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Dr Peter Doyle

26 January 1995

We are concerned about the manner in which this matter has developed, apparently on the basis of views or whispers by "staff of the Bristol Royal Infirmary and outside Cardiac Surgeons". We do not know whether any facts are on your table. We have had no opportunity to inform you of the results of our work which we are always ready to do, and which was done annually in the context of being a supra-regional centre between 1984 and 1993. Yet we now find ourselves with no practical alternative to a temporary stoppage of infant work following your letter. The bold steps which were taken last year in appointing a new Paediatric Cardiac Surgeon and deciding to move the childrens' work to the Children's Hospital was primarily in relation to a specific problem of a particular operation, a problem which we fully acknowledge, and no neonatal switch operation has been carried out since. The issue appears to have widened to all complex neonatal and infant surgery for reasons which are far from clear.

We hope that after the external experts have reported we shall have an opportunity to meet and discuss these general issues with the goal of establishing more satisfactory lines of communication for the future. I would repeat that we stand ready at any time, including now, to put the results of our work before you should you so wish.

Finally, may I respond to two details of your recent letter.

There was no discussion, statement or understanding, written or verbal, by any representative of the Trust about stopping infant cardiac surgery from last September; we cannot help in understanding why you should have thought there was.

Secondly, you state that two more children have been operated on with unfortunate results. Two infants with complex abnormalities have indeed been operated since 12 January. One of these is making a good progress and has left intensive care, and the other more recent patient, although still in intensive care, is making progress. The term "unfortunate results" does not seem to apply in any way to this situation and it would be most regrettable if this impression has contributed to the current escalation of the problem.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely

cc Mr R McKinlay, Chairman UBH NHS Trust
 Professor G Angelini, Dept of Cardiac Surgery
 Dr K Morgan, Director of Public Health, Avon Health
 Dr G Scally, Regional Medical Officer, S & WHRA

John Roylance
 Chief Executive

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