

PFAS Newsletter, April 2024

Dear Islanders,

Please find the latest update on the PFAS work by Public Health and the Scientific Advisory Panel. Previous newsletters are available at gov.je/PFAS.

Update on Report 2: An assessment of the impact of PFAS exposure on health

Panel meetings

The January and February PFAS Scientific Advisory Panel meetings heard from five global subject matter experts who have contributed to the evidence that the Panel will review for Report 2. The Panel heard from experts in the USA, which included a study of the contamination of the Cape Fear River basin in North Carolina, which supplied people with drinking water and concerns raised in New Jersey following PFAS exposure through drinking water.

The Panel also heard about various lab test results showing the impacts of PFAS on mice, plus research from a town called Ronneby in Sweden, which also had exposure caused by firefighting foam. Ronneby has also carried out blood testing, where the results showed that PFAS concentrations in the blood were higher than in the comparison reference population. An English summary of the Swedish research will be published shortly at: <https://pfas.blogg.lu.se>.

The Panel meeting in March covered a range of topics including:

- An introduction to the chemistry of PFAS to help further understand the complexities of the many PFAS compounds
- An introduction into the health effects review and the types of evidence the Panel will review
- The mental health impacts of environmental contamination

Also at the March meeting, Steve Hajioff mentioned a summary of the common conditions Islanders shared during their testimonies in November and December 2023. Conditions that are less common were not mentioned in the meeting to protect the privacy of the relevant Islanders, but I'd like to reassure everyone that the Panel are reviewing the evidence for all the conditions mentioned by affected Islanders.

These conditions were provided by Islanders in public and private meetings and in written submissions. The Panel will look specifically for any link to PFAS in the scientific literature for these conditions as part of their wider evidence review.

Below is a list of the common conditions that Islanders raised with the Panel:

- Cancers including skin, blood, mouth, kidney, bowel, urethral, breast, endometrial, and prostate
- High cholesterol
- Infertility and the impacts on babies and children
- Inflammation of the stomach and gut
- Mental health

Timeline

The Panel are intending to launch the first draft of Report 2 with Islanders in the summer to provide an opportunity to feedback. We will provide further details once we have a venue and date confirmed.

Update on therapeutic phlebotomy service

Public Health is working with Health and Community Services to set up the therapeutic phlebotomy service for eligible Islanders. Detailed information will be provided in advance of the launch of this service to help those eligible decide if taking up the offer is right for them.

The therapeutic phlebotomy service would be a new clinical service, so it is important that it is set up with the appropriate safeguards, medical oversight, and guidance. As a new service which has not been available before, the process is taking longer than we expected, to ensure that there is compliance with safety guidelines and the appropriate teams and facilities are in place.

We asked if Islanders wanted to be involved in designing the service and are grateful to those who expressed an interest, and we will be in touch in due course.

Next Panel meeting dates (online)

- Wednesday 17 April
- Thursday 16 May
- Thursday 6 June

Meetings are usually from 10:00am. If there are any changes, we will share them by email and will update the website. Previous meeting minutes and future agendas are updated on the website as they become available at gov.je/PFAS. To request a copy of the online meeting recordings, please email publichealth@gov.je.

Change in Public Health staffing

Many Islanders will be familiar with Sarah Tyler who has been supporting our PFAS work including the initiation, development and running of the Panel. Unfortunately, Sarah will be leaving us at the end of April. Stepping into her shoes will be Julia Head, who is a Jersey-born scientist and who I am confident will be an asset to the team. I'm sure you will all join me in thanking Sarah for her hard work, and we'll do our best to ensure there is a smooth transition.

As always, if you have any questions, please email publichealth@gov.je.

Best wishes,

Grace Norman

Deputy Director of Public Health