

BSPD welcomes water fluoridation consultation announcement as ‘monumental’

Today BSPD warmly welcomed news that a public consultation on proposals to expand water fluoridation in the north east of England is commencing. Plans to expand the area's water fluoridation to help tackle tooth decay have been put out to public consultation. The government's announcement details that the consultation will last 12 weeks, after which responses are gathered and then its decision on whether to widen the scheme is published.

The plans to expand water fluoridation in the north east are aimed at tackling tooth decay. Water fluoridation is an effective measure for reducing tooth decay, particularly among young children and vulnerable adults in more deprived areas. Around half of the north east region already has fluoridated water, and proposals would extend the scheme to an additional 1.6 million people.

Community water fluoridation, which is part of BSPD's recently issued Blueprint for dental recovery (see notes to editors) is a public health measure that results in substantial reductions in dental decay and resulting abscesses, toothache, tooth extraction and the need for general anaesthetic and hospital admission. BSPD also published a position statement on community water fluoridation in October 2021 (see notes to editors).

Claire Stevens CBE, BSPD Spokesperson said: *“BSPD supports the fluoridation of public water supplies in communities where the burden of dental decay is severe enough to warrant this public health measure and fluoridation is technically feasible. This announcement is monumental. It will be the first one conducted in an area of the UK for several decades. So, we welcome and will support this consultation - and look forward to seeing the outcomes. Dentistry is in crisis at the moment and now children's oral health is everyone's business - where creative approaches using proven interventions that deliver return on investment are more important than ever.”*

Ends

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Notes to editors:

BSPD's blueprint to improve children's oral health

1. Every child and young person (CYP) should have a 'dental home'
2. Deliver a Dental Check by One (DCby1) before every baby's first birthday
3. **Support vulnerable groups (asylum-seeking children, looked after children and those in poverty) by expanding supervised toothbrushing schemes in early years settings, community water fluoridation and increasing the free school meals offer**
4. Drive an equitable recovery of general anaesthetic (GA) services
5. Enable effective and funded Managed Clinical Networks (MCN)
6. Oversee true integration of oral health, with initiatives such as Mini Mouth Care Matters (MMCM)
7. Ensure targeted, evidence-based intervention for vulnerable groups such as looked after children, CYP with learning disabilities and/or neurodiversity
8. Upskill and contractually enable Primary Dental Care Practitioners to provide evidence-based interventions using schemes such as Child Friendly/Focused Dental Practices (CFDP)
9. Support and develop the whole oral healthcare team
10. Expand the paediatric dental workforce – including provision of Tier 2 services and recruiting community-based specialists and consultants

- The government's public consultation can be accessed [HERE](#)
- [BSPD Water Fluoridation Statement October 2021](#)
- Oral health survey: [Oral health survey of children in year 6, 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Around half of the north east already has fluoridated water, which is helping to reduce inequalities, including parts of County Durham, Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne. Health officials are today launching a public consultation on proposals to widen the scheme across the whole of the region to a further 1.6 million people (UK Gov)
- Around 6 million people in England already live in areas with fluoridated water. Fluoridation is commonly used internationally as a measure to tackle tooth decay. Around 400 million people in 25 countries worldwide – including the US, Canada and Ireland – live in areas with fluoridation schemes (UK Gov)
- Discover more about the focusing on the UK's most vulnerable children [CORE20PLUS5 CYP](#)
- [Return on investment of oral health improvement programmes for 0-5 year olds](#)

About BSPD

- The British Society of Paediatric Dentistry (BSPD) has an established place in the dental profession thanks to the dedication of dentists stretching back over 70 years. BSPD's mission is to improve the oral health of children and young people. The Society's executive committee provides strategic direction in line with our 3-year plan and oversees our engagement with other special interest groups and political decision makers. BSPD is now in a strong position to campaign for and implement improvements in children's oral health in the UK.
- BSPD membership has grown steadily over the last few years with a broadened profile. Anyone in the dental profession with an interest in children's oral health is welcome to join the Society. There are full and associate membership categories which encompass our growing groups of members. These include dentists, dental care professionals (DCPs), dental and DCP students, international members and all members of the dental team. We are clear that you do not need to have a dental qualification to be a member of BSPD, just a genuine passion for children's dentistry. Discover more at <https://www.bspd.co.uk>