

1/52

SofS

The Regional Chairmen were happy with the policy but very sensitive about doing this now. Please check with the lead Chairman that this timing is satisfactory to him & his colleagues. I have discussed this with Mr. Malone-Lee.

From: MS(L)

Date: January 1992

cc: Mr Malone-Lee
 Dr Walford
 Mr Dobson
 Dr Rajman
 Mr Canavan

MS(H)
 PS(H).

PROPOSED NATIONAL BLOOD AUTHORITY (NBA)

1 You were concerned that not all the main NHS interests supported the proposal to set up a new National Blood Authority.

2 However, you will recall from the recent meeting with the RHA Chairman that they are now much more supportive of the basic idea of the NBA. I understand too, that the Regional Directors' of Public Health doubts about the principle have also been resolved.

3 However, there are still a number of concerns about the operational details of the NBA. I have discussed these with officials. The main ones seem to be the proposed role of the NBA as the central contracting authority for the supply of blood and blood products to hospitals; its role in allocating capital to the Regional Transfusion Centres in place of the RHAs; the composition of the new NBA which many feared would be too heavily weighted towards the existing Central Blood Laboratories Authority.

4 I believe that the way forward now would be to:-

- i) indicate to those consulted that Ministers accept in principle the idea of a NBA.
- ii) set up a technical working group to resolve the concerns about the operational details of the NBA.

The terms of reference and composition I have in mind are set out in the annex.

5 I would ask the Technical Working Group to report by the end of March 1992. The NBA might formally come into existence on 1 October, but operate in shadow form some months earlier so that it could influence the contracts to be drawn up for 1993/94.

6 Since there is general support for the basic idea of the NBA, I believe that there are no political reasons for not taking the idea forward. Setting up the Technical Working Group should provide the main NHS interests with more time to consider the operational details which concern them and the opportunity to influence the decisions made on those matters.

Conclusion

7 If you are content, I will ask officials to:

- inform those consulted that Ministers have welcomed the support from those consulted over the setting up of the NBA and have accepted this basic idea. That a Technical Working Group is to be set up to consider the concerns over the operational mechanisms of the new body;
- proceed to set up the Working Group.

8 While the Working Group is doing its work, officials should try to identify suitable candidates for the Chairmanship of the new NBA, who should be independent of the interests of either the NBTS or CBLA, so that he/she can present an impartial view.

GRO-C

PS(L)