

PREFACE

This strategy takes into account the state of the present services, future demands, resource requirements and the policies of the District and Regional Health Authority.

Professional representation has indicated a desire to increase the quality of services generally and to maintain or improve access to services in Bristol Maternity and Children's Hospitals for obstetric and neonatal referrals from within and outside the South Western Region. A key request was an increase in nursing levels to manage the desired workload without undue stress on those concerned.

The policies of the Regional Health Authority require priority for development to be given to a number of non-acute services. The District Health Authority in following Regional policy guidelines has advised that in the present financial circumstances of the District no additional District resources can be put to acute services. Unit and District Managers have considered therefore proposals for the strategy with an assumption that resources for neonatal care services will continue to be available at existing levels.

The strategy has been accepted as one which takes into account a Regional commitment, "to provide adequate facilities for the intensive care of infants (in consultation with neighbouring Authorities if necessary)" and a pragmatic assessment of the opportunities for implementation throughout the decade. The adequacy of facilities for intensive care contributed by this District will be determined on a year to year basis in the light of developments in other Districts and agreement on the best balance of all aspects of obstetric, neonatal and children's care within the District's Children's and Maternity Unit.

Members of the Authority's Policy, Planning and Resource Committee and District Managers acknowledge that in interpreting the policy of the Authority and accepting the resource assumption for planning that there will be a shortfall of attainment for future care of neonates. Members are not unaware of the extra strain which will be placed upon staff in the exercise of their professional judgement and in their relationship with parents. If the District's resource allocation increases in the future and the policies of the Authority change, the opportunity to respond to future demand, which are recognised in this paper, will be taken.