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 Professor of Paediatrics

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 17 SEP 1999

Una O'Brian
 The Secretary
 The Bristol Royal Infirmary Inquiry
 2-10 Temple Way
 Bristol
 BS2 0BY



**UNIVERSITY OF
 CAMBRIDGE**

Department of Paediatrics

17th September 1999

IAH/ak

Dear Ms O'Brian

I acknowledge your letter of 21st of July 1999. I had telephoned a member of your staff in order to discuss how I should respond to the questions posed in your letter. I indicated that there were documents I would need in order to construct a comprehensive response but I was advised to proceed along the lines of a preliminary response and your office would decide thereafter if it would be appropriate to send me further documentation.

My present position is Professor of Paediatrics and Head of Department at the University of Cambridge and I hold an Honorary Contract as a Consultant Paediatrician with the Addenbrooke's NHS Trust. I am also a Visiting Consultant Paediatric Endocrinologist to Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children. I left Cardiff in September 1989 to take up my post in Cambridge. I had worked in the Department of Child Health in Cardiff for 10 years having been appointed in 1979 as a Senior Lecturer and Honorary Consultant Paediatric Endocrinologist, with later promotion to Reader in Child Health. Incidentally, I worked at the Bristol Children's Hospital for one year between 1978 and 1979 as a Locum Consultant Paediatrician.

I was Chairman of the Division of Child Health in 1986-1988 under the old Cogwheel system. It is perhaps in that context that I have now been asked to give my opinion concerning matters related to the Inquiry. Before I address comments related to Issues D2 – D5 and D8, I must inform you that my clinical practice in Cardiff was predominantly related to childhood endocrine diseases and diabetes while I also participated in the general on-call rota. I was not involved in the neonatal service nor did I have any particular involvement with cardiac cases, especially of a complex nature. It is in that context that I respond as follows to the list of Issues:

- 1 (D2) I was not in a position to judge the paediatric cardiac surgical service in Bristol based on any specific cases for reasons already stated. I had formed an impression that the service for complex cardiac cases was less than satisfactory if only on the basis that the pattern of referral of any cases from Cardiff utilised centres other than Bristol. In particular, cases were referred to Southampton, Great Ormond Street and the Brompton. That transportation of cases to Southampton which would have travelled passed Bristol is illustrative of the

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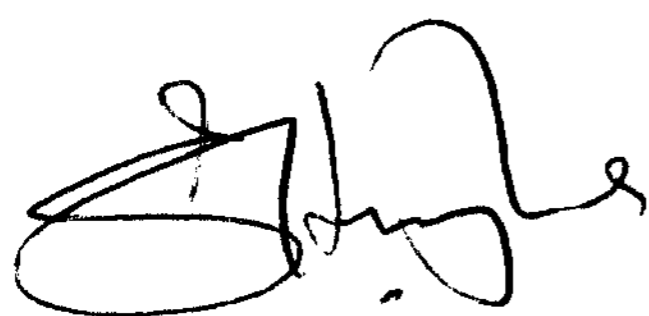
concern prevalent at that time regarding the service in Bristol. Since I left Cardiff in 1989, I am unable to comment regarding the period thereafter to 1995.

- 2 (D3) The sources of information available to me concerning the standards of treatment are no more than the general impression I gleaned by observing the practice of colleagues who were involved in the referral of complex cardiac cases. At Consultant level, these would have included the late Professor Peter Gray who was Professor of Child Health in Cardiff until 1989 and also Dr Roger Verrier-Jones who was a Consultant Paediatrician with an interest in respiratory disorders. He retired from clinical practice earlier this year.
- 3 (D4, D5 & D8) It is not possible to provide specific comments on these Issues for reasons already stated. It is relevant to comment that I was aware of on-going discussions regarding the case for establishing a paediatric cardiac centre for Wales which should be sited in Cardiff at the University Hospital of Wales. The concern about services provided in Bristol would have arisen in discussions, but that was not the prime reason for making a case to establish a Welsh centre. Rather, it was proposed on the basis of a clinical need for a population at that time of 2.2-2.4 M and the problems of often having to transport very sick infants over long distances. I was certainly strongly in favour of that development and I used the opportunity when I was Chairman of the Division of Child Health to state the case whenever it was appropriate to do so. I firmly supported the opinion that appointing a paediatric cardiologist without the concomitant appointment of a paediatric cardiac surgeon who would undertake surgery in infants less than one year of age would not be a viable option. It gave me enormous pleasure to see the fruits of those labours realised in 1989/90 when a purpose-built paediatric cardiac unit was opened in Cardiff with appropriately trained staff.

It must be stated that much of the drive and energy for realising this development came from the persistent endeavours of Professor Andrew Henderson who was Professor of Cardiology in Cardiff during that period. His clinical practice was in adult cardiology yet he was an indefatigable worker in furthering the cause of establishing a paediatric cardiac centre in Cardiff. It is my recollection of the time that Dr Roger Verrier-Jones was also extremely active in that regard. Issue D8 refers to involvement with the parents or guardians of children with cardiac problems. Again, I was not involved in specific cases but I was well aware of the extremely active support group entitled "Heart Circle in Wales". I do not recall making any specific negative comments to any members of this group concerning the Bristol service. Discussions were focused more on the problems of not having a cardiac centre in Wales and how this could best be rectified.

I would emphasise that this response is based on recollections of events occurring about 15 years ago. I would normally have wanted to consult Minutes of relevant meetings including Division of Child Health meetings which took place under my Chairmanship.

Yours sincerely



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