

## FORWARD

The provision of Supra Regional Services cost over £99.3m in 1991-92 and, amongst other things, funded the provision of 432 heart, heart/lung or lung transplants, 386 liver transplants and 1561 open/closed heart operations on neonatals and infants under the age of one.

It is generally accepted that, since their creation in 1983, the supra regional service arrangements have:

- \* led to continually improving levels of patient care with outcomes which, in many cases, compare favourably with those obtained elsewhere in the world
- \* concentrated the delivery of designated services in a small number of centres likely to produce good results
- \* provided a method of controlled development of newly established (and often expensive) treatments
- \* ensured that the costs of services have been controlled and that funds have been used effectively
- \* meant that quality of service is constantly monitored and improvements sought.

Twelve services, ranging from heart transplantation to the treatment of retinoblastoma, currently have supra regional service designation. All relate to rare, and usually, life threatening conditions.

All supra regional services are centrally funded and are thus "free" to patient's district of residence. This gives the provider units the necessary financial security to provide the service and the confidence to plan its future development in a sensible and controlled way. It also means that health authorities are relieved of the need to reserve funds for the treatment of conditions whose incidence is, by definition, rare and difficult to predict.

In this, the first Annual Report of the Supra Regional Services Advisory Group, each of the designated services is described in detail and a list of the units providing them is given. In addition the report explains the background to the supra regional arrangements and the criteria that have to be met before a service may be designated.

I hope you find the report informative and helpful.

Sir Michael Carlisle  
Chairman, Supra Regional  
Services Advisory Group