

JCVI Secretariat  
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Mrs Heidi Connor  
Assistant coroner  
For the area of Nottinghamshire  
Nottinghamshire Coroner's service  
The Council House  
Old Market Square  
Nottingham  
NG1 2DT

02 December 2017

Dear Mrs Connor,

**Re: Tomas Kelly**

I am writing in my capacity as Chair of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), which advises the Department of Health (DH) on immunisation, in response to your Regulation 28 Report, To Prevent Future Deaths. This was clearly a very distressing case and I am in full agreement with you that all efforts should be made to minimise such events.

I understand from your report that the cause of death for Tomas Kelly was confluent bronchopneumonia. The coroner's concerns laid out in that report came under two headings 1 "talking to parents" and 2 "vaccination against chickenpox" with the below points under 2.

- a. *"The evidence confirmed that it is not the chicken pox per se which creates a risk. Rather it is the immunosuppressant effect of this – creating a risk of more serious infections as a result.*
- b. *We heard from a community paediatrician that, as matters stand, there is no plan to vaccinate all children against chicken pox. This is limited to certain high risk groups only.*
- c. *It is clear that children with Downs Syndrome are at increased risk – both of contracting infection and of the infections being more serious.*
- d. *Careful consideration should be given to including children with Downs Syndrome to the category of children who will be routinely offered this vaccination."*

Varicella immunisation is not offered to all children in the UK as part of the routine immunisation programme, but is offered to individuals in specific groups because of their

increased risk of serious disease should they contract varicella. Down's syndrome is not currently included in the list of high risk groups, as an increased (complicated) varicella risk has not previously been identified. Your communication is timely as JCVI is currently undertaking a review of its advice on varicella vaccination and will give consideration to your suggestion regarding Down's syndrome during one of the 3 meetings in 2018.

Yours sincerely



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Cc

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