



The Association of Greater Manchester  
Primary Care Trusts

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Our Ref: TGP/caf

Date: 1<sup>st</sup> May 2009

Mr Denis Kelly  
Cooperation and Competition Panel  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London  
SW1A 2HQ

Dear Mr Kelly

On behalf of the Association of Greater Manchester PCT's, I have been asked as scheduled care lead to respond to your recent communication. After a two year procurement process the Greater Manchester NHS Clinical Assessment & Treatment Service (CATS) commenced full service delivery on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2009. A mobile solution operating from 7 sites on a rotational basis across Greater Manchester. These new mobile clinical units will provide patients with an additional choice of service provision alongside that of the established local health providers and as part of the increased capacity now available to the health economy. The aim of the local PCTs is to provide all patients with efficient and easy access to NHS services in line with the NHS North West's vision of delivering *Healthier Horizons* for the future health and well-being of the population.

The service is available Monday to Saturdays 7:45am – 8:00pm and in five specialties alongside Endoscopy and diagnostic tests. The scheme is one of a number of nationally procured services that are designed to provide additional choice in conjunction with locally procured services.

During the procurement phase a number of open engagement sessions were delivered with members of the public having an opportunity to participate alongside each of the local acute providers. These sessions were generally well attended and a good balance between healthcare professionals and members of the public was achieved.

Each Acute provider was visited with recruitment and retention issues forming part of the overall introduction to the new service. This type of service lends itself to having sessional based clinical staff who are then attached to a major acute centre in order to achieve the right professional balance in the clinical work place.

Whilst there was great deal of interest shown in the new service provision the IS provider has:

- Demonstrated an Inability to recruit a sufficient number of local doctors through (Non Contractual Hours) NCHs (or secondments).
- Relayed that this was further exacerbated by news that 5 Acute trusts would not support consultants who wish to work NCHs in CATS.
- Relayed that many Consultants reported a number of conversations barring them from working for a “competitor”.

No documentary evidence to support this was however available. The only interest that the IS provider received on NCHs had come from doctors working within the private sector, albeit one local acute trust (The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust) has now engaged and from outside Greater Manchester

The lack of support from the local acute trusts reduced the potential pool from which the new service provision could engage with. The eventual outcome did provide difficulties that resulted in additional overseas consultants being recruited. The provider did continue to monitor the applications received for NCHs and updated the records on any engagements entered into for NCHs.

I understand the Trusts who are opposed to supporting consultants in using NCHs already had consultants working NCHs under other national schemes.

At a recent Directors of Human Resources meeting of acute trusts a question was tabled to establish if there were any trusts not willing to support NCHs, none of the Human Resources Director’s responded.

Guidance on the use of NCHs is contained within the Independent Sector Treatment Centres HR framework for phase 2 schemes and further guidance is available on the NHS Employers website. It is understood that details of the circumstances in which NCHs may not be supported had been detailed in an issue of “the Week” earlier this year.

A number of these Trusts have Foundation status and may have amended the standard NHS consultant contract – this may affect the ability of consultants to engage on NCHs.

Yours sincerely

Mr Trevor Purt  
Chief Executive of NHS Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale  
Greater Manchester Lead for CATS

Cc Mike Burrows – CE of NHS Salford, Chair of Association of Greater Manchester PCTs  
Mike Farrar – CE of NHS Northwest