

October 2008

Update for paragraph 6.4.7

CITIZENS' ENQUIRY ON THE NDNAD

The National DNA Database (NDNAD) was the subject of a citizen's enquiry commissioned by the Human Genetics Commission (HGC), the report of which was published in 2008.

The main conclusions of the enquiry were that the majority of the UK public considers:

- there is a need for a nationwide awareness campaign about the NDNAD
- a broadly-based, independent body should be set up to oversee use of the NDNAD
- when DNA is taken from children a full explanation should be given to them in age-appropriate terms
- there should not be a universal DNA database, an international forensic DNA database or automatic sharing of such data between the UK and other countries
- the retention period of the profiles on the NDNAD should be proportionate to the severity of the crime
- to avoid discrimination, the ethnic group of the person from whom a DNA sample is taken should not be recorded
- there should be harmonisation of procedures in the UK, with the Scottish approach favoured
- samples should not be retained after the DNA has been extracted
- DNA profiles of those convicted of a serious crime should be recorded regardless of their age

Following further discussions, the HGC proposes to issue its final recommendations in 2009.

Website reference:

<http://www.hgc.gov.uk/UploadDocs/DocPub/Document/Citizens%20Inquiry%20-%20Citizens%20Report.pdf>

Update for paragraphs 6.5.2 - 6.5.5

DEBATE ON THE HUMAN FERTILISATION AND EMBRYOLOGY BILL

The most contentious part of the bill concerned the creation of so-called animal-human hybrid (cybrid) embryos (referred to in the bill as 'admixed' embryos). This was already permitted under current legislation, a decision made by the HFEA after a public consultation lasting several months. The passing of the new bill aimed to formalise this activity, giving it explicit parliamentary approval.

The cut and thrust of debate over this issue can be followed in the verbatim record of the debate held in the House of Commons on 12th May, 2008. Other issues debated concerned savious siblings, pre-implantation genetic diagnosis, artificial (stem-cell derived gametes), 'fatherhood issues' and abortion.

The bill was passed by 340 votes to 78.

Website reference: <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2008-05-12b.1063.1>