

# LDN Chairs support extended fluoridation schemes

The Local Dental Network (LDN) Chairs, who provide clinical leadership throughout England, have stated that they fully support the recently published position statements by the UK Chief Medical Officers<sup>1</sup> around the potential for water fluoridation to address entrenched oral health inequality.

Within the LDNs, clinicians working with patients see at first hand the levels of disease, misery, trauma and obvious health inequality.

Where dentists work across fluoridated and non-fluoridated areas, they can see the clear and positive differences that fluoridation can bring. The pandemic has seen waiting lists for hospital extractions for children rise. The evidence base tells us that water fluoridation can have a significant impact. If all children and young people in the most deprived 20% of areas with fluoride concentrations <0.2 mg/l instead received water with adjusted fluoride, 56% of dental extractions in these areas would have been prevented. As the most deprived areas have the highest incidence of hospital admission, they will see the greatest public health impact.<sup>2</sup>

The LDN Chairs fully support the Government plans laid out by Sajid Javid to extend water fluoridation coverage helping poorer areas first and gradually extending schemes.<sup>3</sup> According to the LDN Chairs, it is unacceptable that in England in 2022 children living in the poorest areas are more likely to report toothache and are more than three times as likely to be admitted to hospital for tooth extraction compared with children in the least deprived areas.<sup>4</sup>

Community water fluoridation has the potential to improve oral health as part of overall health and to reduce the inequality gap safely and effectively.<sup>2</sup> The LDN Chairs welcome the plans laid out by the Secretary of State.

## References

1. Department of Health & Social Care. Independent report: Statement on water fluoridation from the UK Chief Medical Officers. 2021. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-fluoridation-statement-from-the-uk-chief-medical-officers/statement-on-water-fluoridation-from-the-uk-chief-medical-officers> (accessed April 2022).
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3. Department of Health and Social Care, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, UK Health Security Agency, Maria Caulfield MP, The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP. New report confirms fluoridation can reduce tooth decay among children. 2022. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-report-confirms-fluoridation-can-reduce-tooth-decay-among-children> (accessed April 2022).
4. Public Health England. Inequalities in oral health in England. 2021. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/970380/Inequalities\\_in\\_oral\\_health\\_in\\_England.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/970380/Inequalities_in_oral_health_in_England.pdf) (accessed April 2022).

