Committee.

The Action Plan for Hounslow 2011/12 focuses on the following areas:

- Improving immunisation performance of GP practices;
- Ensuring all health professionals who provide immunisations are up-to-date with training;
- Active immunisation target management (e.g. minimise numbers of defaulters, targeting vulnerable groups, working with Children's Services and Lifelong Learning in instigating check-points in nurseries, children's centres etc);
- Active information management (e.g. improving quality of data collected);
- Improving provider immunisation team performance.

The Immunisation Steering Group works closely with public health leads for immunisation in the Outer North West London sub-cluster to improve immunisation rates throughout the three boroughs (Ealing, Hillingdon and Hounslow). The Group also works alongside the North West London Immunisation Network, the London Immunisation Coordinators Network and the National Support Team for Immunisations at Department of Health.

Key areas of strategic working include:

- Incentivising GP practices to reach 95% coverage target;
- Continuing to ensure that all immunisers are up-to-date with their immunisation training and confident to address parents' questions;
- Developing a baseline of parental attitudes to uncover what parents think and feel about immunisations and the process in Hounslow;
- Continuing to use the school leavers' booster as a means by which to identify and rectify immunisations;
- Developing a process for early identification and facilitation of unregistered children;
- Continuing the call/recall system;
- Ensuring advice and support on immunisation is available in health and community settings (e.g. written/tailored information provided in libraries);
- Sustaining the current system of data information management, whilst preparing for



setting up a new reporting system using Child Health Module of Systmone, from April 2012; and

- Implementing a defaulters' policy, including procedures for actively managing patients who default within the childhood immunisation programme.

3.1 *Specific measures to improve childhood immunisation in Hounslow*

In Hounslow, there is an established immunisation training programme offered to all community and GP practice staff who deliver immunisations. Health professionals are expected to undertake a two-day introductory programme upon commencement of their post, followed by annual one-day updates.

There has been an improvement in Hounslow's rates of immunisation coverage over the past two years. This has been mainly due to efforts to improve the quality of data management, followed by work to improve immunisation records of GP practices, the quality of training given to health professionals, effective active patient management and public knowledge and access. A centralised call/recall system was also implemented in 2010.

4. Priorities

In 2011/12, the update of childhood immunisation in Hounslow will be improved through measures to:

- Develop protocols/plans to check immunisation status at all child health contacts and signpost appropriately. This includes working closely with Early Years Team in CSL, children's centres and schools;
- Develop a process for early identification and facilitation of unregistered children;
- Improve on the 2009/10 reported rate of 81% for HPV vaccination in Year 8 girls;
- Improve on the 2009/10 reported rate of 72% for the school leavers booster; and
- Develop strategies for targeting vulnerable groups (or groups most at risk of defaulting);
- Continue specific planned initiatives, including practice visits by the GP Champion and the Public Health Manager to support general practices where uptake of immunisations is below target. A review of 2010/11 visits has shown that such visits are effective and have greatly reduced the number of practices underperforming. Practices within these categories will be supported with quarterly feedback and recovery plans until their uptakes improve.

5. Summary of Need

The following table summarises the needs in childhood immunisation in the London Borough of Hounslow.



SUMMARY OF NEED: CHECKLIST	
Is need increasing over time?	Yes
Is need greater than the London average?	Yes
Is there qualitative intelligence indicating that need is substantially unmet?	No
Is there an external inspection or report suggesting need is unmet?	No
Are quality indicators worsening over time?	No
Are quality indicators worse than the London average?	Yes
Is there an intervention of proven effectiveness to address the need which is not currently delivered in Hounslow (or not delivered enough)?	Yes