



## Garnering support for a UK ban on lead ammunition

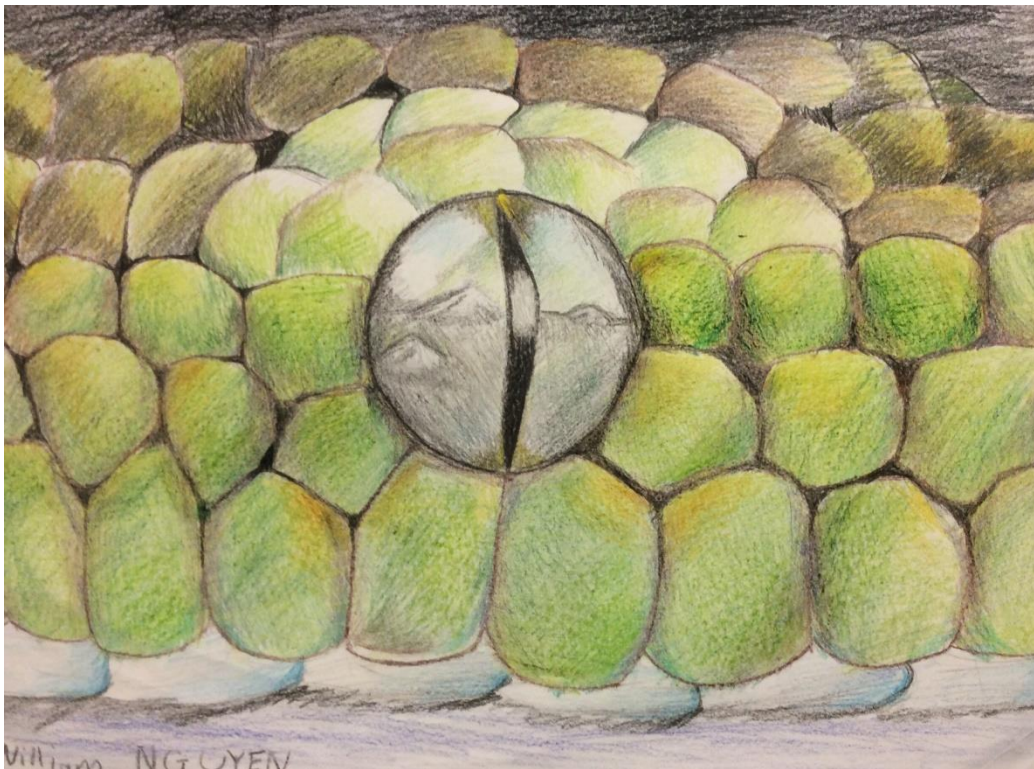
### Members of UK Parliament

Several members of the UK Parliament (MPs) have sponsored or supported an 'early day motion' ([EDM #1963](#)) regarding banning lead ammunition. This focuses on the impact on wildlife. Early day motions rarely get into law, but are used to draw attention to issues.

This appeared to be an opportunity for us to try to obtain more support from these MPs. An email was sent to the sponsors and supporters of the bill – see below.

Most autoreply messages say that it is not parliamentary procedure to assist people who are not constituents of the MP. However, the Chief of Staff to Caroline Lucas says she will ensure Ms Lucas reads it. Caroline Lucas is a prominent public figure and leader of the Green Party in the UK.

We await further responses.



Volcano Art Prize 2018  
Winner of one of 30



Pictureproducts Mugs printed with the entrant's image. Title: Reptile's Eye. **Lead-Safety Message:** Reptiles can be killed by ingesting lead shot, bullets, bullet fragments or prey contaminated with lead ammunition. Artist: William Nguyen, Creative Einstein tutoring school, Sydney, age 11.

<http://volcanoartprize.com/portfolio-item/reptiles-eye-creative-einstein-education-tutoring-school-age-11/>

## **eMail to Selected UK Members of Parliament**

Subject: EDM #1963

To: Sponsors and Supporters of EDM #1963

From: Lead Safe World UK

As a volunteer with the "[Lead Safe World](#)" project I was very pleased to see [EDM #1963](#) regarding a ban on the sale, possession and use of lead ammunition and I thank you for sponsoring and supporting this.

While the impact of lead ammunition on wildlife is well known, we wonder if you are aware that there is also a significant health impact on people using lead ammunition in firing ranges ([Laidlaw et al, 2017](#)). For example, in the USA, the National Guard [stopped all public events](#) at indoor firing ranges because of lead exposure risks. You may also be surprised to learn that lead continues to be emitted into the environment, e.g. light aircraft still often use leaded petrol ([AVGAS](#)) and, as of 2008, this sector was the [single largest source](#) of lead emissions in the USA. This presumably, could also impact wildlife.

As MPs who are aware of the damage lead can do, we wonder if any of you would be interested in promoting lead toxicity prevention in the UK. As stated in the motion, lead has been banned in petrol, paint and water pipes, but much of the old lead remains and we have no idea about exposures now. We do know that lead toxicity is [preventable](#).

Some reasons why you might consider championing this include:

- The [NHS Long Term Plan](#) aims to reduce the prevalence of many conditions through prevention. However, the plan does not mention lead toxicity at all. Conditions listed in the plan, that have been suggested to be related to lead exposure, include the following. (References to evidence can be provided if required).
  - Stillbirth
  - Children and young people's mental health
  - Autism



- Learning disabilities
  - Heart attack
  - Stroke
  - Dementia
  - Mental illness
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
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- Lead is also a health equality issue. As stated by the [Centres for Disease Control](#) “*children living at or below the poverty line who live in older housing are at greatest risk*”. Lead toxicity can result in lower IQ, decreased ability to pay attention and underperformance at school; all of which could be expected to limit life chances. Several studies have found that lead toxicity may also be associated with violent crime ([Boutwell et al, 2017, 2016](#); [Taylor et al, 2016](#); [Nevin, 2001](#); [Dietrich et al, 2001](#); [Naicker et al 2018](#)).
  - In terms of prevalence, a recent study reported in The Lancet ([Lanphear et al, 2018](#)) found that around 29% of cardiovascular disease deaths and 37% of ischaemic heart disease deaths could be attributed to elevated lead exposure. Furthermore, they found that around 18% of all-cause mortality could be attributed to lead. We do not have any recent population data in the UK, but in the mid-1990s in Avon, it was found that [27% of toddlers](#) had blood lead levels high enough to cause harm and, on average, their performance at school was impacted ([Chandramouli et al, 2008](#)).
  - The cost of lead toxicity is also high. In the USA, [Landrigan et al, 2002](#), estimated the total annual cost to be \$43Bn. In France, [Pichery et al, 2011](#), calculated the benefits of reducing blood lead levels to be up to €23Bn per year. This would equate to between £8Bn and £20Bn per year in the UK, but our environmental conditions are not the same as other countries. Our remaining lead exposure may be worse due to our long history of lead mining and working, coal use and old housing stock.
  - In the USA lead poisoning prevention is a [top priority](#). For example, the [President’s Task Force](#) on health and safety risks to children is currently [focussed on lead](#). It is estimated that in the USA [535,000 children](#) have lead toxicity at any one time. However, the 2018 “[Health Profile for England](#)” appears to contain no reference to lead poisoning prevention.

Population screening could inform environmental and public health policies, improve monitoring and regulation, and prompt a review of housing conditions. However, we failed to convince the [National Screening Committee](#) to recommend screening for lead in children. We then wrote to Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive of Public Health England (PHE). Our letter is attached, but with the names of



signatories removed. These include academics and other lead experts. (It should be noted that one lead toxicity prevention advocate in the UK has received online abuse and death threats to their family so I try not to share names, including my own.)

[*Editor's note:* Our letter has (since this email was written) been read by Duncan Selbie himself, and] we have had responses from his office. These include references to two recent PHE reports – [LEICSS](#) and [SLiC](#). These report on children already identified with possible lead poisoning – many more will not be diagnosed. The reports combined contain 28 recommendations, but only four are being progressed to date.

If you would be willing to help, then there are two immediate actions that we would like to suggest:

- 1) Write to Duncan Selbie and ask him to read our letter himself
- 2) Also ask Duncan Selbie if, and when, the other recommendations in the LEICSS and SLiC reports are going to be implemented

This issue presents an exceptional opportunity and imperative to improve both the health and the finances of the country.

Please let us know if you need any more information.

Yours faithfully, Lead Safe World UK

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