

NATIONAL BLOOD AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP
HELD ON 28 APRIL 1992 AT HANNIBAL HOUSE, ELEPHANT & CASTLE, LONDON

Present:	Mr R M T Scofield ✓	Chairman
	Sir Colin Walker ✓	Chairman, East Anglia RHA
	Dr H H Gunson ✓	National Director NBTS
	Dr M Harrison ✓	Regional Director of Public Health, West Midlands
	Dr R J Moore ✓	Deputy Director NBTS
	Mr B Savery ✓	Finance Director BPL
	Mr T Martin ✓ <i>P Sullivan</i>	Business Manager S Thames RTC
	Dr W Wagstaff ✓ <i>J Wilkinson</i>	Director Trent RTC
	Dr A Rejmam ✓	Department of Health
	Mr M Lally ✓	Department of Health
	Mr P Davenport ✓	Observer Welsh Office
	Mr J Canavan ✓	Secretariat
	Mr J Rutherford ✓	Secretariat

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chairman reported that he had received apologies for absence from Mr Sullivan and Mr Wilkinson and he welcomed Dr Harrison and Mr Martin, who was attending in place of Mr Sullivan.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 APRIL 1992

These minutes were agreed subject to the first sentence of minute 6.2 being amended to read "BPL had never been funded for basic research".

3. THE ROLE OF THE NBA

3.1 Dr Moore introduced the paper "The role of the NBA in supply of blood and plasma". He said that the paper considered the advantage and disadvantages of a series of options which differed in the extent of the NBA's involvement with the RTCs in the supply of cellular products.

The paper concluded that a form of licensing authority would go furthest to meeting the aims of the NBA. It would maximise local autonomy but still give the NBA a strategic role.

3.2 After discussion it was agreed that Dr Moore, Mr Savery and Mr Sullivan were to develop options 5.4 and 5.5 in the paper into a single recommended option for further consideration at the next meeting.

3.3 Dr Moore said that the paper had gone on to consider options for the NBA in respect of the supply of plasma to BPL. After discussion it was agreed that the favoured options were 7.2 proposing the NBA as a central contracting body and 7.3 in which the NBA as the contracting body would retain ownership of the plasma.

3.4 It was agreed that Dr Moore, Mr Savery and Mr Sullivan were to develop these two options for further consideration at the next meeting.

3.5 Mr Canavan introduced his paper "Criteria for considering NBA options". He said that discussion on the previous paper had touched on most of the points that were covered in this paper. Contracts elsewhere in the NHS were mainly between purchasers and providers and the roles were distinct and clearly understood by the parties. Similarly the NBA would need a clear role and one that added something of value to the existing structure if it were to gain credibility. While the NBA would need to be in constant dialogue with the RTCs in order to make informed decisions about the future of the Service, disputes might arise. A feature of NHS contracts was a disputes procedure. It was for consideration whether such a mechanism would be required within the NBA arrangements.

Ultimately, though, the NBA needed the authority to effect changes in the blood services in the best interests of the NHS as a whole.

4. THE OPERATION OF THE NATIONAL DIRECTORATE OF THE NBTS

4.1 Dr Gunson tabled a note outlining the weaknesses that had become apparent in the operation of the National Directorate. The Directorate had lacked the authority to implement national policies when these did not fit in with local priorities.

4.2 The Chairman thanked Dr Gunson for his note which would be used to inform the Committee's discussions on the role of the NBA.

5. CAPITAL

5.1 Mr Canavan tabled the paper "National Blood Authority: Capital Allocation". He said that the paper considered whether there was a need for the NBA to control capital expenditure in the blood services and suggested the principles on which such an arrangement might be based.

5.2 The Chairman said that substantive discussion of this paper would be held over to the next meeting and invited any Member who may have a further papers on the subject to send them to Mr Canavan.

6. EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

6.1 Sir Colin Walker tabled his paper "European Community: some aspects affecting BLA, BPL, and BTS". He said that the real considerations were for fractionated blood products. The UK had always been self-sufficient in whole blood and would not consider importing red cells. Fractionated blood products were now subject to the EC Directive which harmonised the licensing requirements throughout the Community. The Directive encouraged self-sufficiency in blood products derived from unpaid donors. BPL paid a higher price for unpaid UK donor plasma than its rivals did for paid plasma from abroad. In addition these companies could spread their costs over a wider range of pharmaceutical products. In the long term it could be difficult to sustain the UK's position of fractionating its plasma within the health service and there would be pressure overtly to subsidise it or to make the system commercial. One option would be for BPL to become a contract fractionator of NHS plasma and seek to use its spare capacity contracting to fractionate plasma from abroad. Similar models existed elsewhere in Europe.

6.2 In discussion it was said that future consideration of self-sufficiency in the EC would have to take into account developments in Eastern Europe. Self-sufficiency had never been clearly defined in the EC and countries including the UK may take their own line. At this stage there was a great deal of uncertainty over EC developments. The NBA would need to develop a flexible system to cope with changes. BPL would need to be able to react in line with its commercial rivals.

6.3 The Chairman thanked Sir Colin for bringing these issues forward. Seeking solutions was a long-term and beyond the remit of the Working Group but they should bring them out for the NBA to develop.

7. ACTION

It was agreed that:-

- i. Dr Moore, Mr Savery and Mr Sullivan were to develop:
 - a. options 5.4 and 5.5 of their paper with a single recommended option, and
 - b. to develop further options 7.2 and 7.3 of that paper

for consideration at the next meeting;

- ii. Mr Scofield, Dr Gunson and Mr Savery were to continue their meetings to discuss the composition of the NBA and report at the next meeting;

- iii. Mr Scofield, Dr Gunson and Mr Savery were to discuss the relationships of the NBA with BPL, the RTCs and RHAs. Dr Wagstaff was to provide a note on the RTC's relationship with the NBA;

- iv. Mr Canavan was to seek legal advice on the possible functions of the NBA and how they could be given effect in Regulations.

8. FURTHER MEETINGS

Members were reminded that these had been fixed for:

Tuesday 26 May at 11.00 am
Wednesday 10 June at 11.00 am