



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

SACN Secretariat
Office for Health Improvement and Disparities
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

8th July 2026

Good afternoon,

A doctor and resident of Richmond Park has written to us on behalf of a group of senior endocrinologists to report their serious concerns regarding people in the UK experiencing side-effects of iodine deficiencies.

While we note that iodine deficiencies were examined by SACN in 2014, we would like to make the case that a new review is required.

This is due to the availability of a decade of new research on the national level, undertaken since 2013, by the National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS), which shows that UIC levels have fallen below adequate levels in the UK.

In 2013, the NDNS estimated that among UK adults aged 19 to 64 years, median UIC was 119µg per litre and 13% of the population had a UIC below 50µg per litre. The most recent survey, covering the period from 2019 to 2023, reported a median UIC of 89µg per litre and 25% of the population had a UIC below 50µg per litre.

In their letter, the endocrinologists also cited this data which shows that the median urinary iodine concentration (UIC) among women of reproductive age is **82 µg/L**, with **30%** recording levels below 50 µg/L. Both figures fall well below World Health Organization (WHO) thresholds for adequacy (100–199 µg/L) and far beneath the optimal pre-pregnancy target of 150 µg/L required for normal fetal brain development.

This trend of iodine levels falling is especially concerning amongst pregnant women, as noted in the Committee's 2014 report, which stated that *'Pregnant and lactating women and the fetus are of particular interest because of the effects of severe iodine deficiency in pregnant women resulting in impaired fetal growth and psychomotor development.'*

The 2014 report also found that: *'intakes of the element are associated with defective thyroid hormone production and with consequent defects in growth, physical and psychomotor development; and that; iodine deficiency is a major preventable cause of growth and intellectual impairment and, as such, it has significant societal and socio-economic impact.'*

With a decade of data showing that not only are iodine levels below adequate levels in the UK, but they are also falling, accompanied with the consequent medical complications caused by iodine deficiencies, we believe a new review is required.

While we also note that the Committee's report highlighted concerns about the reliability of

using UIC for measuring iodine deficiencies, it is generally seen as the gold standard for measurements at the population level, which we now have a decade of evidence of, and is still used by the WHO.

In addition, the endocrinologists pointed out that the UK is funding the promotion of iodine sufficiency abroad, but according to a recent study undertaken by the Iodine Global Network, women of childbearing age in the UK had lower iodine levels than countries which we direct such resources towards.

Despite the significant complications potentially caused by iodine deficiencies, we have also been unable to find a single reference of the dangers of deficiencies present to UK residents by the current government, and it is vital that this important matter is not overlooked.

We would therefore urge the Committee to re-examine the issue of iodine deficiencies in the UK, and we are grateful for your consideration of our letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Sarah Olney'.

Sarah Olney
Member of Parliament for Richmond Park
Business Spokesperson for Liberal Democrats

Layla Moran
Member of Parliament for Oxford West and Abingdon
Chair of the Health and Social Care Committee