

Low vaccination rates create risk of measles outbreak

MMR vaccinations among children in Islington have fallen “far below” the levels required for herd immunity new council data shows. The most recent health inequalities report shows that levels of vaccination have “significantly” worsened, however experts maintain that the public do not need to panic.

The rates of 2-year-olds receiving the MMR vaccine, which provides protection against measles, mumps, and rubella, fell to a low of 81% this year. A rate which is described as “far below” the WHO recommended target of 95% for herd immunity against measles.

This figure places Islington 10% below the England average, but only 3% below the average for London.

[The latest data](#) shows that in the first 3 weeks of physical distancing the number of MMR vaccinations administered fell by 42% compared to the previous year. However, these figures only paint part of the picture.

Helen Skirrow is a research fellow in the department of primary care and public health at Imperial College London who is writing a PhD looking at pregnancy and childhood vaccination uptake.

Helen told *Islington Now* that “those declines were quite quickly detected and there was a huge amount of work done to by GP’s and public health practitioners to maintain immunisation delivery over the course of the pandemic”

[Helen found](#) that out of 837 GP’s, 97% continued to provide childhood vaccinations during the pandemic. Although there was “huge parental anxiety” and confusion over whether vaccinations were still taking place in the beginning, Islington’s low rate of immunisation cannot entirely be attributed to COVID.

“This predates covid.” Said Helen, “there has always been lower reported uptake of vaccinations such as MMR in London compared to national figures”

While it is “a concern” that immunisation rates remain low Helen urges that “in terms of what the public need to be worried about; it is making sure they are up to date on their vaccinations, making sure their children are up to date with their vaccinations and feeling absolutely no worry or stigma if their children did miss a vaccination”

Islington Council did not respond to request for comment