



Health Department
Directorate of Service Policy and Planning

Health Planning and Quality Division
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
EDINBURGH
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Dear Colleague

COMPULSORY REGISTRATION IN ACCREDITATION SCHEMES FOR NHS PATHOLOGY LABORATORIES IN SCOTLAND

Summary

1. This letter is to inform NHS Boards, Trusts and other bodies that the Scottish Executive Health Department has decided that all NHS pathology laboratories in Scotland should enrol with an appropriate accreditation scheme.

Action

2. NHS Board and Trust Chief Executives should ensure that:
- this letter is brought to the attention of all relevant staff within their area of responsibility; and,
 - action is taken to ensure that all pathology laboratories enrol with an appropriate accrediting body such as the Clinical Pathology Accreditation (UK) Ltd (CPA) by 31 March 2004.

Background

3. Pathology services are crucial to timely diagnosis; access to appropriate clinical services; and the overall provision of high quality patient care. Accreditation, which has previously been voluntary (except for cervical cytology laboratories) is seen by the Scottish Executive Health Department as a key element in ensuring good clinical governance in this important area.

4. All NHS pathology laboratories in Scotland are therefore being instructed to enrol with an appropriate accreditation scheme.

6th October 2003

Addresses

For action

Chief Executives, NHS Boards
Chief Executives, NHS Trusts
Director, SNBTS
Chief Executive, Common Services Agency
Chief Executive, State Hospitals Board for Scotland

For information

Local Health Councils
Chief Executive, NHS Education Scotland
President, Royal College of Pathology
President, Scottish Partnership Forum

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5. For the most part laboratory accreditation is overseen by Clinical Pathology Accreditation (UK) Ltd (CPA) developed by the Royal College of Pathologists and other professional bodies (including the Independent Healthcare Association), with support from the Department of Health. CPA is independent from the UK territorial Health Departments and other government departments. The standards applied are compatible with international standards (ISO).

6. Many Scottish laboratories have already enrolled on the CPA scheme and details of those who have attained full accreditation are listed on the CPA website at: www.cpa-uk.co.uk.

7. The Royal College of Pathologists has indicated that it supports the compulsory enrolment of all laboratories in an appropriate accreditation scheme.

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