**Fluoride consultations take off**

The first of a series of public consultations, that could lead to 40 per cent of England’s water being fluoridated, has begun. Southampton is just one of a number of areas in the country earmarked for fluoridation after the government changed the law making it easier for strategic health authorities to demand that water companies fluoridate water supplies, if there is strong local support for doing this. Before that, water companies had the power to decide.

South Central Strategic Health Authority (SHA) launched the consultation for a water fluoridation scheme on Monday 8 September.

Dr Jeayanti Lohn, consultant in dental public health, Southampton Primary Care Trust said: ‘We are very pleased that following research into the feasibility, safety and cost of water fluoridation, South Central SHA has decided to begin the public consultation on water fluoridation. Southampton City PCT believes water fluoridation is the most effective way of reducing the large numbers of tooth fillings and extractions currently needed by children. Southampton will also improve the oral health of everyone locally drinking fluoridated water.’

The PCT claims if the level is topped up to one part of fluoride per million parts of water (1ppm), studies from around the world suggest that the average child is likely to have two fewer decayed teeth and that about 15 per cent more children would be totally free from tooth decay.

It also cites evidence from countries where the water has been fluoridated for more than 40 years, such as the United States and the Irish Republic, that suggests that adults benefit as well as children.

However anti-fluoride campaigners, UK Councils Against Fluoridation, claims it will mean one in eight children will grow up to experience discoloured or mottled teeth.

Tony Lees, dental advisor to UK Councils Against Fluoridation, said the most comprehensive study into the practice, the York Review, estimated 2.5 per cent of people in fluoridated areas would develop fluorosis. He claims it condemns one in eight of the population to a lifetime of paying for completely avoidable cosmetic dentistry.

Southampton City Primary Care Trust (PCT) claims most fluorosis is minor and many sufferers remain unaware of it.

The consultation will run until December 19. A final decision will be made early next year.

Around 5.3 million people in Britain already drink fluoridated water, including people in Birminghgam and many parts of the West Midlands, Newcastle, Gateshead, parts of Northumberland, Durham, Cumbria, Cheshire, South Humberside, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Bedfordshire.

Are you for or against more fluoridation?

Email your views to: penny@dental-tribune.co.uk

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**‘Highly effective’ GDC**

The General Dental Council is a ‘highly effective and well managed regulator’ with a consistent focus on public protection and a commitment to continuous improvement, according to the healthcare regulator watchdog.

The Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence, however, did express concern over the time it took to resolve fitness to practice cases.

Although the CHERE performance review of regulators did note that the GDC has put more resources into improving the 20 month average time between receipt of a complaint and final hearing.

‘It has set strong targets in this area and we are heartened by its belief they will be met during the next year,’ said the report.

GDC’s president Hew Mathewson welcomed the findings and said: ‘The GDC has implemented some major changes over the past couple of years to enhance patient protection. We’ve introduced registration for some 40,000 dental nurses and dental technicians and other professionals, enhanced our fitness to practise procedures, launched the Dental Complaints Service and rolled out continuous professional development requirements to the whole dental team.’

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**Scottish funding**

A £75m funding package for dental services in Scotland is an ‘encouraging development’ says the British Dental Association.

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**No-shows**

Broken appointments cost practices from £20,000 to £30,000 a day. So what can you do about it? McKenzie has the answers.

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**Less invasion**

There are several surgical techniques to choose from when it comes to sinuslift, but have you tried Summer’s and Hydrolift?

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**Dress Up Day**

Dentaid raised more funds for overseas work with Dress Up Day. Participants turned out as pirates, cowboys and Indans.