



Ms Joy Warren

By email to: request-913651-2fdd855a@whatdotheyknow.com

1 February 2023

Annex A: DHSC response to initial request

Annex B: Request for internal review

Dear Ms Warren,

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 (FOIA): INTERNAL REVIEW

CASE REFERENCE: IR-1434907 (FOI-1424822)

You originally wrote to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) on 3 October 2022 requesting information relating to 'Water Fluoridation: Risk Analysis, Cost Analysis, Health Analysis'. We responded to you on 24 November and a copy of our response, including the full text of your request, can be found in Annex A.

You subsequently emailed DHSC on 21 January requesting an internal review into the handling of your original request. A copy of your email can be found in Annex B.

The purpose of an internal review is to assess how your Freedom of Information (FOI) request was handled in the first instance and to determine whether the original decision given to you was correct. This is an independent review as I was not involved in the original decision.

You originally asked:

Please let me see these assessments and cost analysis if completed. If not completed, please let me know the expected date of publication.

We have reviewed your request and we can add onto our answer that: '*This will include the information referred to by Earl Howe on 7th March 2022*', otherwise we are confident your request has been fully addressed.

You replied that the assessments had not been completed. You did not tell me the expected date of completion or if they had been commenced or, indeed, if there was any intention to commence them. The assessments ought to have been started at the time I made my request on 24th November 2022 because that was a promise made by Earl Howe in the House of Lords on 7th March 2022, so why am I not allowed to be told that they are being written?

As these questions did not form part of your original request, and the internal review is to review the handling of your FOI, we shall not be answering these questions. Any new requests for information should be submitted as new FOI requests.

Conclusion

After careful consideration, I have concluded that the response you received to your FOI request was compliant with the requirements of the FOIA.

The review is now complete.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by DHSC.

Guidance on contacting the ICO can be found at <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us> and information about making a complaint can be found at <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint>.

Yours sincerely,

Mr D Stanton
FOI Internal Reviews
freedomofinformation@dhsc.gov.uk

Annex A: DHSC response to initial request

Ms Joy Warren

By email: request-913651-2fdd855a@whatdotheyknow.com

24 November 2022

Dear Ms Warren,

Freedom of Information Request Reference FOI-1424822

Thank you for your request dated 3 October to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), a copy of which can be found in the accompanying annex.

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

DHSC does not hold information relevant to your request.

The Department has not completed an Environment Risk Assessment, Health Risk Assessment or Cost Analysis in relation to the proposed expansion of water fluoridation for the North-East of England. A public consultation on the proposals will take place in accordance with the Water Fluoridation (Consultation) (England) Regulations 2022 in 2023, although the exact date has not yet been set. When launched, the consultation will provide information to ensure respondents sufficiently understand the context and impacts of the water fluoridation proposals.

If you are not satisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to appeal by asking for an internal review. This should be sent to freedomofinformation@dhsc.gov.uk or to the address at the top of this letter and be submitted within two months of the date of this letter.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communication.

If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may complain directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have already appealed our original response and received our internal review decision. You should raise your concerns with the ICO within three months of your last meaningful contact with us.

Guidance on contacting the ICO can be found at <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us> and information about making a complaint can be found at <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint>.

Yours sincerely,

Freedom of Information Team freedomofinformation@dhsc.gov.uk

Annex

From: Joy Warren <request-913651-2fdd855a@whatdotheyknow.com>

Sent: 03 November 2022 16:30

To: FreedomofInformation <freedomofinformation@dhsc.gov.uk>

Subject: Freedom of Information request - Water Fluoridation: Risk Analysis, Cost Analysis, Health Analysis

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Dear Department of Health and Social Care,

On 7th March 2022, Earl Howe (Minister for Health) on winding up a debate on the Water Fluoridation clauses in the Health and Care Bill 2021-2, stated:

“Finally, any future public consultation on expansion would also include information on the impact of any proposals on health, the environment and cost-benefit analysis.”

<https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fhansard.parliament.uk%2FLords%2F2022-03-07%2Fdebates%2F94E636CE-A4D1-4380-940F-277A&data=05%7C01%7Cdhtml%40dhsc.gov.uk%7Ca7fb7799c95c4edfbacb08dabdbaac8c%7C61278c3091a84c318c1fef4de8973a1c%7C1%7C0%7C638030906693455323%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IjE1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=S9a1tq%2BV4NYizwAFD5imSolGJAKwjKtjEHmlAwoZ%2BCs%3D&reserved=0>

62CCB199/HealthAndCareBill#contribution-A20F1C68-BE6F-4D43-AC42-18C668F54B81

Bitly:

<https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fbitly.ws%2Fp6Cwin&data=05%7C01%7Cdhtml%40dhsc.gov.uk%7Ca7fb7799c95c4edfbacb08dabdbaac8c%7C61278c3091a84c318c1fef4de8973a1c%7C1%7C0%7C638030906693455323%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IjE1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=9LDA%2Fsmsl3x79YgWt30DMeEjTM5CG3W6MBnYQW222Y%3D&reserved=0>

A Public Consultation on Water Fluoridation has been announced for the North-East of England, presumably to begin in the New Year (2023). There are two months remaining of 2022 so an Environment Risk Assessment, a Health Risk Assessment and a Cost Analysis should be well under way, if not complete.

Please let me see these assessments and cost analysis if completed. If not completed, please let me know the expected date of publication.

Yours faithfully,

Joy Warren

Annex B: Request for internal review

From: Joy Warren request-913651-2fdd855a@whatdotheyknow.com

Sent: 21 January 2023 13:41

To: FreedomofInformation freedomofinformation@dhsc.gov.uk

Subject: Internal review of Freedom of Information request - Water Fluoridation: Risk Analysis, Cost Analysis, Health Analysis

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Dear Department of Health and Social Care

Please pass this on to the person who conducts Freedom of Information reviews.

I am writing to request an internal review of the Department of Health and Social Care's handling of my FOI request 'Water Fluoridation: Risk Analysis, Cost Analysis, Health Analysis'. Your Ref: 1424822 dated 24th November 2022.

My request for information asked for two things:

1. Sight of the completed Environment Risk Assessment and the Health Risk Assessment in relation to Water Fluoridation, and
2. The date of expected completion if not completed.

This is the exact wording and response:

“Please let me see these assessments and cost analysis if completed. If not completed, please let me know the expected date of publication. “

“The Department has not completed an Environment Risk Assessment, Health Risk Assessment or Cost Analysis in relation to the proposed expansion of water fluoridation for the North-East of England. A public consultation on the proposals will take place in

accordance with the Water Fluoridation (Consultation) (England) Regulations 2022 in 2023, although the exact date has not yet been set. When launched, the consultation will provide information to ensure respondents sufficiently understand the context and impacts of the water fluoridation proposals.”

You replied that the assessments had not been completed. You did not tell me the expected date of completion or if they had been commenced or, indeed, if there was any intention to commence them.

The assessments ought to have been started at the time I made my request on 24th November 2022 because that was a promise made by Earl Howe in the House of Lords on 7th March 2022, so why am I not allowed to be told that they are being written?

Also, in relation to the Health Risk Assessment, the numerous studies (76 in no. which are listed and discussed on

<https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.fluoridealert.org%2F&data=05%7C01%7Cdhmail%40dhsc.gov.uk%7C696879962cfc4d11eb7e08dafd3a0593%7C61278c3091a84c318c1fef4de8973a1c%7C1%7C0%7C638100722885582772%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTil6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=zFxNXCEgVg3NNrhzf3QDfVdopwZq6QKr3gG85xYvQtw%3D&reserved=0>) demonstrating that human intelligence is reduced when over-exposed to fluoride when in the womb and when fed with fluoridated baby formula must have been noticed by John Newton of OHID at the time I made my Fol request on 24th November 2022. Their availability in the public domain must have been noticed by him since he has promised continual review of the research literature in relation to health and fluoride. And I am sure that he has learned about the court case in the USA where Water Fluoridation is being challenged because of its potential to cause developmental neurotoxicity.

With alarm bells ringing, this should have necessitated a new health assessment because the evidence of harm of damage to the developing brain is overwhelming.

Also, the highly relevant Swedish study on hip fracture (Helte et al, April 2021) should have been included in the WF Health Monitoring Report 2022. Had it been referenced in that report, we would not be where we are today: the study from Sweden is damning of fluoride – 50% more hip fracture in Swedish areas with fluoride in drinking water when compared to non-fluoride areas. So, we need a health assessment published, and well

before the imminent Public Consultation (PC) on Water Fluoridation in the North-East of England. The new hip fracture assessment must account for hard water/soft water, ethnicity and deprivation so that more consistent results can be achieved. Also note that the greater consumption of [Indian] tea in England is another factor which ought to be factored in.

We're also waiting - perhaps in vain - for research into the greater occurrence of hypothyroidism in fluoridated areas.

So, I am requesting an internal review because there has to be an Environment Risk Assessment and Health Risk Assessment in the pipeline if not completed. If neither have been started or if both have found no harm, the Public Consultation will be seen to be a sham. The Public Consultation announcement should not be a vehicle for the Risk Assessments. They should be published separately and sooner rather than later and definitely before the PC commences.

As a comment and I hope that you will tell John Newton this: the conclusions of any assessment need to be published now and not during the 3-month PC. In any case, if the risk assessments find harm, there would be no need to continue with the PC. Why put the population in the North-East through the hoops of a PC and waste our money when knowledge of harm is known by John Newton of OHID?

A full history of my FOI request and all correspondence is available on the Internet at this address:

https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.whatdotheyknow.com%2Frequest%2Fwater_fluoridation_risk_analysis&data=05%7C01%7Cdhmail%40dhsc.gov.uk%7C696879962cfc4d11eb7e08dafd3a0593%7C61278c3091a84c318c1fef4de8973a1c%7C1%7C0%7C638100722885582772%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTil6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Avra4p3OCIfNoQ6RNBbNeYufdm27Cn5JLHoi6Ms6p%2F4%3D&reserved=0

Yours faithfully,

Joy Warren