

Consultant 91

5 February 2014

Dear Mr Witcomb

Competition Commission: 'Provisional Decision on Remedies'

I am a Consultant Paediatric Neurologist who works at [X] with the NHS and at The Portland Hospital for Women and Children privately, for the last [X] years or so.

I did have my private practice in the past, in 2 other hospitals ([X]), however I would like to explain why I now have my private practice solely at the Portland Hospital. I found that the Portland Hospital provided prompt and safe care to my patients and when I needed another service and made suggestions to that effect, a solution was found.

I would like to provide an example for how the connectedness of the HCA supports progress within my field. I pointed out to the Hospital the need for an acute Neuro-rehabilitation unit in the summer of 2008 after we had to accept a child who had a severe head injury while on holiday in the Canary Islands. The Chief Executive listened and asked me what we needed. I explained that [X] and we could duplicate it in the private sector. He took notes and accepted my suggestions. As the Portland Hospital belongs to HCA and they had an adult Neuro-rehabilitation unit at the Wellington Hospital, we discussed the practicalities with them and we converted the 6th floor at the Portland into a Neuro-rehabilitation unit.

All the rooms had hoists, bathrooms that were wheelchair friendly and a Physiotherapy Gym on the same floor. We have had many children from the UK and from abroad who have benefitted immensely from this service and the unit became larger with many more patients benefitting from it. Access to the expertise held by consultants elsewhere within the HCA network greatly improved the service I could offer my patients.

In a similar view, many of the Paediatricians and Paediatric Subspecialists are asked to provide support to the Harley Street Clinic Cardiovascular and Oncology Unit.

Furthermore, HCA are always particularly keen to bring together the highest quality specialist expertise for the benefit of their patients.

Most of our Paediatricians at the Portland work in the teaching hospitals in London, Great Ormond Street, or other similar prestigious institutions.

For instance, we pointed out the need for an in-house Electroencephalography and Electromyography and Nerve conduction studies. We now have the machines and the service with the Consultant Neurophysiologists from Great Ormond Street and St Mary's Hospital.

We requested a CT scan machine for the Neurological/Neurosurgical patients and this was also installed and this service is routinely used by the Neurosurgeons from Great Ormond Street who work with us.

At the Portland Hospital, I am able to request urgent MRIs under general anaesthesia with a Paediatric Anaesthetist from Great Ormond Street. They are also reported by Neuro-radiologists from Great Ormond Street.

HCA provide opportunities for me to work with experts in their field without restriction, which benefits the quality of care I can offer my patients.

I feel that HCA provides a service that is much needed with different hospitals covering different areas of expertise. The combination of these sub-specialists and access to the best equipment available allows us to provide the best quality care for our patients and the hospitals are distributed in several locations making the service very accessible

I feel that it is important that HCA remains as a group, because they work with the NHS human resources and have the breadth to offer not only, a wide range of services, but also to make investments that benefit both the private and public sectors that smaller units would not be able to make.