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Child's Measles Death Sparks Alarm Over Falling Vaccination Rates

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A young child has tragically died in Liverpool after contracting measles, raising fresh concerns about Britain's declining vaccination coverage and the growing threat of outbreaks in communities already grappling with strained public health services.

The child, who had underlying health conditions, passed away at Alder Hey Children's Hospital, marking the second pediatric measles death in the United Kingdom this decade. According to health officials, measles is highly contagious and can linger in the air for hours, making it especially dangerous in areas where immunisation rates are slipping. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), which replaced Public Health England in 2021, has

confirmed 529 measles cases so far this year, with 357 infections in children under ten years old.

Professor Matt Ashton, Liverpool's Director of Public Health, warned that the disease could "spread like wildfire" if parents continue to forgo vaccinations. He noted that approximately 288 out of every 1,000 people in the Merseyside region remain at risk due to inadequate uptake of the Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine. The MMR jab, which offers about 97 per cent protection against measles, is widely available through the National Health Service and can be requested at any age.

This tragic death underscores a serious failure of leadership in recent years, with more energy devoted to political point-scoring than to reinforcing basic public health responsibilities. Despite repeated appeals from medical professionals, successive governments have failed to maintain consistent vaccine messaging, leaving many families confused or complacent.

Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust has now taken the unusual step of issuing an open letter to parents, urging them to vaccinate their children without delay. Symptoms of measles typically begin with fever, cough, and a runny nose, progressing to a widespread rash. Health authorities advise that anyone with suspected infection should avoid work, school, or nursery for at least four days after the rash appears and stay away from vulnerable individuals.

With vaccination rates continuing to slip, the United Kingdom faces a real possibility of widespread measles outbreaks that could have been prevented with more decisive action and clearer public health priorities.

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