

These notes refer to the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 (c.43) which received Royal Assent on 20 November 2003

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE (COMMUNITY HEALTH AND STANDARDS) ACT 2003

EXPLANATORY NOTES

COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

Part 5 - Miscellaneous

Public Health Laboratory Service

Section 190: Abolition of the Public Health Laboratory Service Board

465. This section abolishes the Public Health Laboratory Service Board ('PHLS'). The intention to do so was announced in Health Protection Agency ('HPA') Newsletter Number 10 on 15 November 2002¹.
466. The PHLS was established in 1946 and its statutory powers are broadly defined by the 1977 Act (as amended by the Public Health Laboratory Service Act 1979). Section 5(2) (c) of that Act, as amended, provides for "a microbiological service... for the control of the spread of infectious diseases and carry[ing] on such other activities as in his [the Secretary of State's] opinion can conveniently be carried on in conjunction with that service".
467. The PHLS's corporate purpose, as described in its Business Plan for 2001-2, was to protect the population from infection by maintaining a national capability of the highest quality for the detection, diagnosis, surveillance, prevention and control of infectious and communicable diseases in England and Wales. From 1 April 2003, all but one of the functions of the PHLS transferred to the Health Protection Agency ("HPA") - a new Special Health Authority - or to other parts of the National Health Service. The only function remaining with the PHLS is provision of microbiological culture media for use in microbiology laboratories. It is not intended that this function should remain with the PHLS in the longer term. An independent appraisal of the options for the future of this service is being carried out, after which appropriate recommendations will be made to the Secretary of State. It is intended that the repeal of the PHLS provisions will be brought into force after the Secretary of State has transferred the remaining function.

¹ A copy of the HPA letter is available in the Library.