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Thank you for your further letter of 20 March about the allegations made by "*Uncaged Campaigns*" about Imutran and Huntingdon Life Sciences in its report "Diaries of Despair".

There is very little that I can add to my letter of 12 February as regards the routine review of compliance with the relevant authorities that is being carried out by the Chief Inspector. You draw a comparison with the earlier allegations against Harlan-Hillcrest, but I am sure you appreciate that each case must be considered on its individual merits.

As I have explained, the Home Secretary and I carefully considered the arguments for a judicial inquiry. We also considered whether some other form of special investigation was merited. In the event, we concluded that a review by the Chief Inspector was the appropriate way to proceed on the grounds set out in my earlier letter.

As to the issue of the cost benefit assessment, a review based upon fresh information not available when the original assessments were carried out would have no relevance to the decisions reached at the time.

The Home Secretary indicated when he announced the Chief Inspector's review that his report would be published, subject to the requirements of Section 24 of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

Yours sincerely

MIKE O'BRIEN