

BFS welcomes Ministerial intention to proceed with Community Water Fluoridation

The Chair of the British Fluoridation Society (BFS), Dr Barry Cockcroft CBE, has welcomed a statement made by the Minister of State for the Department of Health and Social Care Will Quince, on his intention to proceed with increasing the coverage of community water fluoridation schemes in North East England.

The announcement was made during the Minister's speech to a committee debate on 'Draft Water Fluoridation Consultation

Regulations 2022'.

The Minister said: 'One element in deciding whether we proceed with a water fluoridation proposal is of course a cost-benefit analysis of said proposal, and any new proposal would have to demonstrate that the benefit to health represents good value for the investment of public money being proposed.

'Where the conditions are met, we want more of the country to benefit from water fluoridation. I am pleased to announce that, subject to the outcome of this debate and any future consultations, funding has been secured to begin expansion across the North East into Northumberland, County Durham, Sunderland, South Tyneside and Teesside, including Redcar and Cleveland, Stockton-on-Tees, Darlington and Middlesbrough. I know that the local authorities in those areas are strong supporters of water fluoridation.'

Speaking following the announcement, BFS Chair Dr Barry Cockcroft said: 'We welcome Minister Quince's positive statement, which is an indication that the Government is serious in its intention to

widen the coverage of water fluoridation, starting with a public consultation on its proposals for expansion across the North East of England next year.

'This is a hugely positive development for organisations like the BFS, dentists and oral health practitioners up and down the country, who have been campaigning for the introduction of more schemes to prevent tooth decay and unnecessary suffering in our communities due to poor oral health. The BFS is keen to give its support when public consultation events on the proposals are held locally.

'As the Minister stated, the expansion will enable an additional 1.6 million people to benefit from water fluoridation. It will help to reduce the levels of tooth decay in the area and, over time, reduce the numbers of children who need to be admitted to hospital for tooth extractions because of decay. As children in more deprived areas are at greater risk of tooth decay, expansion will help to level up dental health for the children and families who need it most.'

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Food industry misleading parents on sugar

The British Dental Association has said government must stamp out misleading marketing claims by children's food manufacturers, in response to damning new research from Action on Sugar.

Latest findings show breakfast foods aimed at toddlers contain up to four teaspoons of sugar per serving. Over three quarters of products claim to have 'no added sugars' or 'only naturally occurring sugars' despite many containing sugars from fruit juices, concentrates and purees – all of which are harmful to dental health.

Earlier this year a British Dental Association study of 109 baby pouches aimed at children aged under 12 months found over a quarter contained more sugar by volume than Coca Cola, with parents of infants as young as four months being marketed pouches that contain the equivalent of up to 150% of the sugar levels of the soft drink.

The BDA backs sweeping action on food marketing and labelling, including

the complete removal of misleading nutrition and health claims on baby and toddler food and drink products and ensuring dedicated baby aisles in supermarkets are a 'safe space' for parents.

British Dental Association Chair Eddie Crouch said: 'The food industry is walking parents down the garden path, pushing sugar-laden products as 'healthy options'.

'Claims of 'no added sugar' are utterly meaningless when toddlers are receiving four teaspoons over breakfast.



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'Tooth decay is the number one reason for hospital admission among young children, and Ministers can't remain bystanders. Action here is a prerequisite if we're ever going to turn the tables on wholly preventable diseases.'