



National Screening Advisory Committee

**Chairperson's note of the virtual meeting of the
National Screening Advisory Committee (NSAC)
21 October 2021**

The National Screening Advisory Committee held its final meeting of 2021 on Thursday 21 October.

NSAC Ethics Framework

HIQA presented to the Committee on their draft report entitled '[Review of international ethics frameworks used in policy-making in the context of screening](#)', which had been requested by the Committee.

The Committee commended HIQA on an excellent report which will be valuable in informing the next stage of the work to develop an Ethics Framework for NSAC.

The Committee looks forward to the publication of this report by HIQA in the near future.

The Committee agreed to move onto the next stage in the process which will be progressed by Dr Sheelagh McGuinness working with the Department of Health and other stakeholders

Expansion of the Newborn Bloodspot Screening Programme

Our work on considering the expansion of the Newborn Bloodspot Screening Programme has also progressed significantly since our last meeting in May 2021:

- HIQA published their evidence review document '[Review of processes in use to inform the expansion of newborn bloodspot screening programmes](#)' in July 2021.
- Following on from our recommendation for the addition of ADA SCID (Adenosine Deaminase Deficiency – Severe Combined Immunodeficiency) to the National Newborn Bloodspot Screening Programme, HIQA have now begun preparatory work on an evidence review in respect of the addition of other SCID types. This follows a reaffirmation of the recommendation from the National Newborn Bloodspot Screening Programme Governance Group.

The Committee also considered correspondence recently received from the HSE National Newborn Bloodspot Screening Programme Governance Group regarding conditions which may be considered by the Committee for addition to the screening programme in Ireland. The list of conditions is based on expert clinical opinions of the Group members and while it is acknowledged that the list of conditions is neither an exhaustive nor a prioritised list, the Committee is grateful to the HSE for their input on progressing the expansion of the programme in Ireland.

Following discussion, it was agreed by the Committee that the next step is the development of a methodology for prioritisation of and consideration of these conditions for more extensive evidence review and assessment.



National Screening Advisory Committee

NSAC Annual Call 2021

Members were updated on the NSAC Annual Call 2021 which launched on Monday 1st November and remains open until Thursday 23rd December 2021.

We are seeking proposals from the public on new screening programmes that may be adopted in Ireland, as well as suggestions for changes to five existing programmes, delivered by the HSE and the National Screening Service: [BreastCheck](#), [CervicalCheck](#), [BowelScreen](#), [Diabetic RetinaScreen](#) and the [National Newborn Bloodspot Screening Programme](#).

Anyone who has a proposal for a new screening programme or changes to one of our existing programmes is encouraged to take this opportunity to make a submission and more information can be found at gov.ie/screeningcall.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 17 February 2022 from 11am to 2pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Niall O'Higgins'.

Professor Niall O'Higgins
Chair, National Screening Advisory Committee