

Human Tissue Authority consultation on Codes of Practice September 2008

On 1 August, the Human Tissue Authority (HTA) launched a public consultation on its revised Codes of Practice. The Codes relate to the removal, storage, use and disposal of human tissue and organs. Their aim is to give practical guidance and lay down standards.

Besides revisions to existing Codes, the consultation includes a new Code on research (Code 9). This is directed at all those who store human tissue for research. It covers areas the licensing and consent requirements for both living and deceased donors, as well as provisions governing the use of cell lines and stem cells, including their use in clinical trials.

Another newcomer, first published in May, is Code 8. It concerns the import and export of human bodies, body parts and tissue. Code 8 is not under consultation at this stage.

Failure to comply with a codes of practice is not of itself a criminal offence, but the non-compliant act *may* be an offence under the Human Tissue act 2004. Even if there is no offence, non-compliance with a Code may be taken into account when reviewing licences.

Comments are welcome on any part of the draft Codes, but the HTA has asked some specific questions including:

- whether the codes clear and comprehensible;
- whether the codes provide a broad framework of guidance rather than a detailed prescription;
- whether there is a clear enough distinction between what *must* be done and what is good practice; and
- whether the examples of best practice are helpful in illustrating the guidance.

The consultation may be completed on-line. Visit the Human Tissue Authority website (www.hta.gov.uk) for more details, or click [here](#). The consultation closes on **14 November 2008**.

Julian Hitchcock
Senior Solicitor
for Mills & Reeve LLP
+44(0)1223 222545
julian.hitchcock@mills-reeve.com

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