

DOH 4 File SRF 1 Vol. 20

IN CONFIDENCE - NOT FOR DISCLOSURE OR PUBLICATION

DESIGNATION ISSUES

SRS(92)2

(b) NEONATAL AND INFANT CARDIAC SURGERY

Background

1. At its last meeting the Advisory Group reviewed the provision of neonatal and infant cardiac surgery and considered whether, in view of the number of units undertaking this work, the service could continue to be designated. Members were in favour of continued designation and asked whether there were any prospects of identifying specific operations rather than units which might be designated or whether any units might be de-designated. Those which had been identified by the Society of Cardiothoracic Surgeons and the Royal College of Surgeons as being most at risk were Bristol, Newcastle, Guy's, and Harefield. The latter had been designated jointly with the Brompton, but, as reported in SRS(90)6 (Copy attached at Flag A), the joint arrangement was not working in practice.

2. Members had considered a paper SRS(90)15 (Copy attached at Flag B) which had provided more information on the units at risk. Bristol and Newcastle were considered to be important on geographical grounds but officials were asked to discuss with both units ways in which the activity might be increased. Officials had visited all the units and the Annex A to SRS (90)15 set out details of the situation at Harefield and Guy's Hospitals.

3. Members accepted the conclusions set out in the paper SRS(90)15 that in general terms, all other factors being equal, there is a strong case for Bristol and Newcastle in terms of geographical spread. They agreed that it would be difficult if not invidious to de-designate the centres in question on the basis of surgical expertise, and doubted whether it was possible to do so on the basis of referral pattern. Members agreed that designation should continue but that the situation should be kept under review.

4. The activity in the this service is set out on a sheet tabled at the September 1991 meeting (copy attached Flag C), and the latest activity figures for the designated units up to 31 December 1991 are attached (Flag D). Mortality data from each of the designated units will be tabled at the meeting.