

MEDIA RELEASE

18th November 2009

The CCP recommends the proposed acquisition of Bedfordshire and Luton Partnership NHS Trust (BLPT) be allowed to proceed

The Co-operation and Competition Panel (CCP) has recommended to Monitor and the Department of Health (DH) that the proposed acquisition of BLPT by South Essex Partnership University NHS FT be allowed to proceed.

The recommendation follows the CCP's review of the proposed transaction under Principle 9 of the *Principles and Rules of Cooperation and Competition* and its finding that the acquisition would not give rise to any adverse effect on patients or taxpayers as a result of a loss of choice or competition.

CCP Director, Andrew Taylor commented:

"Our inquiry finds that the proposed acquisition would not adversely affect the ability of commissioners to competitively tender for mental health services in the Bedfordshire and Luton area due to the range of credible bidders in the locality."

Mr Taylor added:

"In the course of our analysis we identified a potential concern that commissioners might, as a result of the transaction, experience a loss of control of properties key to the delivery of mental health services in the area. Nevertheless, in the prevailing circumstances, we concluded that the loss of control did not result in any detriment to patients or taxpayers in this instance.

However, as a result of our inquiry, we have been asked by the DH and Monitor to undertake a wider study of the relationship between property, cooperation and competition in the NHS. We look forward to beginning this work in due course."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. The Cooperation and Competition Panel's (CCP) report, and further information regarding the CCP's approach to analysing mergers, is available on the its website at www.ccp-panel.org.uk
2. The CCP's sponsors, the Department of Health and Monitor, the regulator of NHS Foundation Trusts, will now consider the CCP's recommendation.
3. The CCP was formally established following a written Ministerial Statement in the House of Commons from the Minister of State for Health Services on 29 January 2009. The CCP advises on the application of the *Principles and Rules of Co-operation and Competition*, and makes independent recommendations to the Department of Health and Monitor, and Strategic Health Authorities, on how such breaches should be resolved.
4. The CCP is chaired by Lord Carter of Coles and its membership comprises Guy Beringer QC, Laura Carstensen, Professor Dame Janet Husband, Professor Peter Smith, John Swift QC, Andrew Taylor and John Wotton.
5. For inquiries about the Co-operation and Competition Panel contact Tom Frusher, Policy and Communications Director, on 0207 270 5442.