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NHS England North (Lancashire and
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To: Head Teachers

Dear Colleague,

NHS England is aware that materials questioning the safety and effectiveness of the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine have been circulated to some secondary schools. The clear scientific and medical consensus internationally, based on extensive reviews of the evidence around HPV vaccine have concluded that the vaccine has an excellent safety record.

The HPV vaccine for girls aged 12 to 13 years helps protect against cervical cancer. Almost all UK women under 25 and millions of girls worldwide have received the vaccine. There is already evidence from Australia, Denmark, Scotland and England that the vaccine is making a difference. There has been a large drop in the rates of infection with the two main cancer-causing HPV types and the vaccine is already demonstrating longer term protection. We expect it to eventually prevent hundreds of cancer deaths every year in the UK.

The materials also raise concerns about the consent process for the immunisation. Consent is obtained from girls and their parents by providing them with the HPV vaccination leaflet, 'Your HPV vaccination guide' (linked below). This provides readable and evidence-based information on the reasons why vaccination is important and on the known side effects. It also contains links to further information including the Patient Information Leaflet (PIL) and Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC) provided by the manufacturer. The school immunisation teams are also happy to discuss any further questions the girls or their parents have.

Further information on HPV vaccine is available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/628711/HPV_leaflet.pdf

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hpv-vaccination-and-cervical-cancer-addressing-the-myths>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-hpv-vaccine-beating-cervical-cancer-questions-and-answers>

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all your support in the schools based vaccination programme and please do not hesitate to contact england.lancashiresit@nhs.uk for Lancashire and South Cumbria schools or england.cane.screeningimms@nhs.net for North Cumbria and The North East schools should you have any further concerns or require any further support.

Yours sincerely,



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