

1162

John
could we discuss para 7, please.

GRO-C 7/92

Mr Canavan HC(A)4B

From: Roger Scofield HC(A)4

Date: 3 February 1992

Copy: Mr Wilson HC(A)

NATIONAL BLOOD AUTHORITY

1. Reference:

- i) Paul Ahearn's minute to Miss Burnett dated 29 January 1992.
- ii) Strachan Heppell's advice that action to set up the NBA might be put on the back burner for six months.
- iii) Mike Malone-Lee's minute of 24 January 1992

2. I spoke on the telephone to Mike Malone-Lee concerning Paul Ahearn's minute reference (i) in which he was asked to ascertain Health Authority Chairmen's views on the timing of the setting up of the NBA. Mike had just come off the telephone from Sir Michael Carlisle, having previously had a meeting with Sir Colin Walker and Dr Burgess 15 January.

3. The RHA Chairmen were all signed up to the principle of the National Blood Authority but were concerned at the pace of establishing it. They certainly did not want it rushed through before the General Election. Mike Malone-Lee had indicated

- a) A target date for going live of Autumn 1992, and
- b) The setting up of a technical working group to look at the details of operation, etc, and generally to clear the ground.

4. Dr Stuart Burgess had already indicated his wish to address any such working group - see reference (iii).

5. Mike Malone-Lee wished for HC(A)4 to go ahead with the setting up of the working group but to note S of S's wish that this should be pursued quietly.

6. There would be no formal announcement of the Government's decision in principle to go ahead with the National Blood Authority, eg by arranged PQ, but it would be appropriate to write to those playing a lead role in the consultation exercise, including Regional Directors, RGMs, RTCs, etc, saying:

- i) There has been wide support to proposals to set up NBA;
- ii) A number of details yet to be worked out;
- iii) Do not propose to proceed until they have been resolved;

- iv) Setting up of technical working party to address detailed issues against Government's decision in principle to establish NBA.
- v) No dates for implementation to be announced, but let it be known informally that technical working party have been asked to report by end March and target date for new Authority is 1 October 1992.

7. I should be grateful if you would now prepare draft letters to those concerned - the membership of the working party has already been fleshed out - and prepare a note on the issues which need to be addressed, identifying what is the common ground and what has yet to be resolved.

8. I note from Mike Malone-Lee's minute reference (iii) that three issues emerged from the consultation process, viz

- i) The complexities of the contracting process;
- ii) The structure of the NBA; and
- iii) The system of distributing capital to RTCs.

9. We need also to consider what other representation might be appropriate from within the Department, including for example someone from the purchasing area of the NHS ME. Otherwise I suggest that I chair the group with you as secretary and Dr Rejman as a Departmental member.

10. I have already undertaken to visit CBLA 18 February and would now like to arrange to see a local blood transfusion centre before the working party gets going. Could you now please organise this.

11. We agreed that it was not necessary to respond to Ron Wing's letter, although I would give Mike Malone-Lee some comments on the points that he raised. I think what came out of this letter was that in some areas he did not fully understand the proposals. I may be able to take the opportunity of my visit on the 18th to smooth any concerns.

12. I would like to get the invitation letters out within the next few days and then for us to address the details of the working of the group itself.

GRO-C

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