



14 NOVEMBER 2011

## No waiting game for patients after DH ruling

Patients in Wiltshire, Bath and North East Somerset will no longer be subject to minimum waiting times and other restrictions on their right to choose their hospital for planned operations.

In July, [the Cooperation and Competition Panel found that Wiltshire PCT's decision to impose a uniform minimum waiting time](#), and restrict the number of services that are commissioned from hospitals would lead to a reduction in choice and competition and impose material costs on patients and taxpayers. The CCP then recommended a number of measures to the Secretary of State for Health to address the harm.

In response to a CCP report on nationwide patient choice [published in July](#), the Department of Health has today accepted the CCP's recommendations that those Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), like Wiltshire and Bath and North East Somerset PCTs, currently imposing inappropriate constraints on elective activity should stop doing so. The Department of Health agreed with the CCP that they should improve their procedures and act more transparently to ensure the benefits of patient choice are realised.

CCP Director, Catherine Davies commented:

'We're pleased that the DH ruling means that patients in Wiltshire, Bath and North East Somerset will no longer be subject to unnecessary waiting times and excessive restrictions when it comes to choosing their hospital for planned operations.'

**ENDS**

## NOTES

1. More information on this particular conduct complaint can be found on the CCP's website at [http://www.ccp-panel.org.uk/cases/NHS\\_Wiltshire\\_Conduct\\_Complaint.html](http://www.ccp-panel.org.uk/cases/NHS_Wiltshire_Conduct_Complaint.html). For more information about the CCP see: <http://www.ccp-panel.org.uk/>

2. The CCP's role is to ensure that the *Principles and Rules of Co-operation and Competition* for the provision of NHS-funded services successfully support the delivery of high quality care for patients and value for money for taxpayers.

3. The CCP investigates potential breaches of the *Principles and Rules*, and makes independent recommendations to the Department of Health and Monitor on how such breaches should be resolved. It also reviews proposed NHS mergers, and advises on the wider development of co-operation, patient choice and competition within the NHS. Since its formal introduction in 2009, the CCP has:

- Reviewed 161 NHS merger transactions
- Undertaken 4 conduct cases
- Completed 3 procurement dispute cases
- Undertaken 2 market studies (including the ongoing 'review of choice in elective care')

4. For inquiries about the Cooperation and Competition Panel contact Nick Warren, Inquiry Director at [cases@ccp-panel.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:cases@ccp-panel.gsi.gov.uk) or 020 7270 5262.