

Sir Neil McKay CB
Chair, Joint Committee of PCTs
Victoria House
Capital Park
Fulbourn
Cambridge
CB21 5XB

2nd Floor, Southside
105 Victoria Street
London SW1E 6QT

Tel: 020 7932 3128

1 September 2011

Dear Sir Neil

Retrieval of critically ill children from the Isle of Wight

I am writing to let you know of the advice that the secretariat will give to members of the Joint Committee of Primary Care Trusts (JCPCT) around the emergency retrieval of children from the Isle of Wight.

You will recall that in response to evidence submitted by Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust (SUHT) in March 2011 the secretariat undertook a significant amount of work to explore the issues in depth and to advise the JCPCT on a potential response.

As an outcome of this work, in June 2011 you agreed with Mark Hackett, Chief Executive of SUHT, that you would ask the secretariat to work with the Trust to deliver a paper that provides JCPCT members with a more detailed understanding of the unique factors involved in retrieving a critically ill child by ferry and you asked the secretariat to provide further advice on the extent to which a retrieval team from London or Bristol could reach St Mary's Hospital on the Isle of Wight in compliance with the Paediatric Intensive Care Society standards for the retrieval of critically ill children (which themselves form part of the proposed *Safe and Sustainable* standards for designated providers of paediatric cardiac surgery).

In pursuance of this further work members of the secretariat attended SUHT on 27 June and 29 July and met with Mark Hackett, Dr Tony Salmon, Dr Iain Macintosh and Alison Ayres.

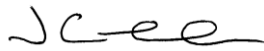
A paper prepared by SUHT is attached for consideration by JCPCT members. The opinions and recommendations set out therein are those of SUHT.

In October 2011, when the JCPCT next meets, the secretariat will advise the JCPCT that there is no available evidence that could reasonably suggest that a retrieval team from London or Bristol could reach the Isle of Wight in compliance with the time limits stipulated by the PICS standards, even if the Isle of Wight is considered to be a 'remote area' and measured by the higher time threshold of 4 hours. This advice is concordant with that provided to the JCPCT by the Paediatric Intensive Care Society in its formal response to consultation dated 23 June 2011.

The secretariat has reached this conclusion by exploring whether there are any reasonable grounds for suggesting that the road-journey times from the Evelina Children's Hospital or Bristol Children's Hospital to the Isle of Wight as calculated with reference to the methodology set out in the Pre-Consultation Business Case do not reflect the actual total journey time, including the ferry element. We have concluded that there are no existing protocols or informal arrangements between SUHT and the ferry companies that have the effect of a ferry being deliberately delayed to await an ambulance. There are therefore no reasonable grounds for suggesting that such a practice could be effectively implemented between the ferry companies and retrieval teams based in London or Bristol in the future.

The secretariat will further advise the JCPCT to take these conclusions about retrievals from the Isle of Wight into account when considering the outcome of public consultation as part of the committee's deliberations to agree an eventual configuration option, and in any necessary re-scoring of options.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Glyde', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jeremy Glyde

Safe and Sustainable Programme Director

Cc Mr Mark Hackett, Chief Executive of SUHT
Members of the JCPCT