

(because truth has to be defined in relation to the subject matter of the publication).

Confidentiality:

This area does concern me considerably. I am quite sure that the authors of the report intended the report to be used confidentially and would be concerned if they were not consulted before it had a wider audience.

In addition and in many areas it would be quite normal for a report to be sent to the people commissioning the report in draft form for observations and for corrections of fact.

I think the Trust could be criticised if it did not give the authors of the report a chance to know that there was substantial feeling that there were many factual inaccuracies in the report. As it has come to me many people have detected inaccuracies and know about them. If the Trust does not take action to try to correct the inaccuracies then the Trust could be criticised by those people. "Those people" are as far as I am aware all employees of the Trust and senior employees at that.

Put another way I think the Trust would have to have a very strong reason for saying later that although it knew about a lot of inaccuracies it did nothing to try to correct them.

Correcting errors of fact is quite different from trying to alter views, opinions or recommendations based on facts. The authors of the report ought to be left to make up their own minds as to whether a change in material facts alters the substance of any views, opinions or recommendations. The Trust ought positively not to interfere in that part of the process.

Department of Health:

The Trust agrees broadly with the Department's view that there ought to be openness in the dealings of the Trust with its business. There will be exceptions to this from time to time but the view on this matter is that the provision of paediatric cardiac surgery is a matter of concern to the public and one which the Trust would like to bring to the attention of the public in order that provision in the future may be made in a proper way and at the right place and at the right time.

The re-arrangements that are in hand to transfer such surgery from Bristol Royal Infirmary to Bristol Royal Hospital for Sick Children stands as a positive indication that the Trust is actually doing something on a forward looking basis. This in turn can be tied in long term with the provision of a new Children's Hospital on property belonging to the Trust. The same argument applies to the reason why you commissioned the report having heard about various group or individual views within the Trust staff on the subject.