

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

The National Screening Advisory Committee held its second meeting of 2022 on Thursday, 26 May 2022. The Committee discussed proposals for new programmes that were received on our first Annual Call. We also made an important decision on progressing a Health Technology Assessment (HTA) for the next condition being assessed for addition to the national Newborn Bloodspot Screening (NBS) programme. We were delighted to welcome our newest member, representing the Public Voice, following a recent expression of interest process.

NSAC Annual Call 2021

As set out in my note following our February 2022 meeting, the Committee was pleased with the significant response to our first Annual Call in 2021 for new population-based screening programmes or changes to existing programmes.

In February, we considered proposals relating to existing programmes and made decisions on some proposals, including a recommendation to the Minister for Health in relation to the BowelScreen programme which the Minister has subsequently approved.

At our May meeting, we considered the proposals for new screening programmes. The submissions received fell into three broad categories – new cancer screening programmes, non-cancer screening (adults and children), and antenatal screening.

The Committee had an extensive and productive discussion on these categories, and would like to extend its thanks again to everyone who made a submission.

Concerning new cancer screening programmes, as the Committee is expecting updated Council recommendations on cancer screening to be published by the European Commission in the autumn, it decided to give further consideration to these proposals when the updated EU recommendations are available.

For the submissions received on prenatal and non-cancer screening, the Committee will continue its deliberations, and has not yet made any conclusive decisions or recommendations.

A small number of submissions about new technologies will be considered at our September meeting.

The Committee plans to publish its full work programme, including details on our consideration of the 53 submissions received in our first Annual Call, after our September meeting.

The Committee is planning to launch its 2022 Annual Call later this year, and further information about the Annual Call will be posted on our [website](#).

HIQA HTA on the addition of Severe Combined immunodeficiency (SCID) to the National Newborn Bloodspot Screening (NBS) Programme

The Committee received the interim report from HIQA on Phase 1 of the Health Technology Assessment (HTA) underway on the addition of severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID) to the NBS programme.

The Phase 1 of the HTA covered the domains of description of the technology used internationally to screen for SCID, the epidemiology of the condition in Ireland, and the clinical effectiveness of screening (including reviews of test accuracy and the clinical benefit of early versus late diagnosis or treatment).

The Committee commended HIQA on the report and decided to progress to Phase 2 of the HTA, which will include assessment of the evidence relating to economic, organisational, social and ethical issues relevant to the broader implications of adding TREC-based screening for SCID to the NBS programme. The Committee expects to receive the final HTA report from HIQA, following completion of Phase 2 of the HTA, before the end of the year. The Committee also continues its deliberations on further expansion of the NBS programme.

Update on previous NSAC Recommendations

The Committee was pleased to receive updates from the HSE on the implementation of two previous recommendations made by the Committee.

Update on Diabetic RetinaScreen recommendation:

The Committee received an update from the Diabetic RetinaScreen (DRS) programme on the implementation of the modification to the programme which prolongs the interval between screens from one to two years for people with diabetes who are at low risk of retinopathy. The Committee was pleased to see the progress made by the programme in the successful implementation of the recommendation that was made in 2020.

Update on NBS recommendation on ADA-SCID:

The Committee received an update from the National Newborn Bloodspot Screening Programme Governance Group on the addition of Adenosine Deaminase Deficiency Severe Combined Immunodeficiency (ADA-SCID) to the NBS programme, which commenced on 23 May 2022.

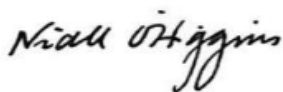
The Committee extended its congratulations to all involved in this considerable achievement.

Welcome to new NSAC member

The Committee was delighted to welcome Lora Ruth Wogu to her first meeting. Ms Wogu was appointed as the second Public Voce member by the Minister for Health in March 2022. Ms Wogu has advocated and represented patients on various levels from community support to representation at national and international level to ensure that patient needs are recognised. The Committee looks forward to her valuable contribution to future meetings in representing the Public Voice.

Date of next meeting:

The next meeting of the Committee is on Thursday, 22 September 2022.



Professor Niall O'Higgins
Chair, National Screening Advisory Committee