

Consultant 39

3 October 2013

Dear Sir/Madam

I refer to the competitions inquiry to the private healthcare market. I am a consultant orthopaedic consultant and have practiced at the Wellington Hospital for almost [X] years. I work in a specialised knee surgery unit which deals with all problems relating to the knee joint from the simple to the complex. [X] I have nine other surgical colleagues and we work closely with a team of rheumatologists and sports physicians. If it were not for the patronage and support of HCA units such as this would not exist. We provide high quality care in a safe supporting setting.

Since I have been at this hospital and since it was taken over by HCA I have seen considerable investment in the infrastructure and the business of healthcare we provide. We deal with patients both locally, nationally and internationally. Indeed a large part of our clientele come from various countries in the Gulf state but also Africa, India and Russia. As a consequence the hotel infrastructure is second to none and equates to that of a 5 star hotel which I am sure these patients would expect nothing else. As a consequence of the extensive investment in the patient facility this benefits patients both nationally and internationally.

[X]

Orthopaedic surgery is a speciality which is constantly evolving and developed more complex techniques. This involves a high degree of investment which HCA and the Wellington Hospital are happy to support and provide. This not only involves investment in equipment but also in providing training to staff and ensuring staff are of a high calibre.

Thanks to the support of HCA our unit and many others in the hospital are able to provide training for local physiotherapists, general practitioners and junior doctors at minimal costs to the attendees.

We often treat patients who have complex knee problems with significant medical co morbidities. On many occasions we have to use the high dependency unit and occasionally have to use the intensive care facility.

I also work at a small [X] hospital in [X] which has none of these facilities. Indeed most peripheral hospitals do not have adequate HDU or ITU facilities and rely on the health service to deal with any sick patients.

At The Wellington Hospital I am aware that ITU in the south and north building are amongst the best in the country and invariably perform better compared to the NHS hospitals statistics than the counterparts in the health service. If I was ill then I can assure you that is where I am coming!

The business of healthcare is expensive, which of course is a concern for the government and our economy. The costs in maintaining the structures we work in and keeping pace with the demands of modern medicine which our patients demand is also very significant.

I have worked in a hospital group which used to be owned by private equity when no investment was made and this is not the way we should precede.

I write because I think HCA has clearly been treated unfairly in the competition commission report (which I have read) and the commission clearly has not taken into consideration the costs involved.