

## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Present Facilities

Facilities in Wales for the investigation and surgical treatment of children with heart disease exist only in Cardiff and are scant. No beds are specifically allocated to paediatric cardiology, children being accommodated on general paediatric wards in the University Hospital of Wales as need arises. The cardiac catheter room facilities are shared with the adult cardiology workload. Paediatric cardiac surgery is subject to the same constraints as adult cardiac surgery. There is no full-time paediatric cardiologist; the service is at present provided by one consultant practising both adult and paediatric cardiology. It was previously agreed that an average usage was 4 beds in the paediatric wards, although there was no increase in the paediatric bed compliment at the University Hospital of Wales to accommodate the 4 paediatric cardiology beds transferred from Sully Hospital in 1978. More recently, the pressure on paediatric beds from other specialities appears to have increased. Nevertheless it would seem important that 4 beds are made available for paediatric cardiology until the new paediatric ward opens.

### 2.2 Paediatric Cardiology Clinics in Wales at present

North Wales is served by cardiologists from Liverpool who carry out 22 clinics per year. Clinics are held in Wrexham, Rhyl and Bangor.

Mid Wales receives a visit from a cardiologist from Cardiff who performs a clinic in Aberystwyth 4 times a year, seeing mainly adults, but small numbers of older children also.

South Wales is served principally by one cardiologist from Cardiff who, in addition to holding weekly paediatric clinics in the University Hospital, performs clinics in Newport (12/year), East Glamorgan (3/year), Camarthen (5/year), Swansea (3/year) and Pontypridd (4/year). In addition, a cardiologist from London performs clinics in Bridgend 5 times per year, seeing patients referred from paediatricians in Bridgend, Swansea, Neath and Pontypridd.

### 2.3 Present referral patterns

#### (a) Paediatric Cardiology

Gwynedd, Clwyd, Northern Dyfed and Northern Powys. All neonatal and infant emergencies and almost all older children are referred to Liverpool. Small numbers of older children from Northern Dyfed are referred to Cardiff.

Southern Dyfed: Almost all children are referred to Cardiff.

West Glamorgan: Almost all neonatal and infant emergencies are referred directly to London, the majority going to the Hammersmith Hospital and the remainder equally divided between the Brompton Hospital, the National Heart Hospital and Great Ormond Street Hospital. Of the 4 paediatricians in West Glamorgan, 2 refer all their older children to a visiting cardiologist from the Hammersmith Hospital at her Bridgend clinic and 2 refer some older children direct to London but most to Cardiff.

Mid Glamorgan: Most neonatal and infant emergencies are referred directly to London; a small number go to Cardiff. Three of the five paediatricians refer their older children to the Hammersmith cardiologist at Bridgend. The other 2 refer to Cardiff.

South Glamorgan: Almost all neonatal and infant emergencies and older children are referred to Cardiff.

Gwent and Southern Powys: Most neonatal and infant emergencies are referred to Cardiff except when the paediatric cardiologist is unavailable, in which case they are referred to Bristol (very small numbers). Most older children also go to Cardiff apart from those living in the Chepstow area who are referred to Bristol.

#### (b) Paediatric Cardiac Surgery

All children requiring cardiac surgery seen by cardiologists in England or visiting from England are referred for surgery to their surgical colleagues in England.

Of children requiring surgery referred to Cardiff, two thirds are referred to cardiac surgeons in Cardiff, the remaining third being shared between surgeons at the Brompton Hospital, Harefield Hospital, Great Ormond Street Hospital and the National Heart Hospital.

#### 2.4 The size of the problem

Figures are available from paediatricians and cardiologists indicating the numbers of Welsh children who underwent cardiac catheterisation and cardiac surgery in 1978.

##### Cardiac Catheterisation, 1978

Liverpool	110	
Hammersmith	45	
Other London hospitals	15	
Cardiff	52	(23%)
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	222	or 80/million population