



**Minutes of proceedings of the Plenary Meeting (Zoom) of the Irish Expert Body on
Fluorides and Health held on Friday 11th February
2022 @ 11am**

Chairperson:	Mr Ray Parle
Present	Professor Blánaid Daly, Professor Máiréad Harding, Dr Therese Montgomery, Dr Gerard Colleran, Dr Lina Zgaga, Mr Mike Broderick, Dr Patrick Quinn, Mr Michael Madden
Quorum:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
In Attendance - Secretariat	Ms Orlaith Kennedy, Ms Etain Kett
EB Minute 01/22 Apologies:	No Apologies were noted.

EB Minute 02/22: Declaration of Conflicts of Interest
Professor Máiréad Harding declared that she was an author of the Fluoride and Caring for Children's Teeth (FACCT) Study. Mr Ray Parle declared that he had been a member of the Programme Steering Committee of the FACCT Study.
EB Minute 03/22: Approval of the minutes of the meeting of [1st December 2021]:
The Minutes were approved subject to minor amendments.
EB Minute 04/22: Matters Arising
It was noted that neither the World Health Organization nor the Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks (SCHER) provided any evidence concerning the dermal absorption of fluoride in water. It was agreed that the Expert Body will continue to monitor any emerging evidence regarding this. It was noted that Mr Ray Parle circulated the EPA Research Report (2017) 'Assessing and developing natural background levels for chemical parameters in Irish groundwater' to the Expert Body members as it refers to Fluoride.
EB Minute 05/22: Correspondence
Correspondence was noted. It was noted that the Department of Health will discuss when the next Governance Meeting may take place and it was agreed that the Expert Body would review what might be required for discussion at the Governance Meeting.



Report on activities:

EB Minute 06/22: Report of the Sub-Committees

NEI Health Sub-Committee: Report

It was noted that a considerable amount of work has been carried out by Dr Gary Moran regarding a review of oral microbiome and fluoride. It was agreed that this may be useful to take forward as a published paper.

It was noted that the Expert Body is waiting for a response from the Department of Health to the gaps in research it highlighted.

It was agreed that any future quantitative health assessment on community water fluoridation ought to consider risks/benefits, the impact of sugar, and impact on health inequalities.

It was agreed that there will be a need for the results of the Health Research Board Review to be interpreted and whether any actions may be required. It was further agreed that the Minister for Health will need evidence-informed advice for the Irish context of CWF and for communicating the facts.

It was agreed that the Expert Body will draft a handover document and that the Chairs of the 3 Sub-Committees will consider items/issues for the document.

It was noted that fluoride continues to be important as the amount of sugar consumed on a daily basis is high. It was further noted that health inequalities exist concerning nutrition and access to food information. It was noted that fluoride delivery is a downstream approach.

Papers have been assigned to the subcommittee and are currently being reviewed by the members.

It was noted that the paper Chellaiah et al 2021 'Isolation and identification of high fluoride resistant bacteria from water samples of Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu, South India' applies to polluted waters which have high fluoride levels, and not to drinking water.

To date, none of the papers reviewed changes the advice to the Minister for Health concerning CWF.

It was noted that the Department of Health has acknowledged receipt of Draft Position Statement and advised that feedback will be forthcoming.



NEI Environment Sub-Committee Report:

It was noted that the new Drinking Water Directive has more emphasis on making information available to the public. It was noted that Mr Ray Parle is a member of the Interagency Review Group.

Mr Ray Parle has contacted the EPA to arrange the annual liaison meeting with the NEI Environment sub-committee to discuss issues of mutual concern. A meeting has been suggested for some time in September 2022

Irish Water has included fluoride testing in its Ground Water Monitoring Programme which will continue into 2022. It was noted that it may be necessary to engage with a Hydrogeologist to interpret the results and that further studies may be required once these results have been considered.

Developments in alternative technology for Water Fluoridation in the United States of America (USA), namely the use of sodium fluorosilicate tablets, were considered by the Sub-Committee. It was noted that this would be brought to the attention of the Department of Health as it may be a solution for those who do not have access to fluoride in their water.

It was noted that a revision of Standard I.S.EN 12175:2013 'Chemicals used for treatment of water intended for human consumption – hexafluorosilicic acid' is being finalised by a European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) Technical Committee. It was noted that Mr Ray Parle is a member of the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) Technical Group of Water Supplies. It was noted that there is a confidentiality clause so any changes being made cannot be shared in advance of publication.

It was noted that the Expert Body Code of Practice on the Fluoridation of Drinking Water ensures efficient and effective implementation of the technical aspects on the procedures for the fluoridation of drinking water, by all personnel involved, including:

1. The fluoride concentration of fluoridated water supplied to the consumer will be within limits set by Irish and European legislation.
2. The potential for environmental contamination from hydrofluosilicic acid spillages is minimised.
3. The risk of injury to fluoridation plant personnel from hydrofluosilicic acid is minimised.

It was further noted that the Code of Practice is not intended to absolve any individual or organisation from its obligation to comply with more detailed or specific safe work systems, provisions or guidelines relating to Fire Safety, Safety, Health and Welfare at Work or Environmental Protection.

It was noted that Irish Water also have standards have in place. It was further noted that implementation of all these standards is an operational issue.

It was noted that the next NEI Environment Sub-Committee will be set to take place after the Governance Meeting with the Department of Health.



Communications Sub-Committee

It was noted that Dr Patrick Quinn is Chair of the Communications Sub-Committee.

It was noted that Mr Ger Colleran has joined the Communications Sub-Committee and has also been appointed as Vice-Chair.

It was noted that Term of Reference 5 states 'Provide an external communications and media role as required by the Minister for Health'.

It was noted that the Infographics for the Fluoride and Caring for Children's Teeth (FACCT) Study were discussed by the Sub-Committee.
It was suggested by the Plenary that greater dissemination of these infographics may be required and that the Expert Body will highlight this to the Department of Health.

A draft of the overview section of the Expert Body website was discussed and it was agreed to allow for any further feedback by 18th February.
It was agreed to review google analytics for the website.

EB Minute 07/22: Expert Body Work Plan

The Work Plan for 2022 was agreed and adopted.

EB Minute 08/22: Any other business (AOB)

There was no AOB.

EB Minute 09/22: Next Meeting

Date:	The chairperson thanked those all for attending. The meeting was declared closed at 13:45pm and it was agreed that the next meeting will take place face-to-face in early May and that a doodle poll will be circulated.
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Actions Arising from This Meeting:

Item No.	Action	Person Applicable	Timeframe
05/22	Preparation for Governance Meeting with Department of Health.	Chair/Chairs Sub-Committee/Secretariat	TBC
05/22	Follow-up with the Department of Health regarding rolling programme of research being carried out by HRB	Chair/Secretariat	TBC



An Corpán Oilte Éireannach
um Fluairídí agus Sláinte

The Irish Expert Body
on Fluorides and Health

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06/22	Draft handover document	Chair/Chairs Sub-Committees/Secretariat	TBC
06/22	Papers have been assigned to the NEI subcommittee and are currently being reviewed by the members.	NEI Health Members	By next NEI Health Sub-Committee Meeting
06/22	Review of oral microbiome and fluoride	Dr Gary Moran/Dr Lina Zgaga	By next NEI Health Sub-Committee Meeting
06/22	Confirm meeting date with EPA for annual liaison meeting with the NEI Environment sub-committee to discuss issues of mutual concern.	Mr Ray Parle	TBC
06/22	Follow-up on developments in alternative technology for Water Fluoridation	Mr Ray Parle	TBC
06/22	Feedback on Draft overview section of Expert Body website	All	18th February
06/22	Highlight FACCT infographics to the Department of Health	Mr Ray Parle/Secretariat	TBC
06/22	Monitor google analytics of Expert Body website	Secretariat	Ongoing
Chairperson's signature and date			