

## **NATIONAL BLOOD AUTHORITY**

### **Minutes of the Twentieth Meeting of the National Blood Authority held on Thursday 19 January at 8.30am at Oak House**

**PRESENT:** Sir Colin Walker  
Mr J F Adey  
Dr W G van Aken  
Mr D Allison  
Mr W L Banks  
Prof Sir Keith Peters  
Dr E A E Robinson  
Mr B J Savery

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr T A Kelly  
Dr A S M Rejman  
Miss J Minifie

95/1 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** were agreed.

#### 95/2 **MATTERS ARISING**

The Chairman's draft letter regarding lease of premises was with Mr Kelly and they would discuss this outside the meeting. **Action: CW/TAK**

The Birmingham and Wessex Centres had now been granted licences by the MCA.

Wales - Mr Adey had received a phone call from Dr Gail Williams the previous day when she had informed him that John Redwood had agreed that BTS Wales would remain part of the Common Health Services Agency. Mr Kelly was not aware of this decision.

Accountability Review - Mr Adey advised that this had gone well and referred to Mr Savery's very good job on the documentation. The follow up letter had not yet been received and Mr Kelly's comment that "it is in the post" caused some amusement.

#### 95/3 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

##### **BPL**

In line with budget predictions, November had been less good and December adequate resulting in BPL being slightly in the red. The plant was now in shut-down and providing sales were maintained over the next two months budget was expected to be met.

### **Advance Notice of Hospital Demand**

There followed a discussion about hospital requirements and The Chairman asked Mr Kelly whether there was likely to be less hospital activity during February and March. Mr Kelly advised that he had circulated a request for information about incentives/reductions that could affect the NBS.

The Chairman voiced his concern that we might not be able to provide sufficient blood to meet such things as waiting list initiatives because it was not possible to increase collection overnight. (Sir Keith Peters joined the meeting at this point).

Mr Kelly pointed out that the letter from Alan Langlands following the Accountability Review would require demand factors to be built into our strategy. The Chairman said he would write to Mr Kelly expressing his concern at our lack of advance information. (Dr Rejman joined the meeting at this point). **Action: CW**

### **Blood Stocks**

Richard Lodge attended and presented the current figures which showed some improvement with stocks at a level of around one and a half days. (Dr van Aken joined the meeting at this point).

There followed a lengthy discussion (during which Dr Robinson joined the meeting) centring on the different levels of stocks in different Centres and Hospitals and how this could be better controlled.

It was stressed that it was necessary for us to completely meet demand before we could embark on the process of educating surgeons to reduce amounts used.

Mr Lodge said that demand had increased over the previous two years. He would be in a position to present figures at the next meeting.

### **Consultation Process**

The process of meeting hospital doctors/executives was continuing and being run on a zonal basis. MPs were also being visited, mainly by the Chairman.

The Executive had discussed the formulation of the document to be put to the Department and this discussion would continue in greater detail.

The need for immediate agreement to the zonal structure was emphasised.

It was unlikely that we would be able to proceed with a commercial partner, or ALT testing, for BPL at this stage because of the difficulty of separating this from the RTCs in the view of the media.

### **HCV Lookback**

Dr Robinson updated the Board on this matter at Mr Adey's request and circulated an information sheet "for laymen".

Dr Robinson commented on the large amount of work done by Sue Cunningham, in particular, and the Department of Health to ensure that information was available to all who needed it before the Panorama programme was screened on 16 January. She

was also going to write to all NBS medical staff who had dealt with masses of calls from worried patients following the programme.

It was agreed that from now on Dr Robinson would update the Board on this subject on a quarterly basis.

**Mr Alan Langlands**

Mr Adey reported on Mr Langlands' visit to our offices the previous day. He had stressed the importance of blood stocks and promised to assist in the consultation process.

**Zonal Clinical Directors**

Interviews for these posts would take place on 14 February and the appointments made before the Consultants' Meeting in Birmingham on 16 February. This meeting was a follow on from the meeting held in York in July and would include a personal update by each member of the NBS Executive and the opportunity for the Consultants to discuss their future role.

**95/4 MEDICAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

The HCV Lookback programme had been covered earlier in the meeting.

**95/5 MINUTES OF AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING**

Mr Banks reported that the NBA had been given a clean bill of health by its auditors and commented that this reflected the quality of its financial management. Mr Savery warned that it would be unrealistic to expect a clean management letter in respect of the coming year during which the new financial systems would be introduced.

The Audit Committee were proceeding with the search for external auditors.

**95/6 FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

6.1 Mr Savery pointed out an error in the Highlight Report for December 1994 (NB 95/3) i.e. under 1.d. "breakage" in the penultimate line should read "brokerage".

6.2 Due to inheriting a fairly healthy financial situation in the centres at the beginning of the year and the increasing demand for and provision of blood components to hospitals we were likely to have a surplus of cash at year end. Mr Savery and Mr Kelly would discuss the possibility of "brokerage" and other actions outside the meeting.

**Action: BJS, TAK**

**6.3 NBA I.T. Strategy Project Core Systems Procurement Business Case**

The Board agreed to Mr Savery's request that he send them the above document asking for their comments within ten days. This would enable him to submit the document to the DoH before submitting it to the Board for formal approval and any final amendments on 23 February and thus speed up the formal process. Mr Savery noted that Sir Keith Peters would need to receive the document before 1 February when he would be visiting Australia.

**Action: BJS**

Mr Allison raised some concerns and he and Mr Savery agreed to discuss these outside the meeting.

**Action: BJS, DA**

#### **6.4 Delegations of Power**

NBA 95/5 had been circulated and the Board agreed this document subject to some minor comments which Mr Savery noted.

#### **95/7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held at Oak House on Thursday 23 February commencing at 12.00 (sandwich lunch) for 12.30pm.

#### **95/8 RESEARCH**

Dr David Anstee, Mr Gary Austin, Dr Marcela Contreras, Mrs Sue Cunningham, Dr Bill Wagstaff and Mr Richard Walker joined the meeting and the Chairman apologised for the late start of this item.

Mr Adey introduced this first discussion of Research by the Board by saying that its purpose was to establish where we are starting from and how it would be appropriate to proceed bearing in mind the need to balance spending control with creative freedom in order to generate useful developments.

#### **8.1 The Organisation of R & D in the NBS**

NBA 95/6 had been circulated prior to the meeting and Dr Anstee presented the proposals which had been reached through discussions between him, Dr Robinson, Dr Wagstaff, Dr Contreras and Dr Harvey.

There was a lively discussion and it was agreed that the prime objective was to achieve the best possible quality of work of the sort that would lead to results which would be of the most benefit to patients receiving transfusions. Mr Banks was concerned that the review body created should not be too cumbersome for the relatively small amount of funding available. (He subsequently agreed to draft what he believed to be an appropriate structure).

It was agreed that to achieve this and to avoid duplication of effort a national co-ordinator was needed and it was unanimously agreed that Dr David Anstee be appointed as National R & D Co-ordinator.

The Chairman asked Dr Anstee, in his role as Co-ordinator, to provide the Board with further developed proposals in due course.

**Action: DJA**

Mr Savery pointed out that there would be no money available from the NBA for Research during the coming year unless the principle of "a penny on the pint" was adopted immediately. It was nevertheless accepted by the Board that it was not appropriate to introduce this at the present time. It was noted that such an approach was consistent with the Culyer report's recommendations on funding.

The above proposals covered the Transfusion Centres only and did not include BPL.

## **8.2 Establishment of a Bristol Institute of Transfusion Sciences between the NBA and Bristol University**

A proposal to formalise the relationship which already existed between IBGRL and the University had been circulated.

At Mr Savery's request Mr Kelly confirmed that funding for IBGRL would continue to be available from DoH. *for 1995/96*

The Board approved this proposal in principle and asked Dr Anstee to improve on some key points which he had noted.

**Action: DJA**

In particular Sir Keith Peters suggested, and the rest of the Board agreed, that as a matter of principle the Director of the Institute and the Professor of the University should be the same person. Additionally it was recognised that it would not be fair to ask Dr Anstee to put this to the University and that this should be done by the Board. (Sir Keith subsequently offered to contact the Dean of Bristol University).

**Action: KP**

The Chairman requested that the final version of the proposal be returned to the board for approval.

**Action: DJA**

## **8.3 Proposed Relocation to IBGRL of MRC Blood Group Unit**

NBA 95/7 had been circulated and the Board was sympathetic to the proposal. However the Board required considerably more detail and The Chairman asked Dr Robinson, Sir Keith Peters and Prof van Aken to discuss with Dr Anstee outside the meeting.

**Action: EAER, KP, WvA, DJA**

Dr Robinson, Sir Keith and Prof van Aken would present the more detailed proposal to the next meeting for approval subject to finance. If the proposal was agreed Mr Savery would be asked to look at the financial aspects, probably in conjunction with the MRC. Sir Keith suggested that the MRC might be willing to provide us with their papers.

**Action: EAER**

## **8.4 National Gene Vector Project**

Dr Robinson advised further financial details on this project and an executive summary including these is attached.

Mr Savery pointed out that at the time this project had been approved in principle the zonal directors had agreed to fund it by means of "a penny on the pint" and he said that it was essential that the precise funding mechanism for research projects be discussed at a future meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting closed.