



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Freedom of Information Team
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0EU

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Ms Joy Warren

By email to: request-885329-16a0fb8f@whatdotheyknow.com

26 August 2022

Dear Ms Warren,

Freedom of Information Request FOI-1414844

Thank you for your request dated 8 August 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 holds information relevant to your request.

Both Catfish and Lotus projects were funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research Public Health Research (NIHR PHR) programme.

NIHR-funded research is independent, which means that the ownership of research data rests with the contracting organisation and research team rather than the funder.

NIHR supports public access to the results of its funded research through its [Open Access policy](#). The NIHR Open Access policy requires all peer-reviewed research articles arising from NIHR-funded research studies to be made immediately open access under an open copyright licence. This means that the articles are freely available for anybody to read online, share and reuse, as soon as they are published. The [NIHR position on the sharing of research data](#) also sets out that, for NIHR-funded research studies, data-sharing statements must be included when publishing the findings of the research, describing how to access the underpinning research data.

NIHR PHR studies are required to publish in the NIHR's own open access journal, and every research team submits a draft final report, which is approved by a peer-review panel. The academic peer-review process takes time, and this impacts on the timing of outputs.

The Catfish project was an evaluation of a water fluoridation scheme in Cumbria (Catfish) - Award ID 12/3000/40. It was a researcher-led application in response to 12/3000 PHR Researcher Led Call.

The project started in October 2013 and ended in January 2021. The Chief Investigator is Professor Iain Pretty and the contracting organisation is the Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust.

A full and final report of the study results will be available when it has been approved by a peer-review panel. The final report will be available to view online at the NIHR Journals Library.

Further information about the study is available at [CATFISH Study \(catfish-study.org\)](https://catfish-study.org).

The Lotus project *How effective and cost-effective is water fluoridation for adults? A 10-year retrospective cohort study (Lotus)* – Award ID 128533 was a researcher-led application in response to 18/124 PHR Researcher-Led Call - November 2018.

The project started in February 2020 and is due to end in August 2022. The Chief Investigator is Professor Iain Pretty and the contracting organisation is the University of Manchester.

There are two published academic outputs:

- *How effective and cost-effective is water fluoridation for adults? Protocol for a 10-year retrospective cohort study* [\[View paper\]](#)
Moore, D. et al. *BDJ Open* 7, 2021; and
- *Water fluoride concentrations in England, 2009-2020* [\[View paper\]](#)
Nyakutsikwa et al. *Community Dental Health* 38, 2021.

The full and final report of the study results will be available when it has been approved by a peer-review panel, and it will be available to view online at the NIHR Journals Library.

The data that the researchers have generated on water fluoridation levels are publicly available at <https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/lotus/>.

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

"To: FreedomofInformation

Subject: Freedom of Information request - Results of Project Catfish (Cumbria) and the Lotus Project

Dear Department of Health and Social Care,

As data controllers for these two research studies, by now you will have synthesised the data obtained from the studies. The published results are long overdue. As a citizen of the UK whose tax has been used to undertake these studies, I feel that the results should be published widely so that we, who have paid for the research, should be acquainted with the results.

Please let me have the conclusions, together with the raw data, of both studies: Catfish and Lotus.

Yours faithfully,

Joy Warren."