

Anti HCV
Testing

NOTES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING

Monday, 20 May 1991

Present: Professor Allain
Dr Williamson
Dr Ouwehand
Mr Hawdon

1. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting 13 May 1991

a) Presentation of Finance

Mr Hawdon tabled a revised product pricing structure which had been produced taking into account the discussion at the last meeting. He felt that hospitals should now be informed to (i) enable units and the RTC to monitor the likely costs/income for the coming year of RTC products and (ii) to provide a price list to non-NHS hospitals.

The prices of some products caused concern, particularly the price differential between the production costs of platelets by conventional collection and platelet cytophoresis. In the longer term this problem might be resolved by producing platelets by the 20°C method. This method was, however, unlikely to be introduced within the near future. It was agreed that the price of platelets should be shown in single units whatever method of production was used.

The question of the provision of whole blood was again discussed and it was agreed this should attract a premium price to deter requests. A notice to the effect that whole blood would be available only on special request should be included in the covering letter with the pricing structure. It was accepted that the prices did not reflect the additional costs which would be incurred by the introduction of Anti HCV Testing. Hospitals should be advised that this charge would be included once the introduction of routine testing had been introduced but that in this year the full costs of anti HCV testing would be covered by the RHA.

On the question of whole blood provision, the bank of which would be provided from sessions held on Fridays, the question was raised as to whether Saturday working should be introduced for plasma production. It was agreed that Dr Williamson would investigate the costs involved.

Mr Hawdon would produce a draft letter to accompany the pricing list to hospitals.

b) Anti HCV Testing

The Director reported on his discussions with Dr O'Brien who agreed the costs as provided and would support the submission to the Regional Executive.

In the discussion the Director reported that it was agreed that should one or more HCV confirmed positive be discovered then routine testing should commence immediately. Depending how the current investigations progressed, a commencement date of July was likely.

c) Hospital Deliveries

It was agreed that the guidance produced for the deliveries of blood to hospitals by RTC Transport should be introduced immediately.

2. Report of Meeting with the Director of Public Health

The Director reported that in his discussion with Dr O'Brien agreement had been reached on all the matters raised.

It was agreed that an additional Consultant post should be established and a case provided. The Director tabled a copy of the justification he would submit and, with minor alterations, it was agreed. The funding for this post would be provided from HCV Funding, Medical Audit and the funds available from the half-a-Consultant released in September.

Dr O'Brien confirmed that freedom and flexibility existed for the management of all non-medical posts within the funding provided.

Dr O'Brien had also stressed the need to implement the submissions approved and funded from capital expenditure.

3. Sector Staffing

Consideration was given to the overall proposals for Laboratory Sector Staffing. In general the level of staffing was approved but concern was expressed that the staffing levels did not, in the same sector, provide an element for research and development. The Director expressed the view that when finalised and agreed, the sector structure should include for all research and development work.

The question of staff on long term sickness was raised. These staff had not been included in the structure. Mr Hawdon reported that one member of staff on long term sickleave had been referred to the Occupational Health Consultant and was also at present the subject of discussions between the trade union representative and the Regional Personnel Department. The other member of the Laboratory staff who had been absent for eight weeks had not yet been referred to his Department for action.

4. Draft Job Description for the Scientific Officer

Consideration was given to the draft job description for the Clinical Scientist Grade B post to be established in Blood Products. The job description, subject to a number of amendments, was agreed. Funding for this post would be provided from a vacant MLS02 post and the HCO Issues which would not be replaced on the retirement of the present holder. The "spine point" of the post had yet to be agreed but according to the Whitley provisions the post should be advertised for open competition and require two independent outside assessors.

Concern was expressed over the line of accountability on quality assurance matters and this would have to be considered when the appointment was made.

5. Capital Investment Programme

The capital investment programme approved in the sum of £345,000 was reviewed (memorandum dated 18 December 1990 from Regional Finance Manager refers). Consideration was given to the purchases made in the financial year 1990/91. The revised capital programme provided for equipment purchases and alterations in the sum of £305.5K. £32K would be reserved towards the funding of the alterations required to the Blood Issues area for 1992/93.

Within the refurbishment programme for the current year, costs should be provided for upgrading the top floor laboratories in the Laboratory Wing. The work should cover upgrading the benching, reflooring all areas and to provide individual work station cabinets. Mr Hawdon was asked to obtain estimates of costs. Dr Williamson would be pursuing the plans and costing for the Issues area.

6. Foundation for Transfusion Medicine

The Director reported that approval had been received from the RHA to the establishment of a Foundation for Transfusion Medicine which would provide a fund under his jurisdiction for research monies.

7. Staffing Matters

Mr Hawdon reported on a number of staffing matters relating to the health of staff within the Centre.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 3 June 1991 at 10.00 am.

DNH/JB
24.5.91