

six months the funding was taken over by the NHS. The report had made the precise needs of families more explicit and this contributed to the increased acknowledgment by senior medical and managerial staff that such a post was vital.

PRACTICAL SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

19. A video was made by the Heart Circle for parents to introduce them to the Unit and the people they would meet when their child was admitted. This was sent out with the admission letters so that they could watch this in their homes and returned by the parents on admission. A copy was retained by the Audit Commission Library as an example of good practice.
20. The first major project undertaken by the Heart Circle was to identify a property where parents could stay while their child was in hospital. It took Dr Jordan and I almost six years of discussion with hospital management before they accepted the need but in 1978 a small house belonging to the hospital was given over. This was completely refurbished and furnished by the Heart Circle and opened in 1978 and I believe was the first such accommodation in the country.
21. Demand for this was so great that a year later the house next door was similarly opened and shortly after that a third house, making twelve rooms in all.
22. In the early years these houses were managed by the Warden of the Nurses Home which was an excellent arrangement and ensured that families on the Cardiac Surgery Unit were accommodated. However, later the management was taken over by the Children's Hospital which meant