

The Redfern Inquiry

into human tissue analysis in UK nuclear facilities

Date 26 April 2007

Ref P/2007/83

WRITTEN MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

THE RT HON ALISTAIR DARLING MP: SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

26 APRIL 2007

POST MORTEM PROCEDURES (NUCLEAR INDUSTRY)

Further to my statement to the House on Wednesday 18 April (Hansard, Cols 301-302), I am now able to announce the terms of reference for the Inquiry that I have asked Mr Michael Redfern QC to carry out. They are as follows.

- (a) Having regard to the provisions of the Human Tissue Act 1961, the Coroners' Rules 1984, the Coroners' Act 1988 and predecessor legislation, to enquire into the circumstances in which, between 1961 and 1992, organs/tissue were removed from 65 individuals, and were sent to and analysed at Sellafield.
- (b) In particular, to establish so far as practicable:
 - (i) when, where, by whom and by what means the taking of organs/tissue was requested and authorised;
 - (ii) whether the taking of organs/tissue was based on informed consent by the family and/or surviving relatives;
 - (iii) the purpose to be achieved by the retention and analysis of the organs/tissue removed; the generic results of analysis; and the identity of all publications in which the results were presented and commented upon;
 - (iv) whether the families or surviving relatives were informed of the results of the analysis, or the identity of the relevant publications;

- (v) when and by whom the retention, storage, transportation, analysis, reporting and disposal of the organs/tissue was authorised;
 - (vi) the circumstances in which the organs/tissue were retained, stored, transported, analysed, reported upon and disposed of;
 - (vii) the general purpose to be served by such retention, storage, analysis and publication of the results;
 - (viii) when this activity ceased, and the circumstances in which it ceased.
- (c) To consider such other issues in connection with the above matters as the Secretary of State may direct.
- (d) To report to the Secretary of State as soon as possible.
- (e) To make recommendations.

Since my statement to the House, the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) and the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) have begun to examine their records to identify if tests on autopsy tissues were carried out at any of the sites for which they are, or have been responsible, other than Sellafield. The UKAEA tell me that they believe such work was carried out at Harwell, at least until the early 1980s, and possibly at other UKAEA sites, potentially involving work related to individuals who had not been employed at nuclear sites. The AWE believes that there could have been additional testing on their employees. In light of this information, and in line with what I told the House last week, I have therefore asked Michael Redfern QC to make this additional information part of his considerations.