



THE SCOTTISH OFFICE

National Health Service in Scotland Management Executive

NHS
MEL (1992)89

St. Andrew's House
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

Dear Colleague

REPORTS ON SPECIFICATIONS FOR LABORATORY SERVICES: GUIDELINES FOR GENERAL MANAGERS

Summary

1. This letter is to inform you of the publication of 2 reports dealing with specifications for laboratory services. These reports were commissioned at the request of different interested parties and while there is some overlap of information the reports taken together provide a comprehensive statement which will be of help to all managers concerned with laboratory services. Copies of the reports are enclosed and their recommendations are commended for your attention.

Background

2. The report 'Specifications for Laboratory Services: Guidelines for General Managers' was prepared by a Working Group of the National Advisory Committee for Scientific Services at the request of the Scottish Health Service Advisory Council. The Council has recommended that it should be published and issued to the NHS for general guidance. The Management Executive has accepted this recommendation.

3. The report considers, in the light of NHS reforms, how best to provide laboratory services required to meet the needs of general hospitals (of various sizes), specialist units, general practitioners and the community on a short-term and long-term basis. It sets out to establish guidelines on essential requirements for laboratory services, and draws attention to the increasingly important role which some laboratory specialists are playing in direct clinical management of patients. It also emphasises the importance of continuing training and education of all grades of laboratory staff, and the need to provide a 24 hour quality laboratory service. No attempt has been made in the report to cost services since the guidelines are based on the current level of services and the resource implications are expected to be neutral.

4. The report 'Laboratory Medicine Services in Scotland' was commissioned from KPMG Management Consultants by the National Competitive Tendering Group on behalf of the General Managers Group to provide a generic specification for laboratory

31 December 1992

Addressees

For action:
General Managers,
Health Board
Chief Executives of
NHS Trusts

General Manager,
Common Services Agency

For information:
Chief Executive
Designate, NHS Trusts
General Manager, State
Hospital

To be copied to Unit
General Managers for
action

Enquiries to:

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Further copies of the
circular and copies of
the reports may be
obtained from:

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services. This will assist managers in determining the core laboratory services to be provided as a minimum in an acute setting. The National Competitive Tendering Group has recommended that both reports should be issued together since the KPMG report contains additional information which Unit General Managers and Directors of Contracts may find helpful.

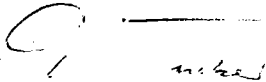
5. While it is for individual managers to use the information contained in both reports in a manner which will suit local circumstances we would particularly draw your attention to the section on autopsies in the KPMG report, which emphasises the value of this service for the purposes of medical audit. There is also detailed coverage of quality assurance which is an aspect which should be given prominence. Managers may find that the specific recommendations in the KPMG report on speed of service guidelines to be of value.

Action

6. General Managers and Chief Executives of Trusts are requested to consider the recommendations made in both reports and to invite all staff who are concerned with the specification for laboratory services to take these forward as appropriate.

7. This letter should be copied to Unit General Managers for action as required.

Yours sincerely



G W TUCKER