

*Conrad.*

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Your reference

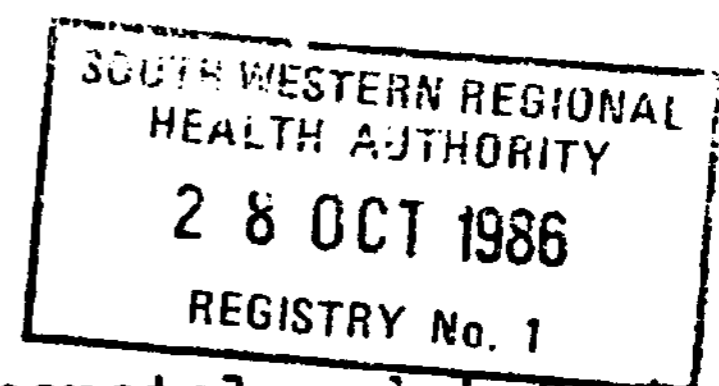
Our reference

Date

27 October 1986

Dear Dr Pitman

SUPRA REGIONAL SERVICES



Thank you for your letter of 21 October about neonatal and infant cardiac surgery.

There are two points that I must make at the outset. The first is that the supra regional arrangements apply only to England, and the exclusion of Wales was made clear in HN(83)36. The second is that they are essentially funding arrangements, and we have no powers to determine referral practices which remain a clinical responsibility; HN(83)36 discourages health authorities from providing supra regional services in units that are not designated as supra regional centres, but this is not binding on clinicians.

Having said that, I confirm that when the decision was made to designate Bristol as a supra regional centre for neonatal and infant cardiac surgery, it was anticipated that it would treat babies referred from South and West Wales. The supra regional procedures would have enabled us to allocate additional funds to the Bristol centre as the workload increased. We are anxious to do what we can to encourage referrals from Wales because we would like to see activity levels in Bristol rise, but there is no mechanism which enables us to influence clinicians, particularly Welsh ones since health services in Wales are not a DHSS responsibility.

I have discussed this matter with Dr Jennifer Lloyd in Welsh Office, and I am copying to her both your letter and my reply. If there is anything she wishes to add, no doubt she will be getting in touch.

Yours sincerely

*Antony Hurst*  
A HURST