

THE PARLIAMENTARY AND SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

AN ASSOCIATE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

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PRESS RELEASE: 23 July 2005

“Visit to the London IDEAS Genetics Knowledge Park”

Institute of Child Health, University College London

30 Guildford Street, London WC1N 1EH

Wednesday 22nd June 2005, 10.00 am – 1.30 pm

Speakers:

Professor Steve Humphries, CEO London IDEAS, Director Centre for Cardiovascular Genetics, UCL

“Human genetics and testing for disease: genetic tests for heart disease, fact or fiction?”

Professor Pete Scambler, Director Genetics Applications Unit, London IDEAS and Head of Molecular Medicine Unit, Institute of Child Health, and

Dr Maria Bitner-Glindzicz, Senior Lecturer and Honorary Consultant in Clinical Genetics, Great Ormond Street Hospital

“High throughput genotyping: basic science underpinning clinical advances”

Professor Pete Scambler and Ms Kerra Pearce

“Laboratory visit: high throughput genotyping facility”

Dr Amy Hunter, Genetics Knowledge Park Manager

“Engaging with public fears: genetics and insurance”

Dr Gail Davies, Honorary Lecturer Imperial College London

“Scientists of tomorrow: educating in genetics”

Dr Ainsley Newson, Postdoctoral Associate Imperial College London

“Personal genomics: the future of clinical genetics”

The visit commenced with a clear and objective statement of some of the highlights, commencing with outline descriptions of the management and governance structure leading on to explanations of genetic tests for heart disease, atherosclerosis and DNA testing for Familial Hypercholesterolaemia. This was followed by an account of cascade testing, and treatment with Statin and the basic science of high throughput genotyping that underpins these clinical advances. The group were particularly interested in the contributions that have made to understanding and identifying possible causes for deafness in Bangladeshi children in London, which helps provide the basis for a long term strategy that could lead to its reduction in future generations in this community. The visit to the analytical laboratory was greatly appreciated and it provided an excellent opportunity to gain a better understanding of some of the recently developed skills and technologies that are an essential component of modern genetic investigations. Subsequent presentations on insurance, education and personal genomics were particularly helpful in

assessing the future direction and applications of genetics for the benefit of human health.

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A full report of the meeting will be published in Science in Parliament – Autumn Issue 2005