

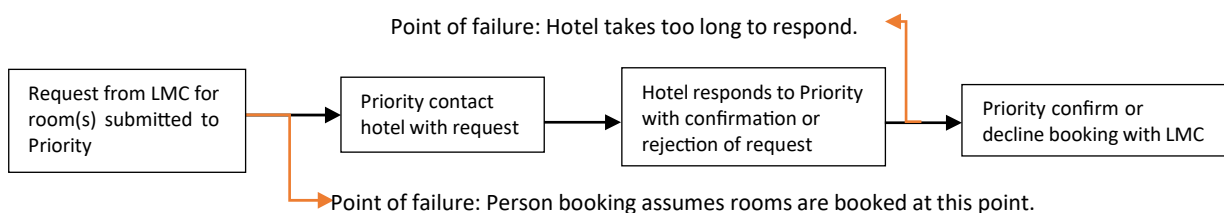
Prior to the UK conference there were a number of observations made on ListServer regarding the booking of hotels.

GPDF have looked into this and would advise as follows:

GPDF contracts with the BMA to organise this conference. Regarding the use of Priority as a booking agent for conference rooms:

1. In response to points regarding the arrangements between the BMA and Priority booking agents -Priority earn their money from the hotels they use. There is no benefit to the BMA.
2. In response to difficulty with booking rooms –

There can be a significant time lag (several days) between a client requesting a room via Priority and the room being confirmed. This is due to the length of time taken by the individual hotels in responding to the request for rooms made by the Priority agent. This has been particularly obvious with booking rooms for the UK conference at the Celtic Manor. The Celtic Manor have been slow to respond meaning that rooms have not been appropriately confirmed at the time of booking and have taken several days to be confirmed to Priority. This means that on several occasions' rooms were not able to be booked as there were no longer any available. The process simplified is:



From the conversation with the BMA, it is clear that people booking via Priority assume that their rooms are confirmed at the time of booking, however this is not confirmed until the hotel has confirmed their availability with Priority.

3. In response to Priority being unaware of the reimbursement limits for conferences and being offered rooms above the limit and prices increased significantly when trying to book an additional night: This has been investigated with Priority who say they are up to date and are familiar with the reimbursement limits but that they recognise some people may have misinterpreted the costs pertaining to inside and outside of London compared with the higher than usual cost of rooms at the time of booking. Due to the limited availability of rooms in November, this meant that there was a much higher cost for rooms booked outside of the conference dates.

4. The use of Priority as a booking agent for GPDF conferences:

On discussion with the BMA it appears that the use of Priority as a booking agent can be useful in certain circumstances:

- People who book for LMCs are used to the system and understand how to book.
- It removes pressure from people who might otherwise try to book from other sites
- Priority has more flexibility with hotel bookings than some other booking agents
- Bookings are dealt with in a first come, first served basis.

However, the disadvantage is that Priority's processes and associated time lags can be misleading to people using the site to book.

5. With regard to rooms being available at varying room rates, this is standard hotel practice, depending on demand and availability. As hotels book up the prices are likely to rise. The size of our conferences means that if last minute bookings are available they will be considerably more expensive.