

## Consultant 85

5 February 2014

Dear Mr Witcomb

I am a Paediatric Ophthalmologist at The Portland Hospital and [redacted] and am contacting you in regards to the Competition Commission's recommended divestiture of two HCA hospitals. Due to my experience of competing hospitals, this proposal seems to me a worrying one.

Having worked previously at [redacted], I made an informed decision to switch to a HCA hospital after becoming disillusioned by the lower standard of training, treatment and service on offer at my previous hospital. For instance, I was unable to treat patients under the age of 5 at [redacted], which was problematic. Additionally, I was sometimes unable to find well-trained nurses to complete simple tasks as administering eye-drops to a patient.

On joining The Portland Hospital, I found a great deal of support was available. I was able to benefit from the HCA's investment in staff, unit space and equipment as I established a new eye unit along with one other consultant. HCA has enabled us in offering treatment in a room side-by-side with an optometrist, a well-structured approach to specialist treatment.

I have also been highly impressed with the attitude to innovation I've seen at The Portland Hospital. I've been able to benefit from this progressive approach to medicine on an individual level, having developed a treatment for children [redacted]. Offering this treatment has only been possible at the Portland due to the need to anaesthetise the child. Furthermore, HCA create the open and supportive environment required to implement new ideas.

I highly value HCA as the owner of The Portland for their openness to new, forward-thinking treatments and approaches to patient care. It is for this reason I believe divesting two of the group's hospitals may damage the quality of care in those hospitals in the longer term and may be an error of judgement on the part of the Competition Commission.