

**Minutes of proceedings of the Plenary Meeting of the Irish Expert Body on
Fluorides and Health held on Thursday 27th June 2019**

Present: Professor Suresh Pillai (Chairman), Dr Brett Duane (Vice Chairman),
Dr Máiréad Harding, Mr Ray Parle, Dr Una Fallon, Mr Michael
Madden (Telecon), Professor Blanaid Daly.

Apologies Dr Patrick Quinn, Dr Therese Montgomery

In attendance: From Secretariat: Ms Orlaith Kennedy, Ms Etain Kett, Professor
John Coggon

EB Minute 11/19: Apologies

Apologies were noted. It was further noted that it is necessary for the Chair to leave the meeting at 12:30pm and it was agreed that the Vice-Chair would Chair the Meeting in his absence.

Ms Orlaith Kennedy, the new Chief Executive, Dental Health Foundation was welcomed to the meeting and the members introduced themselves. Ms Kennedy gave a quick briefing on her previous background relating to health, children and non-profits.

It was noted that Dr Marie Sutton has resigned from the Expert Body due to work commitments and that the Expert Body has written to thank her for her valuable contributions to the work of the Body.

EB Minute 12/19: Expert Body Minutes

The minutes from the meeting of March 11th 2019 were agreed, subject to minor amendments.

EB Minute 13/19: Matters Arising

It was noted Irish Water/ Water Services National Training Group training in relation to the Code of Practice on the Fluoridation of Drinking Water 2016 is progressing. It was noted that there may be queries related to technical matters arising from the Code of Practice and that clarification is required as to where they should be directed.

It was noted that the paper 'Evidence Review for Adverse Health Effects of Drinking Optimally Fluoridated Water (2010-2017) – Public Health Ontario will be included in the systematic review by the NEI Health Sub-Committee. It was noted that some of the references contained within in this report appear to be incorrect and that this will require following up by the Sub-Committee.

It was noted that the Department of Health has been invited to present a briefing to the Expert Body on the new National Oral Health Policy 'Smile agus Sláinte' in order to inform the Work Plan of the Expert Body.

EB Minute 14/19: Finance

It was noted that the Department of Health has been in contact regarding Budget 2019 and that the budget will remain the same as last year.

It was agreed that in order for the Expert Body to carry out its Terms of Reference and to build connections within the dental public health, that it is important that the Expert Body attend relevant conferences. It was noted that funding is required for this and to highlight this matter to the Department of Health.

It was noted that streaming might be a low cost option in some cases to keep abreast of new and emerging issues. It was suggested that important conferences to attend include the following:

- The European Association of Dental Public Health
- The International Association of Dental Research
- The Society of Environmental Technology & Chemistry Europe
- The British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry

The following was noted regarding international organisations:

- It was noted that Public Health England are good at making new reports and information available.
- FDI World Dental Federation has joint goals with the World Health Organisations.
- The European Organisation for Caries Research promotes oral health through scientific research in the field of Cariology with an emphasis on fluorides.

EB Minute 15/19: Report of the Sub-Committees

A briefing was given by the NEI Health Sub-Committee regarding the draft search strategy:

It was noted that an information technologist from Trinity College Dublin is advising the development of the search strategy/systematic review.

It was noted that a researcher/public health doctoral student from the Dental Public Health Training Programme will be involved in the piloting of the search strategy, the person will be supervised by Dr Máiréad Harding and Dr Brett Duane. It was suggested that due to the workload involved in this search strategy/systematic review that this doctoral student could also assist and support the Expert Body by sorting and appraising the papers. It was further noted that this intern will be a free resource to the Expert Body to assist in building capacity. It was suggested that the doctoral student attend meetings with observer status. It was also suggested that access to a doctoral student from medical public health would also be helpful.

It was noted that this will be subject to formalities and governance.

It was noted that animal and toxicology studies would be reviewed before deciding if an eco-toxicologist would be required as a co-opted member on to the NEI Environment Sub-Committee.

It was noted that the search strategy requires further discussion and also input from the Librarian in Dublin Dental University Hospital for refining before it can be piloted.

It was noted that Dr Dympna Kavanagh, Chief Dental Officer, Department of Health referred to the important role of the Expert Body and its ongoing review of evidence in her report to the Oireachtas Committee Meeting regarding the new Oral Health Policy 'Smile agus Sláinte'.

Communications Sub-Committee briefing.

It was noted that the Expert Body FAQ is being reviewed and that the content and aesthetics of the website requires updating. It was agreed to obtain advice on updating the website at a low cost, and to ensure that IT security procedures are followed. It was noted that the Secretariat will follow-up on this.

It was noted that a communications strategy is being developed and that strategic direction is being taken from the National Oral Health Policy 'Smile agus Sláinte'.

EB Minute 16/19: Any Other Business

It was noted Mr Ray Parle had attended the annual conference of the Environmental Protection Agency and that there were no new or emerging issues related to fluoridation.

It was noted that Dr Máiréad Harding presented data of the Fluoride And Caring for Children's Teeth (FACCT) Study at the annual meeting of the International Association of Dental Research (IADR) and that it was well received. It was noted that 12 year old children in the study have self-perceived poor oral health due to white marks on the teeth, but that these white marks were not due to fluorosis.

EB Minute 17/19: Presentation by Professor John Coggon

A presentation was given by Professor John Coggon 'Public Health Ethics and Mandatory Fluoridation'.

It was noted that the key points to consider regarding ethics in public health are

- A mandate to improve population health
- A mandate to address social (health) inequalities
- A shared responsibility for health across society
- A role for government and other partners

It was noted that the following reports are useful in informing the work of the Expert Body:

'Public health: ethical issues', Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 2007

'Public Health Ethics in Practice: An overview of public health ethics for the UK Public Health Skills and Knowledge Framework', Public Health England 2017

'The Nanny State Debate: A Place Where Words Don't Do Justice', Faculty of Public Health, 2018

EB Minute 18/19: Date of Next Meeting

Due to unforeseen circumstances there was not a quorum available to continue the meeting after lunch as planned. Outstanding items related to correspondence will be followed up on. The meeting was declared closed at 13:51pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____