MUM’S PLEA IN VACCINE SCARE

By JO BAILEY

A SWANSEA mum is calling for parents to be better informed about risks involved in the MMR vaccine after her son’s devastating problems were linked to the three-in-one jab.

Benjamin McNeill, from Sketty, was given the Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccine when he was 15 months old.

Six months later he developed autism, a serious bowel condition known as alternative colitis, and large blemishes on his scalp.

Now aged four he is unable to communicate properly, has severe behavioural and learning defi- cits due to only minimal self-help skills. He is uncoordinated and suffers from diarrhoea because of his bowel condition.

His mum, Joanna, never thought that the vaccine may have caused the problems, she simply thought her little boy had been unlucky and just got sick.

Now, however, a team of researchers at the Royal Free Hospital, in London, have linked his combination of symptoms to the MMR vaccine. It now seems possible that the jab may have caused Ben’s problems.

His mother, who has now come to terms with it, said: “I never realised that anything could go wrong.”

So happy to be home

THree Swansea youngsters rescued by coastguards after being cut off by incoming tides at Llanelli today say a big thank you to their rescuers.

The trio had walked out on to a sandbank at North Dock when they were caught out by the tide.

They were saved in a joint operation mounted by coastguards and the Dyfed-Powys Police helicopter which made two journeys to ferry them, their grandfather and a family friend to safety.

Grandad Nigel Williams of Raby Street, Llanelli, and grandchildren Robert, aged 10, Janie, aged nine, and six-year-old Danny Ford from Oxnam Court, Pembrey, said they were very grateful to the rescuers.

A passerby, William Jones of Pembrey, said: “We didn’t think we were in any danger. It all happened so quickly. But we are very grateful to everyone.”

TRADERS’ threat in rates row

TRADERS in a Swansea city centre street are threatening to withdraw their rates claiming the council has slapped a 25 per cent increase on their businesses.

Card Street shops are particularly angry about the rise because they say their trade has dropped and not recovered since council developed Castle Gardens into Castle Square last year.

The increase has been backed up 12 months and means some rates have shot up from around £350 a month to £500.

"Since the £1.5 million revamp of Castle Square we have really suffered and this area of town is now dead,” said Rhys Wayne of Rhys Wayne Financial.

"With all the work and disruptions to the roads, our trade dropped dramati- cally and if it were not for our telephone orders we might have been forced to close like some of other businesses.”

Mr Wayne said he would be resisting removal of rates while work was carried out at Castle Gardens.

"But for what? All they have done is create an expensive skateboarding park for youngsters which diverts ordinary shoppers away from the area.

"Luckily for us we do not rely on passing trade, but come to us. No-one could be commissioned for comment at Swansea Council.

Rush-hour crash chaos

A COLLISION between a bus and a car on Swansea’s busy Fabian Way led to rush hour traffic chaos last night.

No one was injured in the accident which happened just before the Vale of Neath Road at 6pm.

But half-mile tailbacks brought traffic to a halt as hundreds of drivers tried to make their way home from work.

A spokesman for West Wales Ambulance said: "We received one call for injuries but traffic was brought to a standstill for around half an hour as debris was cleared from the road.

Ford

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