



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

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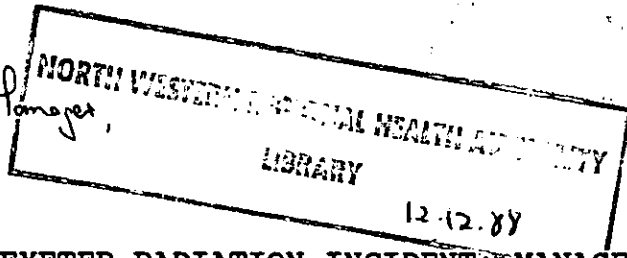
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RMO for action.

Regional General Manager

EL(88)P/217

Dear General Manager,



7 December 1988

EXETER RADIATION INCIDENT: MANAGEMENT ACTION

In case you have not seen it, I enclose a copy of the report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Exeter radiation incident. There are a number of general management points which I think need pointing up.

First, it is important - and consistent with the Griffiths philosophy - that there should be a clear chain of command so that every one is in no doubt to whom they are responsible. This is particularly important where life saving treatment which is nevertheless potentially dangerous is involved.

Second, every one - including professional staff - should have clear and up to date job descriptions, so that they know what their areas of responsibility are.

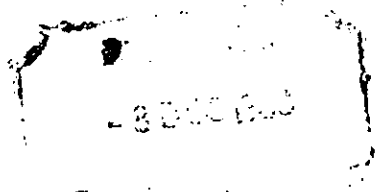
Third, in the event of an untoward incident, general managers must have instant means of communication with clinicians or other professional staff involved.

Fourth, in most areas of clinical intervention there are natural hazards. It is essential, therefore, to have written safety procedures; and general managers must ensure that all relevant staff are familiar with them.

Finally, there need to be clear communications contingency plans for identifying (with the clinicians concerned) and informing patients, their GPs and the public directly and without undue delay in the event of an untoward incident which may affect them. Ministers are particularly concerned on this point and Mrs Currie will be writing to Regional Chairmen separately.

General managers may well have picked up all these points without prompting, but I felt it prudent to ask you to ensure that all Districts institute these checks in order to reassure themselves and the public.

Yours sincerely,  
Anthony Merifield  
A J MERIFIELD



This letter will be cancelled on 31 December 1989 and deleted from the communications index unless notified separately.