

# Member biographies

## Details

The Age Estimation Science Advisory Committee (AESAC) is formed of seven independent members including a chair and a deputy chair.

The committee members were appointed following an open recruitment competition in late 2022, replacing the interim committee. The full committee was established after the publication of the initial report “[Biological methods to assess unaccompanied asylum-seeking children’s age - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/114444/Biological_methods_to_assess_unaccompanied_asylum-seeking_childrens_age_-_GOV.UK_(www.gov.uk).pdf)”.

This document provides more information about the current members of the AESAC.



## **Professor Lucina Hackman (Chair)**

Lucina Hackman is a Professor of Forensic Anthropology currently employed at the Centre for Anatomy and Human Identification. Professor Hackman is a Chartered Forensic Anthropologist with the Royal Anthropological Institute and is a registered forensic expert on the forensic expert database of the National Crime Agency.

Professor Hackman is a practicing forensic anthropologist and has undertaken a wide range of casework in this capacity and given evidence in court in relation to trauma analysis, identification, and age estimation. One of her areas of specialty is in the identification of age in the living for the purposes of assisting investigations in asylum seekers and refugees, and she has passed the proficiency test in age estimation as set by the Study Group on Forensic Age Diagnostics of the German Association of Forensic Medicine. Professor Hackman has undertaken research in this area and has authored chapters on this subject, is a co-editor on two texts on human identification, has over 20 peer-reviewed publications, and has authored many book chapters.

Professor Hackman is currently Chair of the Forensic Anthropology group at the Royal Anthropological Institute, a Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute, and a Member of the Royal Society of Biology. Professor Hackman was the lead author for the UK Code of Practice in Forensic Anthropology published by the Forensic Regulator and the Royal Anthropological Institute, our professional body. She was also the lead author for the Judicial Primer in Forensic Anthropology, published by the Royal Society and Royal Society of Edinburgh.

## **Mr Stuart Boyd (Deputy Chair)**

BSc (Hons) Veterinary Sciences, BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Imaging, PGDip Medical Imaging (CT), PGCert Medical Imaging (MRI)

Stuart Boyd is the Lead Paediatric MRI Radiographer in Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and has been involved in paediatric imaging for over 10 years. As part of the work within Leeds, Stuart was the Superintendent Radiographer in the Leeds Dental Institute before moving into cross sectional imaging, further specialising in Paediatric MRI, Stuart holds post graduate qualifications in Computed Tomography (CT) and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI).

Alongside the clinical role, Stuart undertakes clinical teaching and academic lecturing, Stuart is a guest lecturer for both the University of Leeds and the University of Bradford, lecturing on Dental imaging and Paediatric MRI. Providing practical and theoretical teaching to undergraduate radiographers, post graduate radiographers and undergraduate dental students.

Prior to working within the NHS, Stuart completed a degree in veterinary sciences, at the Royal Veterinary College (University of London), specialising in bone development and the locomotor biomechanics of muscle and joints. Research interests in this area include mammalian muscle and limb bone architecture, and the development of long and flat bones in utero and the musculoskeletal factors that affect them.





## Dr Sally Andrews

BDS (Lond), LDSRCS (Eng), DPDS (Bristol), MSc (Forensic Odontology), DipFHID (Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine), PhD (Cantab)

Sally Andrews qualified as a dentist in 1982 from Guy's Hospital Dental School and, since gaining a Master's Degree in forensic odontology in 2011, has been particularly interested in dental age estimation (DAE). Dr Andrews' PhD research study regarding dental development set out to answer the question of whether there is an ethnic difference in dental development, especially with regard to the 18-year-old threshold where the third molar is of particular importance. The study involved 5,590 subjects aged 6-24 years using existing radiographs held by the King's College Dental Institute at Guy's Hospital and is, to Dr Andrews' knowledge, the largest study of its kind, and the first to compare self-assigned Black ethnic and White ethnic groups in the UK. At each of the eight Demirjian third molar developmental stages, of all third molars, subjects of Black ancestry were highly significantly younger compared to those of White ancestry with mean ages for males and females generally at least one year and 1.5 years apart respectively. Wide age ranges were seen for all third molar developmental stages in both ethnic groups. Dr Andrews is consequently familiar with exactly how DAE is carried out and the many factors that affect accuracy and reliability.

Dr Andrews has worked in various settings, mainly for the NHS, and has been working independently as a forensic odontologist for dental identification and dental aspects of criminal cases since September 2016 in England and Wales. Dr Andrews holds a Diploma in Forensic Human Identification and has been a member of the UK Disaster Victim Identification Team since 2011. Dr Andrews currently serves as Committee Member and Conference Organiser for the British Association for Forensic Odontology (BAFO).



## Professor Tim Cole

Tim Cole is professor of medical statistics at the Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health, University College London, where he has worked since 1998. Prior to that he was with the Medical Research Council, initially at the Pneumoconiosis Research Unit in South Wales, and then from 1975 at the Dunn Nutrition Unit in Cambridge.

He has longstanding interests in human growth and development, his research career of over fifty years focusing on the statistics of anthropometry and growth assessment in the broadest sense. This includes obesity indices such as BMI, and life-course and inter-generational aspects of anthropometry. He invented the LMS method for constructing growth reference centile charts, and also the SITAR growth curve model which estimates the timing and intensity of the pubertal growth spurt in individuals. He has published over 600 peer-reviewed research papers, with over 120,000 Google citations.

His interest in forensic age assessment started in 2011, when he was invited to give evidence to an Australian age assessment hearing about the likely age of an Indonesian fisherman accused of people smuggling. The case was dismissed and the fisherman repatriated, in a pattern that was repeated in other cases where he gave evidence. Since then he has given evidence in age assessment cases in England, Scotland, Norway and Sweden. In 2022 he was appointed a member of the Home Office's interim Age Estimation Scientific Advisory Committee.



## **Dr Tabitha Randell**

Dr Tabitha Randell is a consultant in paediatric endocrinology and diabetes at Nottingham Children's Hospital. She has been a consultant since March 2003 and has more than 22 years' specialist experience in paediatric endocrinology. A significant part of a paediatric endocrinologist's workload is assessing growth and puberty, whether early, within the normal range or delayed. This includes physical examination and reading of bone age X-rays, with timing of puberty strongly influencing the physical growth and development of young people.

Dr Randell is currently Chair of the British Society for Paediatric Endocrinology and Diabetes (BSPED), the professional body which represents all paediatric endocrinologists in the UK and has previously been chair of the BSPED's Clinical Committee. She is also a member of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and one of their representatives on the Age Estimation Scientific Advisory Committee.



## **Professor Denise Syndercombe-Court**

Denise is a scientist, academic, statistician, editor and author of medical and forensic text-books, with over thirty years' experience giving evidence in court as a forensic geneticist. Previously a Senior Lecturer in Forensic Haematology at Bart and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry, she is now a Professor in Forensic Genetics at King's College London. Her expertise relates to DNA analysis for identification, both analysis and interpretation and she specialises in the use of modern molecular biology techniques to provide genetic intelligence, including age assessment, for use in civil and criminal justice. She is a member of many scientific bodies and heads an analytical laboratory in human identification as part of King's Forensics, forming the UK arm of a European expert network in forensic genetics. As a member of the UK Home Office Biometrics and Forensic Ethics Group she also has an active interest in promoting an ethical view of science, and especially in the use of DNA in justice to a wide audience.



## Dr Allison Ward

Dr Allison Ward is an NHS Consultant Community Paediatrician specialising in the health and wellbeing of vulnerable children. She works across three central London NHS Foundation Trusts (The Royal Free London, CNWL and University College London Hospitals) and has been a named doctor for safeguarding and children looked after in Camden since 2015. She has worked in the NHS for twenty years, and her current clinical work involves the holistic health assessment of separated children (also known as UASC / unaccompanied asylum-seeking children) in a weekly dedicated paediatric clinic for children in care. Dr Ward is founder/lead of the NCL (North Central London) integrated health network for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, and co-founder/lead of the UCLH RESPOND Integrated Refugee Health Service. She is chair of the UCLH RESPOND Complex Refugee Health Advice and Guidance Panel and has delivered multi-agency training in safeguarding children and refugee health at ISPCAN, The London School of Paediatrics, UCL and LSHTM. Dr Ward is a member of the Royal College of Paediatrics and a co-founder/lead of their “How to Manage: Refugee and asylum-seeking children and young people” course.