



CO-OPERATION & COMPETITION PANEL
FOR NHS-FUNDED SERVICES

EMBARGO: 0001 HOURS; FRIDAY 30 JANUARY 2009

CO-OPERATION AND COMPETITION PANEL BEGINS WORK TODAY

The Co-operation and Competition Panel begins its work today with a clear purpose to help ensure NHS-funded services deliver high quality care for patients and value for money for taxpayers.

The Panel will investigate potential breaches of the Principles and Rules of Co-operation and Competition (PRCC), and make independent recommendations to Strategic Health Authorities, the Department of Health and, in relation to NHS Foundation Trusts, Monitor on how such breaches should be resolved.

It will also review proposed mergers, and advise on the wider development of co-operation, patient choice and competition within the NHS.

In assessing cases referred to it, primarily by Strategic Health Authorities, the Panel will follow guidelines published today in draft covering mergers, conduct, procurement dispute appeals and misleading information and advertising appeals. These documents are subject to consultation and available on the Panel's website at www.ccp-panel.org.uk.

The Panel includes eight members and is jointly sponsored by the Department of Health and Monitor, the independent regulator of Foundation Trusts.

The Panel's chairman, Lord Carter of Coles, said:

"Patient choice and competition are potentially powerful drivers of improved quality and efficiency in the provision of NHS services. Achieving these aims depends on having a rules-based approach, clear roles and responsibilities for oversight of the system and effective mechanisms for redress.

"The Panel will help ensure that the NHS's principles and rules of co-operation and competition are properly applied for the benefits of patients and taxpayers."

"From today, cases of potential breaches of the rules can be reported to us. We will approach all issues with fairness, rigour and independence, and will be transparent in both in the way we work and in the recommendations we make.

Ben Bradshaw MP, Minister of State for Health Services, said:

"I am pleased the Competition and Co-operation Panel has now started work. With patients now able to choose their provider for NHS services, it will play a vital role in safeguarding the interests of patients and taxpayers by ensuring that competition to provide health services is fair and transparent.



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"We know that competition helps drive up quality and improve standards in the care patients receive, which was the focus of Lord Darzi's Next Stage Review. Today, the NHS is more responsive to patients' needs and waiting times are at their lowest ever level."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. The Minister of State for Health Services issued a Written Ministerial Statement in the House of Commons on the establishment of the Panel on 29 January 2009. The appointment of Lord Carter of Coles as the Panel's Chair was announced on 11 September 2008.

2. The Panel is consulting on draft interim guidelines for mergers, conduct, procurement dispute appeals and misleading information and advertising appeals. The aim of this consultation is to produce guidance that is clear, comprehensible, analytically and procedurally sound, and covers all relevant matters.

Interested parties can make a submission in writing to:
Mergers and Conduct Guidelines Consultation
Co-operation and Competition Panel
1 Horse Guards Road
SW1A 2HQ
London, UK

Or by email to:
consultations@ccpanel.gsi.gov.uk

Or by fax to:
020 7270 5381

3. The Panel's members are:

Guy Beringer QC

Laura Carstensen

Lord Carter of Coles (Chairman)

Dame Janet Husband DBE

Peter C. Smith

John Swift QC



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Andrew Taylor (Director)

John Wotton

For full biographies, visit www.ccp-panel.org.uk

4. For media inquiries about the Co-operation and Competition Panel visit www.ccp-panel.org.uk or contact Ed Owen on 020 7467 9231 or on ed.owen@apexcommunications.com