



National Audit Office

The UK's independent public spending
watchdog

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Reference FOI-1660

Date 11 October 2023

WATER FLUORIDATION EXPENDITURE IN ENGLAND

Thank you for your request of 21 September 2023 for details of any assessments the NAO has made of expenditure on water fluoridation since 2000. We have considered your request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and Environmental Information Regulations 2004. Your specific request is set out in **Annex A** for reference.

We have searched our records and can confirm that we do not hold the information that you requested.

I am sorry that we don't hold the specific information that you requested on this occasion, but I hope you find this response helpful. **Annex B** sets out the steps you may wish to take if you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your request for information under FOIA.

Yours sincerely,

NAO FOI Team



Annex A

Request for information about expenditure on water fluoridation:

Will you please provide details of any assessments the NAO has made of expenditure on water fluoridation since 2000. Of particular interest would be: -

- 1. The amount spent on research since the York Review in 2000.*
- 2. A breakdown of the £42 million allocated by Alan Johnson (Secretary of State for Health and Social Care) in 2008 and how this money was spent.*
- 3. The amount spent on the Southampton public consultation and Judicial Review from 2008 to 2015.*
- 4. The estimated cost of the scheme to extend water fluoridation in the North East of England and the amount of funding secured so far.*
- 5. The cost of the fluoridating infrastructure at the Williamsgate WTW in Cumbria.*
- 6. The annual operating costs for water fluoridation and if this represents good value for money.*
- 7. Any cost/benefit analyses for any existing or proposed fluoridation schemes.*
- 8. An assessment of the cost for extending water fluoridation nationwide.*

NAO response

We have searched our records and can confirm that we do not hold any information in scope of your request.

It may help if I explain the role of the National Audit Office (NAO) and the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG), who is head of the NAO. Our function is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements of government departments and other government bodies. An audit does not require us to examine every transaction or balance to provide a reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. We have not made any assessments of expenditure on water fluoridation as part of our financial audit work.

We also carry out examinations into the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which government departments and other public sector bodies have used their resources. Our value for money studies are discretionary pieces of work and we have not performed any work on this topic.

Please note that our retention period for audit information is 6 years.

Annex B

Statement of Policy

Our policy is to respond to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as helpfully and promptly as possible, having regard to the principles set out in the Act. I therefore hope you are happy with the way we have handled your request. If you are not, then you should take the following steps.

In the first instance, within 40 working days, write to the National Audit Office Freedom of Information (FOI) Team at FOI@nao.org.uk or by post to:

FOI Team, Green 2, National Audit Office, 157-197 Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1W 9SP

The Head of FOI will arrange a review, which will be conducted by a senior member of staff who was not involved in decisions relating to your original request. Once the review has been completed, we will write informing you of the outcome.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The primary way of escalating your concerns to the Information Commissioner is at: <https://ico.org.uk/foicomplaints>

Alternatively you can contact the ICO at <https://ico.org.uk/> or Information Commissioner's Office Wycliffe House Water Lane Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF.