**MEASLES OUTBREAK IN EUROPE – IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ANYONE TRAVELLING TO EUROPE**

**Public Health England (PHE) is advising young people planning to travel to Europe over the holidays to ensure they are up to date with the MMR vaccine, due to ongoing measles outbreaks across the continent. Measles is a highly infectious viral illness that can lead to serious complications and in rare cases can be fatal.**

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control has reported a high risk of measles in Europe, with cases being imported and exported between countries. This is largely due to lower MMR vaccine uptake in many European countries. Romania, Italy, Germany, Greece and France are all currently experiencing large measles outbreaks.

Although the overall risk to the UK population is low, in England there have been 168 laboratory confirmed measles cases this year. London, South East, West Midlands and the South West regions have reported the most cases. About half of the cases in England in 2018 have been in people over 15 years of age.

Whilst MMR vaccine coverage for the routine childhood programme is high in the UK, anyone who has missed out on MMR vaccine or has not had measles in the past is at risk of catching the disease.

Anyone who is not sure if they are fully vaccinated should check with their GP practice. The vaccine is available free to anyone who has not received both doses as a child. It protects against measles, mumps and rubella, all of which can be very serious diseases and are highly infectious.

Dr Mary Ramsay, Head of Immunisation at PHE, said:

The measles outbreaks we are currently seeing in England are linked to ongoing large outbreaks in Europe. People who have not had 2 doses of the MMR vaccine are particularly at risk.

We want to remind people that measles is not just a disease of young children and we’re seeing many cases in people over 15 years of age. Adults or parents who are unsure if they or their children have been fully vaccinated should check with their GP and make an appointment to receive 2 doses of MMR vaccine.

Health information on measles can be found on the NHS choices website at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/>