MMR Frequently asked questions

1. What is the target population for the MMR vaccination programme?

Patients aged 10 years and over who have not been previously vaccinated are eligible for the MMR vaccine. There is no upper age limit for this programme, although patients aged 17 or over would be expected to be vaccinated opportunistically at the discretion of the practice rather than being included in the call and recall payment arrangements.

2. Q. Does the age-range mean that someone who is currently nine years of age, who hasn't been vaccinated but turns ten before 31 March 2014, should be vaccinated under this scheme?

Yes. This scheme covers patients who are aged between 10-16 years prior to the 31 March 2014. If a patient is currently nine years old and is unvaccinated, but will be turning ten before 31 March 2014, they can be invited by the practice to be vaccinated.

3. To be fully vaccinated two jabs are required; how far apart do the jabs have to be given for patients aged 10 years and over?

The two injections should be given a minimum of one month apart.

4. What are the payment arrangements for call and recall for this programme?

Active call and recall is for patients aged 10 years and over, until the day before they turn 17 and is payable at £1.50 per eligible registered patient.

Although there is no upper age limit for this vaccination programme, patients aged 17 or over would be expected to be vaccinated opportunistically at the discretion of the practice and would not be included in the call and recall payment arrangements.

5. What are the payment arrangements for administering vaccinations?

For patients aged 10 years and over until the day before they turn 16, there is no additional payment for administering the vaccine as this is covered under the SFE.

For those patients unvaccinated and aged 16 years and over there is a payment of £7.64 per dose.

Patients 17 or over would be expected to be vaccinated opportunistically at the discretion of the practice and would not be included in the call and recall payment arrangements. This vaccination would be eligible for the £7.64 per dose fee.

6. If a patient is called in for vaccination at 15 years but is vaccinated on or after their 16th birthday, how would payment be calculated?
In the event that a patient is called in for vaccination at 15 years but is vaccinated on or after their 16th birthday, payment can be claimed for call and recall costs at £1.50 and £7.64 for the actual administration of the vaccine. Similarly, if a patient is 16 and over but not yet 17 and invited in for vaccination and is then either vaccinated before or just after they turn 17 then both payments can be claimed.

7. What contractor types are eligible to take part in this vaccination programme?

The specification applies to all GP contractors in England regardless of contract type. The introduction to the specification makes it clear that this applies to all contractors.

8. Who can administer the vaccine?

Anyone who has been trained and assessed as competent (by their employer) can administer vaccines via a parenteral (i.e. intramuscular injection) route under Patient Specific Direction (PSD) i.e. not under Patient Group Direction (PGD). This is because only certain healthcare professionals are allowed to work under a PGD.

The preferred way for patients to receive vaccines is for trained healthcare professionals to prescribe for individual patients on a one-to-one basis. However, in some circumstances, it may be more appropriate for a patient to receive a vaccine (i.e. have it supplied and/or administered) directly from another healthcare professional. Unless covered by exemptions to the Medicines Act 1968, there are two ways of achieving this: either by a PSD or a PGD. See chapter 5 in the Green book for further details on PSDs and PGDs.

9. What happens where there is an existing local agreement in place to deliver an MMR vaccination programme?

NHS England would expect area teams to resolve any differences arising between an existing local agreement and the national specification to ensure that practices operating under the LES are doing so in a manner that is equitable.

10. The specification states that call and recall need to be in the form of a letter, would any other forms of contact be acceptable?

The specification requires that a letter to be sent out inviting patients to a specific appointment, or offering an appointment in order to qualify for the call and recall payment. This format ensures sufficient information can be shared with the parent/guardian/patient in making an informed decision about the vaccination. It will also serve as sufficient evidence for area teams to verify practice claims, if required. It would be acceptable for the letter to be emailed to the parent/guardian/patient where that person has indicated that this is their preferred method of contact.
The use of telephone or text for an initial invite will not be acceptable. It would of course be acceptable for any follow up to be undertaken by telephone.

11. What is the expected number of patients eligible for this vaccine?

It is anticipated that there would be around 40-50 patients eligible for the MMR vaccine in the average practice (registered list size of 6,911).

12. The email address in the letter to practices about MMR from NHS England doesn’t work, what is the correct email address?

The email address to be used to contact NHS England is england.primarycareops@nhs.net.

13. When does this programme end?

It is anticipated that all eligible children will have been vaccinated by 1 September 2013, however this programme is effective until 31 March 2014.

14. What is the name of the vaccine and are there any alternatives available?

The names of the two vaccines available in the UK are:

1. MMRVaxPRO – manufactured by Sanofi Pasteur MSD; and

These vaccines can be used interchangeably.

15. In some areas where there has already been an programme to encourage ‘non-responders’ to be vaccinated, what can be done locally?

Plans are being considered nationally to target 'non-responders'. Details will follow from NHS England and Public Health England.

16. Are there any plans to set up clinics in schools to pick up these children?

Plans are being considered nationally to target school programmes. There are already some school programmes up and running.

17. Can a practice claim the £1.50 fee for writing to the patient even if the vaccination is then given to the patient through a school programme?

Yes. Practices who have written out to eligible patients inviting them to attend the practice for vaccination can claim the £1.50 call and recall payment. However, the practice cannot claim the item of service fee if the vaccination is delivered via a schools programme. Payments can only be claimed if the eligible patient is vaccinated by the practice.
18. Can a practice claim the £7.64 IOS fee for patients vaccinated via a school based programme?

No. Where school programmes are being run, eligible patients will be vaccinated under alternative arrangements agreed locally. In these circumstances, practices cannot claim payment for vaccinations given through the school programme. Payments can only be claimed if the eligible patients did not get vaccinated through the school programme and instead were vaccinated by the GP practice.