



From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020

# Changes to the neonatal BCG programme in London

## What is changing?

**We are changing the way we deliver BCG vaccine to babies in London from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020:**

- Neonatal BCG vaccine will no longer be available to all babies; instead it will be offered to those babies who are most at risk of tuberculosis (TB);
- Neonatal BCG vaccine will no longer be delivered in maternity units. Babies who are eligible for BCG will be referred to community vaccination clinics to be vaccinated<sup>1</sup>.

## Why is this changing?

The national BCG immunisation programme is delivered as a risk-based programme. A key part of this risk-based approach is the selective neonatal programme targeted at those infants most at risk of exposure to TB. Those most at risk are defined in the Green Book<sup>2</sup> as:

- all infants (aged 0 to 12 months) with a parent or grandparent who was born in a country where the annual incidence of TB is 40/100,000 or greater
- all infants (aged 0 to 12 months) living in areas of the UK where the annual incidence of TB is 40/100,000 or greater.

In London, due to a historically higher annual incidence of TB, the BCG immunisation programme has been delivered universally to all newborn babies in many areas. However, the annual incidence of TB in London has been in decline, falling from a rate of over 40 per 100,000 in 2012 to a current overall rate of 19 per 100,000. Due to this, the number of infants most at risk of exposure to TB in London has also decreased significantly.

Therefore, from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020, the neonatal BCG immunisation programme will no longer be available universally in London and will instead be targeted to those infants most at risk of exposure to TB. This will bring the London region in line with the rest of England.

[1] We are undertaking a health needs assessment to ensure that community provision of BCG vaccination will meet the needs of the babies who are eligible.

[2] [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/731848/Greenbook\\_chapter\\_32\\_Tuberculosis\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/731848/Greenbook_chapter_32_Tuberculosis_.pdf)



The aim of the neonatal BCG immunisation programme is to prevent infection from TB and reduce the risk of progression to severe disease. London remains committed to further reducing TB incidence through its programme of work under the London TB Control Board.

## What does this mean for our service?

Maternity services will be required to identify which babies born on or after 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 are eligible for BCG immunisation. This should occur post-natally, preferably alongside the Newborn Infant Physical Examination (NIPE). If a baby is identified as eligible for BCG then the maternity service will refer the baby to their local community BCG clinic for immunisation after birth.

The questions required to determine eligibility for BCG are laid out in Appendix 1 of this document. Eligibility for BCG should be recorded in the local maternity information system.

Maternity services will be required to report the BCG eligibility of all babies born in their service to NHS England on a monthly basis.

Maternity services, health visitors and GPs will need to adjust their messaging to expectant and new parents around BCG neonatal immunisation.

Health visitors and GPs will be required to identify which babies born on or after 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 in their practice are eligible for BCG immunisation and ensure they have been referred to their local community clinic for immunisation.

## What resources are available?

'TB, BCG and your baby' is available to download in English, Arabic, Bengali, Farsi, Hindi, Nepali, Pashto, Punjabi, Somali and Urdu here [www.gov.uk/government/publications/tb-bcg-and-your-baby-leaflet](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tb-bcg-and-your-baby-leaflet)

A supplementary information flyer for new parents in London from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 is available here [please provide link](#)

This sets out why BCG will now be provided on a targeted basis in London and which babies are eligible for BCG vaccination.

A poster 'TB, BCG and your baby' is also available in English here: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/tb-bcg-and-your-baby-leaflet](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tb-bcg-and-your-baby-leaflet)

Hard copies for all these resources can be ordered here: [www.healthpublications.gov.uk/Home.html](https://www.healthpublications.gov.uk/Home.html) and click on TB/BCG search tab.



Appendix 1

# Eligibility questions for neonatal BCG vaccination in London

**1 Does your baby, the baby’s mother, father or grandparents, or anyone who lives with you, come from a country with a high rate of TB?**

A list of countries with a high rate of TB is included at Appendix 2 of this briefing.

**2 Will you and your baby be going to live or to stay with friends and family in one of these countries?**

A visit of 3 months or more to any of the countries listed in Appendix 2 is required for eligibility for neonatal BCG<sup>2</sup>.

**3 Does anyone who lives with you, or who spends a lot of time with your baby, have TB now or had TB in the past?**

Spending time with someone who:

- has TB now, or
  - who has had TB within the past 5 years
- is required for eligibility for neonatal BCG<sup>3</sup>

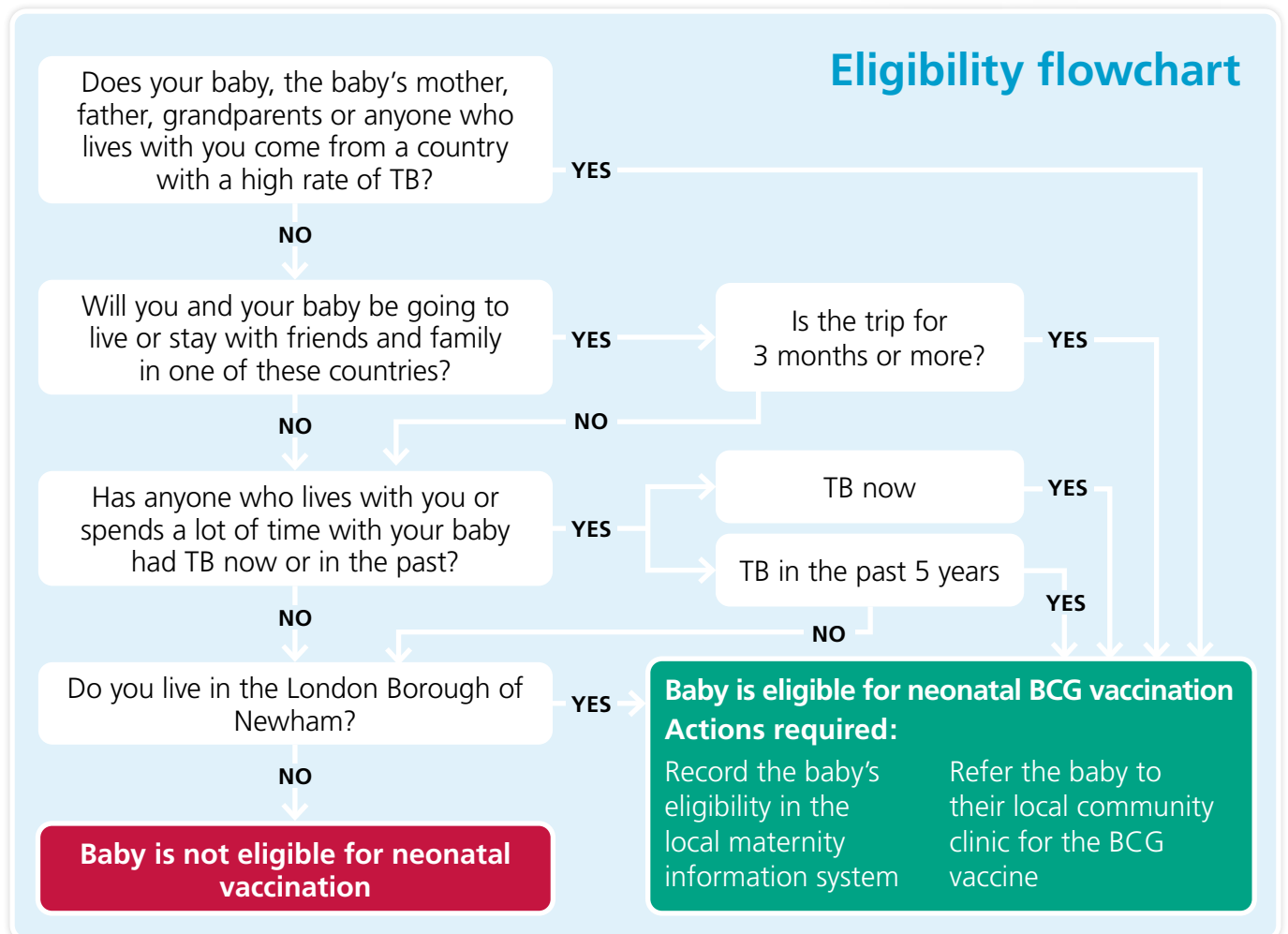
**4 Do you live in the London Borough of Newham?**

Newham has an annual incidence of TB of over 40 per 100,000 according to the latest data. All babies born from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 who live in Newham should be offered neonatal BCG.

This requirement is likely to change in the near future as the incidence of TB continues to decrease across London.

**These questions have been summarised into the flowchart below for use in maternity and other settings.**

[3] [www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng33/ifp/chapter/BCG-vaccination](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng33/ifp/chapter/BCG-vaccination)





## Appendix 2

# Countries with annual incidence of TB of more than 40 per 100,000

Country/Territory	Rate*	Country/Territory	Rate*	Country/Territory	Rate*
Afghanistan	189	India	199	Senegal	118
Algeria	69	Indonesia	316	Sierra Leone	298
Angola	355	Iraq	42	Singapore	47
Azerbaijan	63	Kazakhstan	68	Solomon Islands	74
Bangladesh	221	Kenya	292	Somalia	262
Benin	56	Kiribati	349	South Africa	520
Bhutan	149	Kyrgyzstan	116	South Sudan	146
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	108	Lao People's Democratic Republic	162	Sri Lanka	64
Botswana	275	Lesotho	611	Sudan	71
Brazil	45	Liberia	308	Tajikistan	84
Brunei Darussalam	68	Libya	40	Thailand	153
Burkina Faso	48	Lithuania	44	Timor-Leste	498
Burundi	111	Madagascar	233	Turkmenistan	46
Cabo Verde	46	Malawi	181	Tuvalu	270
Cambodia	302	Malaysia	92	Uganda	200
Cameroon	186	Mali	53	Ukraine	80
Central African Republic	540	Marshall Islands	434	United Republic of Tanzania	253
Chad	142	Mauritania	93	Uzbekistan	70
China	61	Micronesia (Federated States of)	108	Vanuatu	46
China, Hong Kong SAR	67	Mongolia	428	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	48
China, Macao SAR	60	Morocco	99	Viet Nam	182
Congo	375	Mozambique	551	Yemen	48
Côte d'Ivoire	142	Myanmar	338	Zambia	346
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	513	Namibia	524	Zimbabwe	210
Democratic Republic of the Congo	321	Nauru	54		
Djibouti	260	Nepal	151		
Dominican Republic	45	Nicaragua	41		
Ecuador	44	Niger	87		
El Salvador	70	Nigeria	219		
Equatorial Guinea	201	Niue	71		
Eritrea	89	Northern Mariana Islands	95		
Eswatini	329	Pakistan	265		
Ethiopia	151	Palau	109		
Fiji	54	Panama	52		
Gabon	525	Papua New Guinea	432		
Gambia	174	Paraguay	43		
Georgia	80	Peru	123		
Ghana	148	Philippines	554		
Greenland	100	Republic of Korea	66		
Guam	49	Republic of Moldova	86		
Guinea	176	Romania	68		
Guinea-Bissau	361	Russian Federation	54		
Guyana	83	Rwanda	59		
Haiti	176	Sao Tome and Principe	124		

\*Estimated rate per 100,000 population  
 Source: World Health Organisation (WHO) TB burden estimates.  
 Data accessed: October 2019.  
 Prepared by: TB Surveillance Team, TB Unit, National Infection Service, Public Health England.  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/tuberculosis-tb-by-country-rates-per-100000-people](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tuberculosis-tb-by-country-rates-per-100000-people)

