

The Registrar  
Professor Ewan McKendrick

University Offices, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD  
Tel: +44 (0)1865 270232 Fax: +44 (0)1865 270085  
Email: ewan.mckendrick@admin.ox.ac.uk Web: www.ox.ac.uk



Professor Susan Bewley MA MD FRCOG  
Women's Health Academic Centre, King's Health Partners  
10<sup>th</sup> floor North Wing, St Thomas' Hospital  
Westminster Bridge Road  
LONDON SE1 7EH

20 August 2015

Dear Professor Bewley

**Evaluating the age extension of the NHS breast screening programme**

I am sorry that it has taken me such a long time to get back to you. It took some time to identify a senior researcher able to assist me in examining your complaint, and to then be able to discuss the matter with him, but Professor Michael Parker, Professor of Bioethics and Director of the Ethox Centre, has now looked into the matter.

Professor Parker's assessment is that the University and researchers employed by the University have responsibilities, in line with the Research Governance Framework, and that some of these responsibilities are prescribed by the independent ethical review process. In his view the researchers have responsibilities to propose a research question and methodology they consider to be robust, to complement this with an approach to consent that they have good reason to believe appropriate, to build a research team they judge to be able to conduct the research to a high standard, and to submit the proposal to appropriate independent ethical review. Professor Parker's assessment is that in these matters the researchers have discharged these responsibilities.

The responsibility for formally reviewing and approving these aspects of the proposed research, including the approach to consent and the appropriateness of the research team, lies with the research ethics committee tasked with this role, and not with the University. It is the responsibility of the sponsor to ensure that the research is conducted in line with the approved protocol. The University is committed to meeting the requirements of Research Sponsor and has a specialist team (Clinical Trials and Research Governance) which ensures that these responsibilities are met.

I understand that you have also raised these matters with the Health Research Authority, and I understand that they have responded to the bulk of the issues you have raised.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ewan McKendrick'.

Professor Ewan McKendrick