

1. m. GRO-C: Green

2. BLA/3/5 25th

Sir Kenneth Stowe

cc: Dr Harris
Mr Collier
Mr Hulme
Mr Cashman
Mr Harley

CENTRAL BLOOD LABORATORIES

I have been trying, in concert with Dr Harris, for nearly 12 months to obtain a Ministerial decision on the management of the central blood laboratories.

2. We need a decision because the present arrangements for a shared management between the DHSS and the NW Thames RHA, through a Committee chaired by Dr Harris, are cumbersome and dangerous, when we are embarking on the rebuilding of the main unit at a capital cost of £18 million or more, now agreed in principle by the Treasury. (The revenue costs for the three units and about 200 staff is £4.3m in 1982/83).

3. We have very fully examined options such as placing the laboratories under Public Health Laboratory Service Board; or fully under the NW Thames RHA; or under a specially constituted charitable trust. At the end of this consideration we have concluded that only a small management body, with the status of a "Special Health Authority", will provide what is needed. Mr Finsberg, who has, if I may say so, put in a lot of work on this, including visiting the main unit, has himself recommended this course.

4. How does the recent trouble at National Heart and Edgware affect this? In my mind it confirms two judgments:

- (a) that the NW Thames RHA does not provide a suitable body to be given additional management responsibilities at this time in the blood field; (they do not want them anyway);
- (b) that the Department needs to get a firm management body in operation as soon as possible.

5. If the Secretary of State agrees in principle to setting up a team with special health authority status* we will quickly make firm proposals for its composition and constitution.

GRO-C

T E NODDER
D802 AFH
11 March 1982

*as to which, see note of 3 November, attached.

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