



National Screening Advisory Committee

Chairperson's Note
Virtual meeting of the National Screening Advisory Committee (NSAC)
17 February 2022

The National Screening Advisory Committee held its first meeting of 2022 on Thursday, 17 February 2022.

NSAC Annual Call 2021

We were pleased with the very large number of responses to the first Annual Call for new population-based screening programmes or changes to existing programmes which was launched on Monday 1 November and ran until Thursday 23 December 2021. The Committee received 53 applications from a variety of sources which included members of the public, patient advocates, the HSE and health professionals.

The Committee decided that, due to the volume of proposals received, we would consider the proposals for changes to existing programmes (BowelScreen, BreastCheck, CervicalCheck and the National Newborn Bloodspot Screening (NBS) Programme) at the meeting on 17 February. The Committee will consider the remaining proposals in relation to new screening programmes at the 26 May 2022 meeting.

We have made a number of decisions arising from our deliberations at the February meeting:

- The Committee have decided to make a recommendation to the Minister for Health in relation an element of the BowelScreen programme.
- The Committee have decided to ask HIQA to look at the evidence for the expansion of the age eligibility in the BreastCheck and BowelScreen programmes.
- The Committee will be engaging further with applicants and others concerning proposals for changes to existing programmes.

Further information about the Annual Call will be posted on our [website](#). The Committee will communicate directly with anyone who has made a submission once all proposals have been considered. The full work programme will be published later in 2022 once the Committee has considered all of the proposals.

The Committee noted the significant work programme ahead and will give consideration, with the Department of Health, to the resources which will be required to support the Committee.

HIQA HTA on the addition of other SCID types to the National Newborn Bloodspot Screening (NBS) Programme

The Committee received an update from the specialist team in HIQA around the ongoing work on the HTA on the addition of other SCID types to the NBS programme and reviewed the '[Protocol for the Health Technology Assessment of the Addition of severe combined immunodeficiency \(SCID\) to the National Newborn Bloodspot Screening Programme](#)', which was published by HIQA in March 2022.

A draft report on Phase one of HTA is expected to be completed in the coming months and will be presented to the Committee for further consideration at our next meeting on 26 May.

The Committee will then make a decision regarding progression to Phase two of the HTA process.

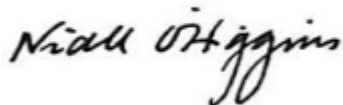
New Members

The Committee were delighted to welcome Dr Aoife Doyle to the Committee. Dr Doyle was appointed as the member with expertise in the area of Pathology by the Minister for Health in February 2022. Dr Doyle is a Consultant Histopathologist with a specialist interest in cervical cytology and we look forward to her valuable contribution to the work of the Committee.

Following an expression of interest campaign which launched in late 2021 for the second Public Voice representative, Ms Lora Ruth Wogu, was appointed by the Minister for Health in March 2022. The Committee looks forward to welcoming Ms Wogu to the May meeting.

Date of next meeting:

The next meeting of the Committee is on Thursday 26 May 2022.



Professor Niall O'Higgins
Chair, National Screening Advisory Committee