

Consultant 36

1 October 2013

Dear Sirs

Re: The Competition Commission Report Consultation Period.

Reduction in patient choice for providers, often the higher quality providers.

I am an independent Orthopaedic Consultant. I am registered and accredited by all the Insurance Companies.

BUPA have introduced a particularly low cost insurance policy to their corporate members whereby BUPA have decided which Consultants would provide the treatment. One would think that this process would involve communication with all Consultants asking them whether they wished or did not wish to be involved, however, this was not the case and certainly I was not approached.

When I have approached BUPA as to the details of what this would entail, there were no details forthcoming. When I have approached BUPA to ask for the application forms, I was told that "they are very busy and it would take three months". Comfortably over three months have passed and I have still not received any communication from BUPA.

The situation therefore is that if a patient with this BUPA policy requires care, they are excluded from some of the Consultants in the UK and, from my own experience, it is fair to say that I provide a successful private knee service and being successful is largely through word-of-mouth and outcomes. I invest heavily in additional staff, additional time for consultations and detailed written material but despite providing a quality service, these services are not available to patients which then limits patients access to quality of service. Furthermore, I have gone out of my way to find the details of why I shouldn't be able to provide services to patients and these answers are not forthcoming from the Insurance Company.

It is my view that this is not in the best interests of patient care which is the core issue. Furthermore, my experience would indicate that the individual Consultant is overwhelmed by the power of some of the Insurance Companies.

It would seem to be that there is some deliberate obstruction to excluding certain Consultants even given their excellent local reputation for quality and outcomes.

If I can be of any further help, please do not hesitate to contact me.