

- To:
- GP practices in England
 - Primary care network clinical directors
 - Out of hours service providers

NHS England
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- cc. Integrated care board:
- primary care executive leads
 - medical directors
 - commissioning leads
- NHS England regional:
- directors of commissioning
 - directors of primary care
 - primary care medical directors

19 March 2026

Dear colleague

For action: urgent vaccination response to outbreak of meningococcal disease linked to University of Kent and the area of Canterbury

As part of the response to the outbreak of meningococcal disease in Kent, we are seeking the support of general practice to offer MenB vaccinations upon request to a small cohort of patients who cannot access vaccination at local vaccination clinics at the University of Kent, for example, because they have returned home from campus.

As of 18 March, UKHSA has been notified of 15 confirmed and 12 probable cases of invasive meningococcal disease with epidemiological links to Canterbury, Kent. Nine of the 15 confirmed cases are meningococcal group B. All but one case has been hospitalised and that case has subsequently been downgraded. Sadly, there have been 2 deaths. Most cases are students from the University of Kent, Canterbury, and sixth-form students from local secondary schools. Several cases share exposure at a Canterbury nightclub (Club Chemistry) from 5 to 16 March.

Following confirmation of the disease strain that is causing the outbreak, a decision has been taken to commence a MenB vaccination offer using Bexsero for a targeted number of contacts. Thanks to local efforts vaccinations started on campus on 18 March.

As of 19 March 2026, UKHSA has updated guidance to offer some students at the University of Kent a vaccine, recognising that many students have returned home. If an eligible individual has already returned home and has not received a vaccine through a local

vaccination clinic, we are asking practices to administer MenB vaccines to the eligible cohort on request.

Action for practices

Providing MenB vaccinations to this cohort as of today is an essential service under the GP Contracts. The Statement of Financial Entitlements (SFE) will be amended to that effect retrospectively from the date of this letter. Practices can claim a £10.06 Item of Service fee for each MenB vaccination administered to the eligible population.

NHS Resolution has confirmed that on the basis that NHS England will retrospectively amend the SFE to enable practices to deliver MenB vaccinations to this cohort under the GP Contracts, that such vaccinations will be covered under Clinical Negligence Scheme for General Practice (CNSGP) from the date of this letter.

As of 19 March, vaccination has been extended to **everyone who has been offered preventative antibiotic treatment as part of this outbreak.**

At the present time, this includes

- a. Students at the University of Kent who are normally resident on the Canterbury Campus, including those who may have now travelled home. Some staff living or working in these Halls of Residence have also been offered antibiotic prophylaxis.
- b. Students in relevant halls of residence or other private dwellings who attend other universities in Canterbury and have been advised to take an antibiotic due to a close contact.
- c. Individuals who attended Club Chemistry from 5 March until it closed voluntarily on March 16.

This list may be added to in the coming days as further information emerges.

Sixth form or other year groups and education settings in Kent where there are confirmed or probable cases are also eligible and have been notified by schools or UKHSA. Local arrangements are in place to offer vaccination to this group.

We are asking **all general practice teams** to ensure anyone in an eligible group who presents can be vaccinated across the country. We are asking that an offer is in place by no later than Monday 23 March if not sooner.

Vaccine type and supply

Bexsero is currently used in the infant MenB routine immunisation programme and is therefore available to all practices on ImmForm.

While some vaccine will be in fridges as part of the offer to young children, supply is available for increased demand and practices should order additional stock as required to support the outbreak response. We expect numbers by GP practice to be small.

Clinical information

Bexsero is a two-dose vaccine with the second dose administered 28 days after the first dose.

Information on Meningococcal Disease can be found in the [Green Book chapter 22 - Meningococcal](#)

The patient group direction is available [MenB vaccine \(Bexsero®\): patient group direction template - GOV.UK](#)

GP recording and payment

GPs will need to create a record for the administered vaccination on their GP IT system. Payments will not be automated and practices will have to make manual claims for this service via the Calculating Quality Reporting Service (CQRS) and usual processes.

There might be circumstances where the eligible patient, who comes forward, is registered with a practice in Kent where they reside during term time. In those circumstances practices should use the INT flag in their GP IT system to create the record.

Information regarding antibiotic chemoprophylaxis

Practices should continue to prescribe chemoprophylaxis to eligible individuals as outlined in the letter dated 18 March and in line with national guidance: [Guidance for public health management of meningococcal disease in the UK](#)

Communications

The University will contact students again, informing them of the updated guidance and offer.

Thank you for your continued efforts to protect students.

Annex A provides links to additional resources and information on meningitis and vaccination

Yours sincerely



Dr Amanda Doyle
National Director Primary Care and
Community Services
NHS England



Dr Shona Arora
Chief Medical Advisor
UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)

Annex A

- [Quick 2 page guide to protecting yourself against MenB](#)

- [A guide to the meningococcal B vaccine leaflet](#)
- [The MenB Vaccination Record Card](#)
- [The signs and symptoms of meningitis and septicaemia](#)
- [Don't ignore the signs and symptoms posters](#)