



Dr Jennifer Carroll MacNeill TD
Minister for Health
Department of Health
23 February 2026

CC Prof Mary Horgan, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health
Dr Ellen Crushell, Deputy CMO, CMO Office
Rachel Murray, Principal Officer, CMO Office
Pauline Brady, CMO Office
Dr Máirín Ryan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of HTA, HIQA
Dr Mary O'Meara, Chair of National Tuberculosis Advisory Committee

Re: Selective BCG Vaccination Programme — operational issues for NIAC and NTBAC consideration

Dear Minister Carroll MacNeill,

In the context of the planned implementation of a selective Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccination programme in Ireland, the National Tuberculosis Advisory Committee (NTBAC) wrote to the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) seeking advice on operational issues that related to recommendations for selective BCG vaccination issued by NIAC in 2022. NIAC considered each of the items at a full Committee meeting in November 2025.

The first item relates to the use of high burden vs high incidence as an indicator of tuberculosis (TB) exposure risk. NIAC agreed with the opinion of NTBAC that reported TB incidence rate in a country constitutes a better approach to assessing risk of exposure to TB than the TB burden.

The second item relates to the need for tuberculosis infection (TBI) screening prior to administration of BCG vaccine. To address this, a review of international practice and adverse events associated with BCG administration in those with TBI was prepared by the NIAC Secretariat and presented to NIAC at the November 2025 meeting to inform decision making. Consideration was particularly given to removing barriers to timely BCG vaccination of young infants where the potential benefit from vaccination is greatest. NIAC agreed that screening for TBI prior to administration of BCG should only be indicated in the following groups:

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- All children and adults aged six years or older.
- Infants and children aged less than six years who were born in a country with an annual TB incidence of 40 per 100,000 or greater or with a history of residence or prolonged stay (more than three months) in a country with an annual TB incidence of 40 per 100,000 or greater.
- Those born in Ireland or outside of Ireland who have had close contact with a person with known TB or who is under investigation for TB.

Chapter 22 (Tuberculosis) of the Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland has been updated to reflect the changes in guidance outlined in this letter. The evidence and Committee considerations that informed these decisions are outlined in the attached appendix.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Edina Moylett
NIAC Chair

Dr Sarah Geoghegan
NIAC Clinical Lead

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