

**RESPONSE OF JAMES D WISHEART TO THE STATEMENT BY
HELEN STRATTON, DATED 21ST JULY 1999**

Ref: WIT 0256.0001-0014

**1 .Para 11 The Meeting with Helen Stratton, Helen Vegoda,
Julia Thomas, Hyam Joffe and myself.**

COMMENT

The background to this meeting was that Helen Vegoda was established as a paediatric cardiac counsellor in the BRHSC and the BRI. Helen Stratton was newly appointed as a Paediatric Cardiac Liason Nurse based mainly at the BRI. The two Helens needed to set out how they would work together in order to fulfil their professional responsibilities. Instead, there was a clash of personalities and some polarisation of viewpoint between them. This led to the meeting described in Para 11, the object of which was to help Helen Vegoda and Helen Stratton resolve their differences and reach a working understanding.

It was not my role to reinforce the polarisation by adopting one of the entrenched positions, rather to facilitate the development of a working understanding by supporting both counsellors.

I am disappointed if Helen Stratton felt that my position was not supportive of her.

2. Para 13. Helen Vegoda as a Paediatric *Cardiac* Counsellor

COMMENT

I am surprised and find it difficult to accept that at the time of her appointment Helen Stratton did not know that Helen Vegoda was a paediatric *cardiac* counsellor, as her presence and her activities were well known. Moreover both appointments were initiated and made by the Heart Circle.

3. Para 28 The time children spent in Theatre

“... I began feeling concerned about the time children spent in Theatre...”

“ I would start a shift at 7.30am going down to theatre with the parents and often be there until as late as 11pm, waiting for the child to come back from Theatre.”

COMMENT

There were a very small number of children who may have been in theatre as late as 11pm for some reason. To suggest that this happened often is quite misleading; it was very very unusual. There were, and I'm sure are, occasional cases in all centres who are in theatre for an extended length of time

4. Para 30 What Doctor Bolsin told Miss Stratton.

"...That he had expressed his concerns to John Roylance and to Mr Wisheart..."

COMMENT

I presume that comment on what Dr Bolsin said or did will come later when his own statements are being considered.

5. Para 31 Fiona Thomas and Lesley Salmon bringing concerns to a Directorate meeting

COMMENT

I do not recall either Fiona Thomas or Lesley Salmon raising concerns of the type referred to by Miss Stratton at a Directorate meeting or elsewhere.

6. Para 38 The Culture of the Unit

"The unit did not have a culture that encouraged or supported the expression of any views."

COMMENT

While it is true that the multidisciplinary evening meetings were Medical and Audit became Clinical (multidisciplinary) only in the mid 90s, there were a range of channels and fora where opinions were both *sought and offered* from nurses as well as doctors. These included the meetings of the Subdirectorate of Cardiac Surgery from 1990-91 onwards, the regular ward rounds and ad hoc groups to discuss specific projects, lectures or meetings involving surgeons and nursing staff at unit level in particular and many others. I cannot accept the view that the unit did not encourage "the expression of views." I cannot challenge Helen Stratton's perception of matters but certainly my aim as well as providing leadership was indeed to encourage and include all members of the team in making policy and in individual decisions.