The limits of market-based reforms

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The recent emphasis on commissioning in health and social care has sought to strengthen the market and enable the diversification of provision in a mixed economy of care. Whilst current reforms are not new, and indeed are being echoed in other parts of the globe, they seek to further embed markets in health and social care and as such the time is right to examine the limits of such reforms. The Health Services Management Centre held a 2-day event in October 2012 and the first day was designed to appeal to academics and focused on the 'limits of market-based reforms'. The aim was to encourage an interdisciplinary exchange and the programme was designed to examine 'the limits of market-based reforms' from a variety of disciplinary and methodological perspectives.

Day two was designed to appeal primarily to an NHS and social care audience and explored the future of health care commissioning using recent research evidence as the basis for discussion. Prominent academics, policy makers, managers and practitioners interested in commissioning, all of whom have researched or worked in health commissioning over many years, contributed to a discussion around the effectiveness and future prospects of market-based reforms in the NHS in England. Papers from the event have been published in BMC Health Services Research and are available at: **http://www.biomedcentral.com/bmchealthservres/supplements/13/S1 (http://www.biomedcentral.com/bmchealthservres/supplements/13/S1)** .

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