



From Lord Avebury

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Dear Damian,

Thank you for your letter of April 27 about the use of x-rays for determining the age of children subject to immigration control.

When this proposal arose on two previous occasions starting in 1981 it was found to be unlawful, and before you seek formal ethical approval yet again, I respectfully suggest that you examine the evidence that led the Government to abandon the idea in 1981. The science may have changed, but the moral and ethical issues are still the same.

It looks as if the UKBA tried to sneak this trial in under the radar, from what you say consulting only the Chief Medical Officer and at his behest, the NRES. May I suggest that you conduct a formal consultation on the proposed trial so that you can obtain advice from the professional bodies and experts such as the BMA, the BDA, the Royal Colleges, the Children's Commissioner etc which have expressed their opinions on the use of dental x-rays for age determination of children subject to immigration control, on previous occasions, most recently when proposals were mooted in 2007.

Yours ever,
Eric

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