

Consultant 2

31 August 2013

Dear Sir / Madam

Further to the preliminary review into competition in the private healthcare sector, I would like to highlight to the Commission another issue that I believe is anti-competitive and detrimental to patient choice.

The Medical Advisory Committee (MAC) of many private hospitals will not grant practising privileges to locum NHS Consultants, on the basis they are not substantive.

There is no logical reason for this policy, particularly as locum Consultants are fully-trained and are on the GMC Specialist Register. Furthermore, locum Consultants may have already been working in the NHS for many years.

By blocking these locum Consultants from working at a particular private hospital;

1. Patients are deprived of choice. Locum Consultants on the Specialist Register are highly trained and could offer a service that does not exist in that locality.
2. Existing Consultants can 'heavily influence' the self-pay market. Because of the lack of competition, existing Consultants can command higher fees from patients.

I would welcome the Competition Commission looking into this as part of their review. It is bizarre that the MAC of a private hospital can block a locum Consultant from gaining practising privileges based on the fact they are not a substantive NHS Consultant. In no other industry is it a mandatory requirement that a person has to work for the state to also work independently.