

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS  
THE ROYAL VICTORIA INFIRMARY  
QUEEN VICTORIA ROAD NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NE1 4LP

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STD 0632

27 November 1972

Dr W B Obank, M.A., M.R., B.Ch.  
Department of Health and Social Security  
Alexander Fleming House,  
Elephant and Castle  
LONDON SE1

Dear Dr Obank

In my capacity as Haemophilia Centre Director I write to ask for the Department's recognition of Newcastle as a Special Treatment Centre. In a recent memorandum (Dr Biggs and Dr Rizza 3.1.72.) it was suggested that Sheffield, Manchester and Oxford be the Special Treatment Centre's for England, and I understand that Edinburgh, Glasgow and Belfast are similarly recognised by their respective authorities.

Several years ago  
At a Meeting of the Newcastle Regional Board attended by medical advisors and medical representatives of the Board it was the unanimous wish of those present that Newcastle should develop into a Special Treatment Centre.

The Newcastle Centre at the Royal Victoria Infirmary has, in spite of financial and staffing problems, a long record of service to haemophilic patients from the Region. Its position has recently been reaffirmed by the Regional Hospital Board and it is partly because of the developments that are now in progress and partly because of the large geographical area and population we serve that we would welcome special consideration by the Department.

The Centre fulfils all the requirements laid down in the Biggs and Rizza memorandum. As senior physician to the Infirmary all adult haemophilic patients are admitted directly to my care, and the recent appointment of Dr Peter Jones as consultant paediatrician with special Regional responsibility to patients with bleeding disorders has resulted in all children being similarly cared for by one physician. Both Dr Jones and I have direct access to the relevant laboratory facilities, and Dr Jones has responsibility for the developing coagulation laboratory in the new Department of Haematology under the direction of Dr W Walker. We are able to perform the full range of investigations necessary for the diagnosis and management of patients with bleeding disorders at all times, and work closely with the Regional Transfusion Centre.

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A new haemophilia unit is scheduled to open in April 1973, and it is hoped that this unit will act as the focal point of the Regional service. Dr Jones is at present engaged in the task of co-ordinating the medical, surgical, dental and social care of all haemophiliacs in the Region with the active co-operation of our colleagues in outlying hospitals. The unit will also permit out-patient therapy for our local population and the provision of a home care programme. We hope to have the services of a full time Sister and auxiliary nursing staff, and have just appointed a full time secretary and a part time social worker to join the established team. This already includes an orthopaedic surgeon, a general surgeon, and dental and genetic advisory services.

We are aware that the major requirement for a Special Treatment Centre must be its ability to treat major complications and undertake surgery. Our record in this field, is, I believe, a good one. Our team have long experience in gastro-intestinal and dental surgery and in recent years have undertaken orthopaedic and neurosurgical operations in safety. We have always worked closely with our colleagues in Oxford, Edinburgh and London and hope that this relationship will continue, but feel that with the obvious exception of Oxford our experience and facilities are now as good as those offered elsewhere.

We wish to continue to develop our experience and service in our own community, and believe that this approach is in the best interests of our patients. We know them and their relatives well; we think that it is often better to watch and observe clinical problems carefully than to act immediately, and we have experience in the detrimental effect of rapid emergency journeys to other parts of the country.

For these reasons we feel that recognition as a Special Treatment Centre would be beneficial to our patients, our developing Regional service, and our staff, and would be grateful for the Department's approval.

Yours sincerely

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Senior Consultant Physician

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Principal Asst. Senior Medical Officer  
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Benfield Road  
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Dr Peter Jones  
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