

DC

MANAGEMENT - IN CONFIDENCE

This is a signed note. We will put it up to Mr Bennett as part of the briefing material for the forthcoming meeting with SHHD GROC 17/3 17A

PROTEIN FRACTIONATION CENTRE LIBERTON AND THE ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE NBS

1. In 1965 the Scottish Home and Health Department, faced with a growing demand for certain blood products, drew up plans to build a new unit in Edinburgh (PFC) which would operate on a continuous-flow principle to deal with 1500, and if necessary up to 3000, litres of plasma per week. The unit would produce plasma protein solution and anti-haemophilic globulin as well as gamma globulin and other fractions required for therapeutic purposes. There would also be research and development facilities at the unit.

AGREEMENT
WITH PFC
TO FRACTIONATE
ENGLISH PLASMA
(Ref D18D20 on
H/B13/6A)

2. The then Ministry of Health made a formal agreement with SHHD in 1965 that the PFC would fractionate plasma for the NHS using plasma collected by four English Regions - Newcastle, Leeds Manchester and Liverpool (then collecting 20,000 litres per annum). The original request to Scotland was that they should provide annually for the NHS about 30,000 bottles of plasma protein fraction and anti-haemophilic globulin from 10,000 bottles of blood.

It was accepted that Scotland would recover from us the cost of the extra processing.

DHSS
CONTRIBUTION
TO COST OF
BUILDING
LIBERTON

3. In October 1968 Treasury gave its approval in principle to the scheme to build the Liberton Centre at a cost of £1 million, subject to the assurance that detailed and costed proposals would be submitted in due course. However, SHHD had underestimated the amount of capital required for the project (the final cost was £1.7 million) and suggested that DHSS might make a contribution towards the cost.

(Ref:
D14 on H/B13/6A
& confirmed by
Mr Ellwood
FB2C)

It was decided that English PESC figures for hospital capital should be reduced by £200,000 in 1970/71, £100,000 in 1971/72 and in 1972/3, so that a total amount of £400,000 could be transferred to SHHD. These sums were in fact transferred.

(At that time it was expected that the centre would be completed by mid-1972).

4. On the question of management, SHHD suggested in 1969 that there should be a management policy committee for both BPL and PFC to ensure that a common production policy would apply to both laboratories. Eventually, in 1973, a Joint Steering Committee was set up, its terms of reference being to consider common policies on, amongst other things, the allocation of fractionation between BPL and PFC, the provision of plasma, the distribution of products between the two countries and the standardisation of blood products.

The Committee, comprising officials, the two laboratory Directors and some Regional Transfusion Directors from both countries, met for the first (and only) time in June 1973. There was a serious divergence of views on the level of production of blood products, particularly ppf. There was, however, basic agreement between the two Departments that the United Kingdom should aim for self-sufficiency in blood and blood products. At the initiative of SHHD the two Departments met again in December 1973 and in May 1974 to resolve their differences and DHSS subsequently prepared a paper setting out the interdepartmental policy on the production of ppf.

5. PFC eventually began operations late in 1974. Then in August 1975 SHHD wrote to DHSS asking how soon English plasma could be made available for fractionation at Liberton and how much would be available in future. Our reply was that BPL would be able to process all available supplies of plasma for at least another year, but that we would review the future situation.

6. DHSS and SHHD officials and Directors of BPL and PFC met in March 1977 to discuss mutual problems. Aspects of practical co-operation between the two units as well as the need for a common policy on such questions as the disposal of surplus blood components, labelling of products and the control of commercially manufactured products were discussed. Members agreed that such a joint working group could usefully assume the functions of the former Joint Steering Committee and agreed that the group should meet twice yearly. (the second meeting was held in August 1977 and the next will take place probably in April).

7. To date Liberton has not fractionated any plasma for BPL. This is due to several factors, in particular:-

1. BPL has been able to fractionate all the available plasma up to now;

2. there are difficulties about shift work at Liberton (although PFC is designed to operate three shifts, the unit is only working one shift a day because the trade unions involved will not agree to any expansion unless a suitable pay settlement is reached).

8. PFC are storing some time-expired plasma on behalf of the BPL; the plasma was sent to Scotland to relieve congestion at the BPL when there was trouble with the coldroom floor. Discussions on what should happen to this plasma will probably take place at the forthcoming 'mutual problems' meeting.

QUALITY
CONTROL

(Ref 5A on
H/B13/6B)

9. On the question of quality control Dr Maycock has said that it is essential that BPL should examine examples of Scottish ppf before any further agreement is concluded with PFC so that differences between products are defined, as far as possible, before they go to users. It would also be necessary to approve the details of types of containers, packaging and labelling, methods of transfer of plasma to Liberton and the distribution of the ppf from Liberton. At the last two 'mutual problems' meetings, in March and August 1977, it was agreed that the question of packaging, labelling, movements of plasma etc was a matter for the two Directors, but it is understood that little or no progress has been made.

SERVICE CHARGE
FOR FRACTIONATION
UNDERTAKEN BY
PFC

FINANCIAL
PROVISION
FOR SERVICE
CHARGE

(Information
obtained from
Mr Elliwood - FB2C)

10. On the question of service charge for fractionation undertaken at the August meeting agreed that this should be worked out by the PFC two Departments.

Arrangements were in fact made in June 1974 to include in DHSS's PESC provision an amount for expenditure on the processing by PFC on our behalf. £75,000 was allocated for 1975/76, £100,000 for 1976/77, 1977/78 and 1978/79. But because no plasma was fractionated at PFC the money was used instead to fund BPL activities. Even the 1978/79 allocation has already been earmarked for BPL purposes at Elstree and will in fact need to be spent for these purposes.