



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Co-operation and Competition Panel asked to look at restrictions on consultants' non-contracted hours

The Co-operation and Competition Panel (CCP) has been asked by the Department of Health and Monitor to examine restrictions on NHS consultants' ability to work for alternative providers of NHS-funded services during their non-contracted hours.

This is the first referral to the CCP since its establishment on 31 January this year.

Concerns have been expressed that restrictions are preventing providers from offering new services, and that this could be having an adverse effect on patient choice and competition.

In the event that such restrictions are found to be problematic, the CCP has been asked to make recommendations to assist NHS organisations in addressing the challenges posed by consultants working for multiple operators, including both NHS and independent sector providers.

The CCP has been asked to report by 28 August 2009. Its findings will be made public and act as advice to the Secretary of State for Health and to Monitor, the regulatory body for NHS Foundation Trusts.

"We are pleased to receive our first formal reference and look forward to considering this matter in a rigorous, transparent way" said Lord Carter of Coles, Chairman of the CCP.

"It is open to any organisation or individual to make submissions and provide information on this issue and we will shortly be writing to those we think are likely to have an interest.

"The Panel will provide independent and impartial advice drawing on the wide experience and expertise of its members, and a thorough examination of the facts."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. A call for submissions, terms of reference and a timetable for the study are available on the CCP's website at www.ccp-panel.org.uk.
2. For more information about the Co-operation and Competition Panel visit www.ccp-panel.org.uk or contact Catherine Davies on 020 7270 4889 or at catherine.davies@ccp-panel.gsi.gov.uk.