

Consultant 7

2 February 2014

Dear Mr Witcomb

I am a General Surgeon and have been practicing at The Wellington Hospital for the last four years. I am writing in regards to the news that the Competition Commission wishes for HCA to sell two of its hospitals.

The Wellington has, over the years, provided me with an avenue to explore a number of areas of interest for me which would not be accessible at other private providers. Operations to treat bowel cancer in high-risk patients are one example; I am only able to conduct these procedures at The Wellington due to the robust backup facilities available. I also practice at Spire [X] Hospital, which is a good hospital, however the facilities for high-risk patients do not match those boasted by The Wellington.

My practice at The Wellington has also enabled me to conduct novel procedures for rectal prolapse using the da Vinci robotic surgery system. Robotic surgery is a major innovation in pelvic and rectal surgery and the equipment is available in very few hospitals. I have now carried out more than 20 operations using this cutting edge technology and can say with confidence that the level of care is incredible - these procedures have proved life-changing for many of my patients.

HCA's attitude to quality is clear. At The Wellington the operating theatres are first-class, the theatre nursing is unparalleled and the hospital is able to attract first class anaesthetists. Radiology is also very rapid in comparison with elsewhere and especially the NHS, where waits can be significantly longer.

HCA's attitude to quality is a key factor that led me to choose to practice at The Wellington. This presents itself in the hospital's investment in staff. In particular the CEO of the hospital, Keith Hague, whose vision, bravery and accessibility make him an excellent asset for all the clinicians and staff.

In my experience, HCA is a group that offers its consultants and their patients many opportunities for innovation and exploration of their areas of specialism. It also has a dedication to quality of care and service. It is for this reason that I would ask the Competition Commission to reconsider its proposal.