

Consultant 32

5 February 2014

Dear Mr Witcomb,

Private Health Care Market Investigation, Competition Report.

I am aware that the Competition Commission is currently conducting an enquiry into the private health care market in the UK. I believe that it is perceived there is inadequate competition in the market but there are, of course, a number of providers. I do private work both at the [X], and London Bridge Hospital (HCA Healthcare).

Whilst the [X] Hospital provides good facilities, the quality of the healthcare facilities at the London Bridge Hospital are second to none and reflects a sustained high level of investment on the part of HCA Healthcare.

As an example, the endoscopy unit has been completely refurbished and now provides two fully functioning rooms completely re-equipped with new endoscopes, monitors and scope guides and also provides facilities for other specialised techniques including capsule endoscopy, BRAVA capsule insertion and endoscopic confocal microscopy. The commitments to such innovative technology would not have been made by a company whose sole aim was to cut costs and maximise profits.

I very much doubt that forcing HCA Healthcare to divest one or more major hospitals would benefit patients. Nor would it benefit the private healthcare market. The international reputation of the London Bridge Hospital creates business opportunities that generate valuable income for the exchequer. This would almost certainly be irreparably damaged by the lack of continuity resulting from the acquisition of the London Bridge Hospital by another organisation.

I sincerely hope that the very high standards of care and high levels of investment will be given serious consideration before making a final decision on the future of the London Bridge Hospital.