

IN CONFIDENCE - NOT FOR DISCLOSURE OR PUBLICATION

DRAFT SRS(91)

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 which might be designated rather than units 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, the joint arrangement was not working in practice.
2. Members had ^{previously} considered a paper, SRS(90)15, which had provided more information on the units at risk. Bristol and Newcastle were considered to be essential 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. 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.

Present position

4. The present position is that there are 10 designated units. The Advisory Group has also received bids from two units wishing to be designated for these services, namely Leicester and Oxford. In addition, it is likely that the Welsh Affairs Committee meeting on 18 December, will agree to the rapid development of services at the University Hospital of Wales. The Welsh Unit will significantly impact on the referral to the British Unit and perhaps also to the Liverpool Unit. A situation now exists where three non designated units will be secure in their funding arrangements and the total number of units providing these service in England and Wales will now be 13.