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NOT FOR PUBLICATION

NATIONAL BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE - JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
(DHSS/NORTH WEST THAMES RHA) FOR THE CENTRAL BLOOD LABORATORIES

Agenda for the 6th Meeting to be held on Wednesday 20 February 1980 at 2.15 pm  
in room 62 Hannibal House, Elephant and Castle.

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the previous meeting - JMC Minutes (79)5 already circulated.
3. Matters arising:
  - (a) Progress with management of BPL estate, letting of cottages and survey of buildings - oral reports by the RHA and Department.
  - (b) Progress with building projects and soil examination - oral reports by Dr Lane and the Department.
  - (c) Progress report on the acquisition of the Harkness Building, Oxford, for the Blood Group Reference Laboratory - oral report by the Department.
  - (d) Charging the Radiochemical Centre, Amersham, for the supply of fibrinogen - oral report by the Department and report on the views of the Scientific and Technical Committee.
  - (e) Charging the Regions for the BPL radio immunoassay.
  - (f) Proportional distribution of blood products - memorandum by the Department *to follow*
  - (g) Release of minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee and the Scientific and Technical Committee to the Staff Side.
4. Future of the Blood Products Laboratory.
5. Action following decisions by Ministers concerning the future of the BPL - oral report by the Department.
6. Review of protected Lister practices (other than pay and conditions) - oral report by the RHA.
7. Report on the last meeting of the Scientific and Technical Committee - minutes of the meeting to follow.
8. Any other business.
9. Date of the next meeting.

DHSS  
February 1980.

*June 15th STC.*

*July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1980 2.15pm*

T E DUTTON  
Secretary

GRO-C

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32/194

## NOT FOR PUBLICATION

## NATIONAL BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE

## JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (DHSS/NORTH WEST THAMES RHA) FOR THE CENTRAL BLOOD LABORATORIES

Minutes of the 6th meeting held on Wednesday, 20 February 1980 at the Department of Health and Social Security, Hannibal House, Elephant and Castle.

## PRESENT:

Dr E L Harris - Chairman  
 Mr W P N Armour  
 Mr J Harley  
 Mr D G Lee  
 Dr R S Lane  
 Dr A M Holburn  
 Professor P L Mollison  
 Dr G H Tovey  
 Dr D Walford  
 Mr T E Dutton - Secretary

## IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr G J Brechin  
 Mrs S C Yuille

1. Apologies for Absence

There were none.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting - JMC Minutes (79)5

These were agreed, but the Chairman wished to clarify his suggestion in item 6 that he should join Professor Mollison and Dr Tovey in discussing Dr Lane's salary. He considered that such a meeting would only be necessary if the post of the Director of the Blood Products Laboratory was to be regarded as a medical post and remunerated as such. Dr Lane remarked that if the post was remunerated on a non-medical scale he might not be interested in it. Discussion turned to comparable posts within the NHS, but Dr Harris doubted whether there were any other posts which were comparable.

3. Matters arisingA. Progress with the Management of the BPL Estate, Letting of Cottages and Survey of Buildings.

Mr Armour reported that before the vacant cottages on the Elstree site could be let, appropriate rental charges had to be fixed and the District Valuer had been asked through the Department to assess the rents. BPL had been approached about letting the stables, but they were in some doubt whether this would be acceptable to the Department especially as the exit from the stables was on to a busy road at a hazardous corner. On the other hand revenue from such a lease, which could be on a yearly basis, would benefit the BPL. The Chairman said that consideration had to be given to letting whatever property was not required for the BPL, but he foresaw difficulty arising from letting the stables and the reintroduction of horses onto the site. It was agreed that the matter should be considered further.

The structural survey was continuing. The examination of the ex-Lister buildings for microbial contamination would be completed shortly.

**B. Progress with the Building Project and Soil Examination at BPL**

It was reported that financial provision was available for a soil examination of the Elstree site to determine the most favourable areas for locating any new premises. When a consultant had been appointed arrangements would be made for him to discuss his ideas with Dr Lane before beginning the examination.

Dr Lane reported that work on several projects including the new freeze-drying plant, the sewage plant, re-siting of the microbiology unit had begun, or would start soon. It was hoped that the new freeze-drying facilities would be ready by April. There had been difficulties and delay during the construction of the freeze-drier building much of which might have been avoided had a project manager been in post. The Department explained that the need for professional project management was accepted in the Department and the RHA was being asked to make the appointment. The complexity of the work which would be needed at the BPL was such as to make the appointment unavoidable if waste were to be prevented. The Committee wholly endorsed the idea of the appointment.

The Department anticipated that there would be a sum in the region of £750,000 available for capital development at BPL in 1980/81 and Dr Lane had been authorised to proceed with "stop gap" and several other projects.

Dr Lane said that he was, nevertheless, worried that the total cost of even the relatively short term re-development of the laboratory, including the modification of the coagulation factor laboratory, would cost much more than this, possibly as much as £2 to £2½ million over 2-3 years. Such a sum would go a considerable way towards the cost of the constructional work of a new laboratory.

The Committee agreed that in addition to the appointment of a project manager the re-development at the BPL would need to be closely monitored by a project committee which would determine the development policy. It was agreed that a project committee should be chaired by Dr Walford. Whenever necessary the Scientific and Technical Committee would be consulted and progress reports would be submitted to the Joint Management Committee as necessary.

**C. Progress Report on the Acquisition of the Harkness Building, Oxford, for the Blood Group Reference Laboratory**

Mr Harley reported that the Area Health Authority (Teaching) Oxford had now formally agreed that the Harkness Building should be made available for the Blood Group Reference Laboratory, but much of the ground floor of the building would not be free until certain University workshops had been re-located. Although the Department had offered to make a modest contribution towards the re-location of these workshops it could not be associated with removal costs in the region of £60,000 as had recently been suggested. Discussions about more realistic re-location costs were taking place with the Regional Health Authority. The latest professional assessment was that, provided there were no major hitches, it was realistic to proceed on the basis that the BGRL would move to Oxford at the end of March 1981, and perhaps a little sooner. Dr Holburn was already drawing up plans for the move and staff had been told. The Lister Institute had been informed of the anticipated removal date with suitable safeguards against unforeseeable delays, and had been advised that the District Valuer would be in touch with them about the reversionary value of the lease remaining on the Chelsea premises. The question whether or not the reversionary value of the lease could be put towards the total cost of moving the BGRL had still to be settled in the Department.

The RHA would be interviewing staff to determine how many would be able to move to Oxford, but Dr Holburn thought that most of his senior staff would go there. Mr Armour thought that the redundancy payments could be high. Mr Brechin reminded members that these payments would have to be met from the total allocation for the laboratory's move.

D. Charging the Radiochemical Centre, Amersham, for the Supply of Fibrinogen

The Scientific and Technical Committee had agreed that it would be appropriate to ask the Department to introduce a charge to the Radiochemical Centre for the fibrinogen supplied by the BPL. Dr Lane thought that since the North London Blood Transfusion Centre incurred expense in recruiting the special panel of donors, part of the proceeds should be passed on to the Centre in recompense. The Committee accepted the Scientific and Technical Committee's advice and it was agreed that the Department and Dr Lane should work out an appropriate charge. The Department would also consider whether the proceeds might be divided between the BPL and the RTC. The RHA anticipated no problems with the arrangements.

E. Charging the Regions for the BPL Radio Immunoassay

Dr Lane reported that he had been advised that the Department could not provide the additional funds which were required in 1980/81 and 1981/82 for the development of the test. As a result he would be unable to make the test available to all Centres, and he was now considering giving priority to those Centres which had hitherto been major users of the commercially available tests, for example North East Thames. Dr Walford and Dr Tovey thought it most important that all Centres should be given the opportunity to switch to the BPL RIA test which would cost them substantially less than the commercial equivalent, and they wondered whether Directors could be asked to pay BPL for the tests; many Directors had expressed a willingness to do so. The Committee agreed with the Chairman's view that the tests should be available to all Centres and that Mr Harley and Dr Walford should lead a group to look at ways of financing the tests. A report would be made to the Committee in due course. The Chairman thought that if there were any difficulties it might be necessary to ask for Ministerial guidance.

F. Proportional Distribution of Blood Products

Dr Tovey reported that Transfusion Directors accepted that a scheme should be devised whereby Centres received from the Central Blood Laboratories finished products in quantities strictly proportional to the amount of plasma and other source materials which they sent for processing. The quality of the plasma and the yields of FVIII would have to be taken into account, and special arrangements would have to be made for those Regions which had a high concentration of haemophiliac patients in relation to the general population. He maintained that such a scheme would be an incentive to Regions to collect more plasma and thereby reduce the need to buy the increasingly expensive commercial products, especially factor VIII. Dr Tovey thought that RMOs and RTDs would require about 12 months' notice of the introduction of a new scheme.

The Committee accepted that such a scheme was necessary, but urged that the requirements of certain centres, which had traditionally received a preferential allocation of PPF, should be taken into account. It was agreed that Dr Tovey should explain the plans for a revised scheme to RTDs, following which a paper would be prepared to RMOs (who would be invited to bring it to the attention of Regional Treasurers) and RScOs.

G. Release of Minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee and the Scientific and Technical Committee to the Staff Side

It was reported that the Scientific and Technical Committee, and the Finance Sub-Committee of the Joint Management Committee did not wish the minutes of their meeting, which contained much confidential discussion, to be passed on to the Staff Side. A general report of their proceedings would, however, be incorporated in the JMC minutes which went to the staff.

4. The Future of the Blood Products Laboratory

Professor Molli son said that the Scientific and Technical Committee had received a report of the Ministers' decisions on the action which needed to be taken following the Medicines Inspectors' report, but they were left with the general feeling that the implications of letting industry become involved in the processing of voluntary donated plasma may not have been adequately explained. The Committee was very anxious about the effect of a commercial partnership on the volunteer donor system. Mr Smart had recently written to Mr Harley expressing the STC's views on the wording of the report of the Ministers' decision.

Dr Harris said that there should be no misunderstanding about the Departmental submission to Ministers; the submission, which fully reflected Medicines Division's views, emphasised the gravity of the situation at the BPL and attention had been drawn to the paper prepared by the Scientific and Technical Committee. Faced with constraints on funds, Ministers had to decide what action was practicable and necessary in the light of Medicines Division's requirements and, as often happened in the industrial situation, a *suave* compromise would have to be reached between the practical and the ideal. Members would have an opportunity to put any further views to the Minister when he met representatives of the STC at BPL on 21 March. The short-term measures needed to improve the conditions at the BPL, which Ministers agreed should be undertaken, were now in hand, but meanwhile Ministers had asked that all the options, including commercial participation, should be investigated. Ministers wished to have a progress report every two months. Dr Harris assured Dr Lane that, having been told of the situation at the Blood Products Laboratory and having recognised that there were shortcomings which could not be put right immediately, the Secretary of State and the Department assumed responsibility for what went on there subject only to the normal responsibilities of professional staff for their actions. Medicines Division had a continuing responsibility to monitor the situation at the BPL and would undertake a re-inspection of the laboratory shortly. In addition, Medicines Inspectors were available to give whatever advice was necessary on the remedial measures being undertaken.

Professor Molli son and Dr Tovey said that they felt reassured by Dr Harris's explanation and welcomed the opportunity of talking to the Minister.

5. Action Following Decisions by Ministers Concerning the Future of the BPL

Mr Harley reported that following the Ministers' decision to include possible industrial participation amongst the options to be examined it had been agreed that the Department's Supply Division would take the lead in consultations with industry. Dr Walford would chair a group, involving members of the STC and JMC as necessary, to 1) prepare briefing for Supply Division, 2) assess the requirements of the existing BPL in 1981/82 onwards, 3) consider the requirements of a new BPL if it were built with public funds. The Finance Sub-Committee of the Joint Management Committee would examine the cost implications.



6. Review of the Protected Lister Practices (Other than Pay and Conditions)

Mr Armour explained that there were certain Lister practices which the RHA had thought it would be right to retain, although they did not conform to the Region's standing instructions. For example, it was decided to retain the Lister Institute's catering contracts. The Committee recognised the need for some flexibility and endorsed the RHA's action.

7. Report on the Last Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Committee

At its meeting on 23 January the Committee discussed at length the future of the Blood Products Laboratory and the measures which were necessary to meet the interim requirements of the Medicines Inspectors' report.

Members also received a report on progress with the re-location of the Blood Group Reference Laboratory and urged the Department to ensure that the move to Oxford was completed within 12 months, if possible.

Discussing the preliminary planning of the possible phased re-development of the BPL members agreed that if the laboratory were to be totally re-developed a project manager would certainly be required, and the Department should be asked to consider whether in view of the up-grading now being envisaged at the laboratory it might be advisable to appoint a project manager for that purpose.

The Committee's views on charging the Radiochemical Centre, Amersham are reported above.

The STC recommended that the Department should find a way to fund the BPL's hepatitis RIA test so that it could be made available to all Transfusion Centres.

8. Any Other Business

A. Visits Abroad by the Director and Staff of the Blood Products Laboratory

Dr Lane reported that he had been invited to attend the 16th Congress of the International Society for Blood Transfusion in Montreal. Dr Turner had been invited to attend a conference in the Federal Republic of Germany and in France, and Mr Vallet would be attending the European Pharmacopoeia Conference in Strasbourg in March. No expense would arise from Dr Turner's and Mr Vallet's visits.

B. Production of ABO Grouping Reagents

Dr Holburn reported that the Blood Group Reference Laboratory had, with the agreement of the Scientific and Technical Committee, entered into a collaboration with the Medical Research Council to develop blood grouping reagents by the use of new monoclonal techniques. Pilot studies were being carried out. The National Enterprise Board had already become interested in the project, despite the fact that no field trials had yet been conducted, and they might approach the Department if they decided to invest money in the scheme. Dr Holburn thought that it was important to move quickly with the scheme before commercial firms brought out reagents produced by these techniques.

The Committee was grateful to have this interesting joint venture brought to their attention and it was agreed that Dr Walford would help Dr Holburn to meet any Departmental requirements.

C. Increased Production of Anti-D Immunoglobulin

Dr Tovey reported that the Standing Medical Advisory Committee Sub-Committee on The Prevention of Haemolytic Disease of the New-born had agreed that if sufficient immunoglobulin could be produced in the future it would be able to reconsider the question of ante-natal administration, especially to primiparae and to those women with no living child. Approximately 15 million units of immunoglobulin would be needed annually for the next 3 to 5 years. Dr Lane said that although he had the capacity to produce the extra immunoglobulin, if it was required, he was unable to do so at the moment because the Medicines Inspectors had recommended that there should be no increase in production of blood products until improvements had been made at the laboratory.

Dr Harris said that this matter would be discussed within the Department and then brought back to the Committee.

D. Storage of PPF at the Department of Environment Stores

Dr Lane reported that he had recently visited the stores where he found that some 90,000 containers of PPF, which were held there for the BPL, were being kept in unsatisfactory conditions. He had written to the Department to express his anxiety about the situation and had recommended that the Medicines Inspectors be asked to visit the stores. The Chairman thought that the suitability of the storage and the principle of holding such large stocks of PPF should be examined in the Department.

E. Report from the Finance Sub-Committee

Mr Harley as Chairman of the Finance Sub-Committee reported that for the financial year 1980/81 the provisional figure for revenue for the BPL was £1.737 million, for the PFL £0.259 million and for the BGRL £0.467 million.

Capital provision for the BPL was £0.773 million (which took account of provision for up-grading following the Medicines Inspectors' report), for the PFL £0.028 million, and £0.263 million for the BGRL (which included provision for the move to Oxford) In addition a further £0.150 million would be available, if required, for the BGRL's move in 1980/81.

9. Date of next meeting

2 May 1980 at 2pm in room 85 Hannibal House, Elephant and Castle.

March 1980

DHSS