

NICK HARVEY MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Sir Terence English
c/o Papworth Hospital
Papworth Everard
CAMBRIDGE
CB3 8RE

18 January 1996

Please quote ref:50516

Dear Sir Terence,

My assistance has been sought by my constituents, Mrs and Mrs Steve Willis of [REDACTED] whose infant son died in surgery at the Bristol Royal Infirmary on 25 May 1993 while undergoing an arterial switch operation.

As there had been for some time troubling accounts of a high mortality rate for paediatric cardiac surgery at the BRI, I have been in correspondence and contact with a number of people in the health field, both in Bristol and in London. Consequently, I have a rapidly growing file of correspondence, much of which contains conflicting reports.

Dr John Zorab, then Director of Anaesthetics at Frenchay Hospital in Bristol and a member of the Specialist Accreditation Committee of the Royal College of Surgeons, has recently confirmed that he spoke to you as President of the Royal College of Surgeons in late 1991 or early 1992, expressing the deeply held concerns of clinicians at the BRI about the mortality results for paediatric open-heart surgery in that hospital.

I have received a letter from a senior medical officer at the Department of Health stating that, "The Royal College of Surgeons was asked to advise the Supra Regional Services Advisory Group (SRSAG) only on whether the service for Neonatal and Infant Cardiac Surgery should remain designated and funded as a supra regional service. Although the report listed the then designated centres including Bristol Royal Infirmary, there was no discussion of the results of surgery for the different centres. In the event, the SRSAG decided to de-designate the service on the grounds that service provision had expanded to the point that it no longer met the very tight supra regional designation criteria".

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