



**Dari Taylor MP
Stockton South**

Monday 22 March 2004

Dear friends

After so much work, and so many letters from families and supporters, many people were disappointed when I withdrew my bill on Friday 12th March. I want to write to say thank you for your valuable work, and explain why I withdrew the bill. **What we have achieved will save lives, and is more flexible than a bill.**

What happened at the debate?

Four hours of constructive debate saw MPs from both sides give very positive speeches, ending with the Minister for Public Health, Melanie Johnson. Melanie's speech said two things:

- There should never be legislation on a specific medical procedure, as this interferes with clinical judgement. Laws are clumsy, slow-moving, and not suited to this level of detail.
- However, the work of the bill, and the persuasive and moving letters that have been written to the Department, MPs, and the Prime Minister, persuaded Melanie that "I am not prepared to leave matters as they stand". She is to establish an expert group to draw up new guidelines for health service providers, through a new chapter in what is known as the National Service Framework. CRY will be represented in this group.

What is the National Service Framework?

The National Service Framework (NSF) is the way Department of Health guidelines and standards are transmitted to doctors and hospitals. If the Department had decided independently that something had to be done about young cardiac deaths, they would certainly have taken action through the NSF rather than through a new law.

All hospitals and health service providers are held to account through the NSF: if the NSF says action must be taken on sudden cardiac death in the young, action will be taken. The NSF is a powerful and adaptable way of changing clinical practice, outlining the latest CRY research, and communicating the urgent need for screening and treatment. It is, in effect, my bill translated into effective action. For this reason, I withdrew my bill.

