

PW/SJH

18 May 2006

Professor J E Banatvala CBE MA MD FRCP FRCPATH I
Church End
Henham
Bishop's Stortford
Herts
CM22 6AN

Swift House
Hedgerows Business Park
Colchester Road
Chelmsford
Essex
CM2 5PF

Tel: 01245 397600
Fax: 01245 397601
www.essex.nhs.uk

Dear Professor Banatvala

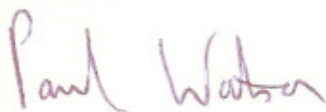
Thank you for your letter dated 2 May concerning school sound-proofing around Heathrow and also the copies of your correspondence with the CMO. You raise two issues, firstly the specific issue of noise exposure and secondly the more general issue of professional duty.

With respect to the first issue, I have now received the first draft of the HIA. This outlines the health effects of noise exposure. There are four schools within the 54 dB contour where clearly there are concerns about the effects of noise on cognitive function. However the RANCH study also suggests an effect in the 40-54 dB range; we are currently in discussion with BAA about how this is examined.

With respect to the second issue, I am well aware of my professional duties; I need to ensure the HIA is carried out using rigorous scientific technique and recommendations are evidence-based. If my judgement is that this has not been done then I will state this very clearly. What I cannot do is pre-judge the outcome of the HIA before it is completed – this would be unprofessional and I am sure you would not expect me to do this.

I am expecting the HIA to be completed by the end of this month for submission to UDC by mid-June. This will be a public document and I would be very happy to meet with you in late June to discuss the document if that would be helpful

Yours sincerely



Paul Watson
Medical Director