

13/3/96

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*From the Master*  
*Sir Terence English KBE FRCS*

A

13th March 1996

The Rt Hon Nick Harvey MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

*Dear Mr. Harvey,*

Further to my letter of 11th March, I have at last found all the correspondence relating to neo-natal and infant cardiac surgery at the Bristol Royal Infirmary and would ask you to disregard much of what I wrote in my last letter, which you would have received two days ago.

Dr Zorab did indeed write to me but this was on 15th July 1992. I had demitted office as President of the Royal College of Surgeons on 8th July, but I consulted with my successor, Professor Norman Browse, and I also reviewed the statistics in the report of the Working Party, which had been commissioned by the Supra Regional Services Advisory Group in February 1992 and which I had been instrumental in setting up.

I should point out that towards the end of 1991 the Department of Health began to look seriously at de-designating neo-natal and infant cardiac surgery as a Supra Regional Service. I was against this as I felt that designation of the service and of the individual Units, who received top-sliced funding for the work that they were contracted to do, was the best way of preserving quality in this complex and highly skilled area of surgery, where it was important to concentrate resources and staff on a cost effective basis.

In any event, the remit of the Working Party was to report on the activity in neo-natal and infant cardiac surgery in the designated Units in England. This had become necessary as there were already ten centres designated by the Department of Health and two other centres had applied for designation, whereas the total allowed under the Supra Regional Designation Scheme was nine Units.