

Title	Invasive meningococcal disease outbreak in Canterbury, Kent 2026: Situational Briefing
Audience	City and Hackney Councillors, Senior Leadership, and partners across City and Hackney Place-Based Partnership
Date	Tuesday 17 March 2026
Report Authors	Ratidzo Chinyuku, Senior Public Health Specialist
Approved by	Carolyn Sharpe, Consultant in Public Health

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. This briefing is for information only. It provides an update on a localised outbreak of invasive meningococcal disease in Kent, England. No immediate response actions are required from local partners at this time.

2. SITUATION SUMMARY

- 2.1. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is investigating an outbreak of meningococcal disease in Canterbury, Kent. As on 17 March 2026, 13 cases have been notified since 13 March 2026. Sadly, this includes 2 people who are known to have died.
- 2.2. Investigations have confirmed some of the cases visited Club Chemistry in Canterbury between 5 to 7 March prior to becoming unwell. UKHSA and the University of Kent have issued advice to staff and students regarding who needs to access antibiotics and how.

3. LOCAL SITUATIONAL UPDATE

- 3.1. This is a geographically localised issue to Kent. We have not been notified of any related cases in City or Hackney.
- 3.2. Any students resident in City or Hackney, that attend university in Kent, and have returned home, should have been contacted by UKHSA or the University regarding the need to access antibiotics.

4. FURTHER INFORMATION AND UPDATES

- 4.1. The UKHSA media statement on the Kent cases, which will be updated as the situation develops, is available at: [gov.uk – Cases of invasive meningococcal disease confirmed in Kent](https://www.gov.uk/cases-of-invasive-meningococcal-disease-confirmed-in-kent)
- 4.2. Further background on meningitis symptoms and prevention is available on the UKHSA blog: [UKHSA Blog – What is meningitis? Symptoms, risks and how to protect yourself](#)
- 4.3. Please use the above sources for further information. We will send a further update only if there are any local implications.

5. LOCAL ACTION

- 5.1. There are no immediate response actions for City and Hackney.
- 5.2. Notwithstanding, the outbreak provides an opportunity to raise awareness of who is at risk of meningitis, signs and symptoms of infection, and the routine vaccinations available that prevent some, but not all, strains of meningococcal disease. Further information will be shared with partners to support this communication this week.

6. OVERVIEW OF MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE

- 6.1. Meningitis is a serious condition where the protective layers (meninges) around the brain and spinal cord become inflamed.
- 6.2. It has many causes, such as different germs, including bacteria, viruses, and fungi. In the UK, most cases are due to bacteria or viruses. Some of the bacteria that cause meningitis can also lead to septicaemia (blood poisoning), and both conditions can result in sepsis, which is life-threatening.
- 6.3. [More information about meningitis, symptoms, risk and how to protect yourself is available here.](#)

7. PREVENTION THROUGH VACCINATION

- 7.1. Several vaccinations can help protect against certain, but not all, causes of meningitis and septicaemia:
 - MenB vaccine: For babies given at 8 weeks, 12 weeks, and 1 year
 - 6-in-1 vaccine: For babies given at 8, 12 and 16 weeks
 - Pneumococcal vaccine: Two doses for babies given at 16 weeks and 1 year; single dose for adults aged 65+
 - Hib/MenC vaccine: For babies given at 1 year (if born on or before 30 June 2024)
 - MMRV vaccine: For babies given at 1 year, with a second dose at 18 months
 - MenACWY vaccine: For teenagers aged 13 to 14

- 7.2. Parents are encouraged to contact their GP for catch-up vaccinations if their child is not up to date with their routine vaccinations.
- 7.3. Teenagers and young people can also access catch up clinics in City and Hackney by contacting vaccination UK on 0207 101 2026 or booking an appointment [online](#).