Minutes of public meeting of the PFAS Scientific Advisory Panel on Teams

15:00 on 16 October 2025

Panel Members present:	Dr Steve Hajioff – Independent Chair
	Dr Tony Fletcher – PFAS and Health member
	Professor Ian Cousins – PFAS and Environment member
In attendance:	Standing Observer (Regulation) - Kelly Whitehead - Group Director of Regulation, Infrastructure and Environment Department
	David Andrews - Subject Matter Expert
	Programme support team from I&E

Welcome:

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Panel meeting and reminded people the meeting was being recorded.

Introductions

The Chair and Panel members introduced themselves.

Dr Steve Hajioff, Independent Panel Chair: A retired Director of Public Health from an area of London with two major international airports and a variety of other environmental hazards and challenges, with 35 years in clinical medicine. An expert on translating science into policy, he has worked with Nice, the Greater London Authority, the EU, WHO and World Bank, several UK government departments and several international governments. Dr Hajioff has also worked extensively in the pharmaceutical industry.

Dr Tony Fletcher, PFAS and Health Panel Member: Environmental Epidemiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, working on PFAS since 2006 and member of the panel with experience of epidemiological studies on the health effects of PFAS in contaminated communities in West Virginia in the United States, in the Veneto region, in Italy, and in Ronneby, and is the health expert on the panel.

Professor Ian Cousins, PFAS and Environment Panel Member: A Professor in Environmental Chemistry at Stockholm University, an expert on PFAS, appointed as the environmental expert on this Panel and whose expertise on PFAS is on the sources, transport, fate, and exposure of PFAS.

Kelly Whitehead, Group Director for Regulation in the in the Infrastructure and Environment Department, leading on the Water Quality and Safety Programme, coordinating Government's response.

Subject Matter Expert Introduction

David Andrews, Acting Chief Science Officer at the Environmental Working Group (EWG), a nonprofit organisation based in Washington, D.C. David has been with EWG for approximately 15 to 17 years, with over a decade of his work focused on PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) contamination, particularly in water. His expertise includes examining exposure pathways and the implications of PFAS for human health. He also noted that EWG is actively involved in identifying policy solutions and advocating for regulatory changes aimed at reducing overall PFAS exposure.

Presentation from Subject Matter Expert David Andrews

David Andrews began his presentation by introducing the Environmental Working Group, a U.S.-based nonprofit and nonpartisan organisation dedicated to protecting human health and the environment. He explained that EWG's mission involves translating complex scientific topics into accessible information for the public, advocating for healthier living through improved environmental policies, and increasing transparency around chemical exposures. Their work spans various domains including drinking water, food systems, consumer products, and agricultural practices, with a particular emphasis on PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) contamination. Andrews highlighted EWG's long-standing involvement in PFAS research, dating back to the early 2000s, when they began analysing documents from legal trials in Parkersburg, West Virginia. These documents revealed significant health risks associated with PFAS and led to public databases and reports that informed both media and regulatory bodies.

He then shifted focus to EWG's research on drinking water contamination, particularly the organisation's efforts to compile and analyse water quality data from public utilities across the United States. This data is made publicly accessible and compared against health-based standards, which often differ from legal limits. Andrews emphasised the importance of understanding local water contamination levels and the need for effective household filtration methods. He discussed various types of water filters, including point-of-entry and point-of-use systems, and shared findings from EWG's testing of ten commonly available filters. Results showed significant variability in PFAS removal efficiency, with some filters achieving complete removal and others only reducing levels by about 20%.

Reverse osmosis systems and multi-stage carbon filters were identified as the most effective, achieving 95–100% PFAS removal, though they come with higher installation costs. Andrews also referenced peer-reviewed studies, including one conducted in North Carolina, which confirmed similar findings and highlighted the importance of evaluating filter performance under real-world conditions. He noted that longer-chain PFAS compounds are more effectively removed and stressed the critical role of regular filter maintenance to prevent desorption and recontamination.

Additionally, he discussed the broader benefits of advanced filtration systems, including the removal of co-contaminants such as disinfection byproducts and heavy metals. He cited recent research indicating that these systems could offer substantial health benefits beyond PFAS removal, potentially influencing cost-benefit analyses for regulatory standards. He concluded by recommending certified water filters, acknowledging limitations in current certification standards that do not reflect the low concentration thresholds now considered safe. He reiterated the importance of following manufacturer guidelines for filter maintenance and highlighted key studies and resources that support EWG's recommendations.

Discussion

The discussion began with clarification around EWG's recommendation to avoid bottled water, which David Andrews explained was a general public health recommendation across the U.S., not specific to PFAS contamination, but rather due to broader concerns such as microplastics. Questions then turned to reverse osmosis (RO) systems, with Steve Hajioff asking whether users need to remineralise water filtered through RO systems. David responded that while many RO systems include remineralisation cartridges, the literature suggests that the impact on daily mineral intake is negligible, and supplementation is generally unnecessary.

Ian Cousins raised concerns about the disposal of reject water from RO systems, to which David explained that PFAS-contaminated water typically enters the wastewater stream, with waste-to-drinking water ratios varying by system. He noted that while individual household contributions are small, the cumulative impact at community scale could be significant. Additionally, PFAS captured in carbon filters often ends up in landfill waste, highlighting the lack of effective disposal or destruction mechanisms for PFAS in home filtration systems.

The panel also discussed ion exchange technologies, which David noted are more common at municipal treatment scales but less available for household use. Questions about filtration efficacy followed, particularly regarding whether filters can reduce PFAS levels to parts per trillion. David confirmed that while certification standards (e.g., NSF) do not currently guarantee reductions to such low levels, independent testing—including EWG's and academic studies—has shown that some filters can achieve reductions below detection limits, potentially meeting health-based thresholds.

Concerns were raised about filter maintenance, with panellists asking whether service contracts are available and how consumers can ensure timely replacement. David noted that the EPA includes professional maintenance in its cost estimates for small systems and that some companies offer installation and servicing. However, guidance on replacement frequency based on contamination levels is limited, and variability in water quality complicates standard recommendations.

The conversation then shifted to the reliability of certified products. David clarified that while certification indicates some level of testing, it does not necessarily correlate with superior performance, especially given the lack of low-level certification standards. Tony Fletcher and others highlighted the variability in filter performance, referencing real-world studies showing lower efficacy in under-maintained systems. David confirmed that single-stage carbon filters showed modest reductions, while multi-stage and RO systems performed significantly better.

Further discussion explored factors influencing filter performance, including ambient temperature, maintenance frequency, and water composition. While temperature effects were not studied, David acknowledged that variability in household conditions likely contributes to inconsistent results. The panel praised EWG's consumer resources, noting their uniqueness and value in guiding product selection, despite limitations in scale and variability.

Finally, David recommended under-sink RO or multi-stage carbon systems for those concerned about PFAS in drinking water, citing their effectiveness and manageable maintenance. He shared his personal experience with installing and maintaining such a system, aligning with manufacturer guidelines. The panel concluded with reflections on the importance of understanding co-contaminants and water quality when selecting filtration technologies, and the broader resilience of RO systems in handling diverse contaminants.

Date of next meeting

Wednesday 22nd October 2025. It will be held 10am - 1pm online.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions, those watching the meeting and those offering support throughout the whole process.

A reminder to the public that this meeting has been recorded, and the video will be available online on request by emailing the Regulation Enquiries mailbox on RegulationEnquiries@gov.je. This will take a couple of days to make sure the observers are anonymised.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed.

To note that the Panel can be emailed via PFASpanel@gov.je.

Details of meeting dates and times can be found at PFAS in Jersey (gov.je)