

This response was submitted to the Call for Evidence held by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics on Genome editing between 15 May 2017 and 14 July 2017. The views expressed are solely those of the respondent.

To: Nuffield Council  
Fm: Richard Hayes

Re: Genome Editing: call for Evidence

I'd be grateful if you could tell, in your final report, why none of the three scenarios in the accompanying survey address the potential harm that the development and use of heritable human gene editing might entail for the wider human community. The scenarios ask us to approve or disapprove of procedures that would allow the desires of a single couple to be fulfilled, as if the rest of society – indeed, the entire human community – simply did not exist. In a world as beset as ever with class, racial and national antagonism, the development and use of heritable human gene editing would launch us into an era of high-tech eugenics that would make the crude and brutal eugenics of the early 20th century pale in comparison. It would be inexcusable, absolute folly. In truth, launching humanity into an era of high-tech eugenics, one that would irrevocably inscribe inequality into the human genome itself, would be nothing less than a crime against humanity.

Richard Hayes, PhD  
Executive Director *emeritus*  
Center for Genetics and Society