

**VISIT TO THE BRISTOL ROYAL INFIRMARY**  
**& BRISTOL ROYAL HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN**  
**ON 22<sup>ND</sup> JULY 1999**  
**BY THE PANEL OF THE BRI PUBLIC INQUIRY**

Present: Ian Kennedy  
Rebecca Howard  
Brian Jarman  
Mavis Maclean

Accompanied by, from the Secretariat:

Una O'Brien  
Richard Green  
Theresa Abrefa

**VISIT TO THE BRISTOL ROYAL INFIRMARY**

1. The Panel were met at reception by Rachel Ferris, General Manager and joined briefly by Jeremy Martin, Associate General Manager, Cardiothoracic Services. They were shown into a teaching room on level six and briefed by Fiona Thomas, Clinical Nurse Manager for Cardiac Surgery on the layout and changes to Ward Five. Ms Thomas then showed the Panel around the unit.

**Ward 5A**

2. Ms Thomas pointed out the old nursery area which is now a ward; a clinical room, and a shower room. This area had been the nursery between 1988 and 1995 when it contained four beds. The doors at the end of the corridor were used in an emergency to gain access to the high dependency unit.

**Main Corridor**

3. The Panel walked down the main corridor and were shown into the patients' dining room, adjacent to a consultant's room. They saw the relatives' kitchen area and a consultant's office which, between 1988 and 1995 was a play room. They were also shown the Clinical

Director's office, formerly Mr Wisheart's office. Next door was a secretaries' office and the intensivist's office.

4. The Panel proceeded along the main corridor past the staff coffee room, patients' toilet and Ms Thomas' office, which used to be the blood gas room. They saw the relatives' sitting room where relatives who preferred not to go back to the Blaise or Wiltshire bedrooms sometimes slept overnight. Next door, the room which had been Mr Dhasmana's was pointed out, as was the Senior House Officer's room, through some double doors. At the end of the corridor, the Panel saw what will become direct access to the new children's hospital.

#### **Ward 5b – ITU**

5. The Panel saw the eight beds which comprise the ITU; Ms Thomas said that two of these beds had been reserved for children. In addition, the Panel saw the high dependency unit with seven beds.
6. Moving on, the Panel took a lift to level four. This was the lift used to move children pre- and post-operatively between floors. Ms Thomas explained the changes that had been made since the late 1980s and early 1990s. She pointed to the current day theatres, which are in the location where paediatric cardiac surgery had been performed during the period under examination by the Inquiry.

#### **Ward 6 – Relatives Room**

7. The Panel returned to level six. They walked to the Relatives' room, adjacent to Ward 6. The Panel were shown the corridor outside what used to be the Blaise and Wiltshire rooms. Ms Thomas said that these had been self contained with washing facilities and a telephone.

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8. The Panel walked up St Michael's Hill from the BRI to the BRHSC where they were introduced to Ian Barrington, the General Manager and Dr David Hughes, Clinical Director.

9. On the ground floor, the Panel saw the ambulance bay; casualty area, the resuscitation area which had been expanded in 1987, and divided into two separate parts. One area was specifically designated for the use of smaller babies. They also saw the outpatients' department.

### **Cardiac Catheter Unit**

10. The Panel then went down to the lower ground floor and were shown the theatres which were developed in 1987, where diagnostic and interventional catheters are performed. The Panel were introduced to Nurse Sue Simpson who worked on the unit. She indicated the location of the room, on the floor above, where echocardiographs were performed.

### **Echo Room – Cardiac Surgery**

11. The Panel walked to the ground floor. Nurse Simpson said babies were scanned here on this level. In addition, cardionimos, an investigation which traces the heartbeat, were performed, and ambulatory cardiac monitoring was also used.

### **Ward 36**

12. The Panel proceeded to level 1 and were informed that at the end of the corridor was the former mortuary. The Panel were shown into Ward 36.

### **Intensive Care Unit Area**

13. Next to Ward 36, Mr Barrington showed the Panel a disused area that had been the Baby Unit. He said that, originally, the ITU had been at the end of the baby unit and had contained 3/4 beds. The ITU was then moved into a new block in 1987 and the capacity was expanded to seven beds. The area is now only used when it is needed to increase the number of beds in ITU in winter.
14. The Panel were shown an area within the ITU area where equipment was kept for retrieval of ill babies.

### **The ITU**

15. The ITU, which was next door, had originally been set up with seven beds; it had since been expanded in 1994 to twelve beds; there was a parents' room.

### **Main Surgical Ward – Ward 33**

16. Across the corridor the Panel were shown the ward which had fifteen beds. It had been upgraded in 1990/91. In 1993 the play area was added and there is now a full time play leader.

### **Operating Theatres**

17. On the same floor the Panel were shown the two theatres which had been constructed in 1981, and were now used for cardiac as well as for general paediatric surgery.

18. Across the corridor the Panel saw the recovery area and an operating theatre which was built in 1995, so that open heart surgery could be undertaken at the BRHSC.

BRI Inquiry Secretariat

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