**PRESS RELEASE**

For immediate release

30 April 2020

**Don’t forget you still need to get your child’s routine childhood immunisations done at your GP surgery during the COVID-19 pandemic**

**Health Chiefs across the Black Country and West Birmingham are urging parents to take their children for their routine childhood immunisations at their GP surgery when they are invited to. Pregnant women should also take up the offer to have the pertussis (Whooping Cough) vaccine.**

**Dr Anand Rischie, Walsall GP and Clinical Chair for NHS Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group said**, “As long as patients attending for vaccination (including parents and carers) are well, are not displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or other infections and are not self-isolating because they are contacts of suspected COVID-19 cases, immunisation should proceed and is encouraged.

“Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that routine childhood immunisations are started and completed on time. This will help protect your child from a range of serious and sometimes life-threatening infections. Whilst infections such as measles and meningitis are not as common as they used to be, this is only because of high levels of vaccination. It is very important that we continue to prevent outbreaks of infectious diseases by making sure children get vaccinated.”

* To prevent resurgence, infants still need protecting through vaccination.
* All routine childhood immunisations are offered to babies, infants and pre-school children including first and second MMR dose
* All doses of targeted hepatitis B vaccines for at-risk infants will be offered
* Its important that pregnant women and take up the pertussis vaccine, and that their babies start receiving protection against this, and other infections, from 8 weeks of age.

**Stephen Gunther, Director of Public Health at Walsall Council said today**, “While preventing the spread of COVID-19 and protecting those who are most vulnerable is a public health priority, it is very important to maintain good vaccine uptake and coverage of immunisations.

“In addition to protecting the individual, good vaccine uptake helps to prevent the spread of diseases and so protects even more people from needing support from health services.”

GP practices are safe to attend for these appointments and continue to implement the most up to date guidance on maintaining social distance in the waiting room, (for example separating individuals by 2 metres) and decontamination of premises and equipment is being strictly followed. Practices may be adjusting appointment times to avoid waiting times with others and in some areas, practices may also be working with neighbouring practices to deliver COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 activity on separate sites.

**Ends**

**Media enquiries**

Please email communications.bcwb@nhs.net