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26 January 1995

Dr Peter Doyle
Senior Medical Officer
Department of Health
Health Care (Medical) Division
Eileen House
80-94 Newington Causeway
LONDON SE1 6EF

Dear Dr Doyle

I am writing in response to your letter dated 25 January, and I would like to address the following issues:-

- (a) Our response to the immediate situation created by your letter.
- (b) A statement of the action which the Trust has taken to resolve the issues to which you refer.
- (c) Some comments on the way in which this matter has developed.

The Trust has decided not to perform complex neonatal or infant open heart surgery until there has been resolution of the conflicting professional advice. We would reserve the right to exercise our judgement in the best interests of the patient in an emergency situation.

The Trust is committed to the maintenance of the highest standards throughout Paediatric Cardiac Surgery and recognises that there is always room for improvement in this specialty in which every operation carries a major risk of death, and in which there is continuing change and development. In order to resolve the conflicting professional advice, the assistance of external experts is being sought. They are being approached following consultation with the President of the British Cardiac Society. We hope that they will be able to act promptly. The Trust will afford them every facility needed to carry out their task. Mr Marc de Leval has agreed to assist in this matter, a Paediatric Cardiologist is being approached. If it is possible to find a suitable third person without causing undue delay, we shall do so.