

Monitor to Investigate NHS Contract Setting

News Article



Monitor

Making the health sector
work for patients

Healthcare regulator Monitor has confirmed that it is to launch an investigation into the process by which Barking and Dagenham, and Redbridge, Havering and Waltham Forest clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) awarded a care contract to Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust. The contract covers a range of services, including general surgery, orthopaedics and ophthalmology, for 965,000 people.

It follows a complaint by Care UK, one of the biggest private care providers in the UK, which has supplied elective care services in the area for several years. Care UK said the CCGs' decision to take away the contract was discriminatory, with too much emphasis on price and too little weight on quality.

Monitor said that the investigation would focus on whether the CCGs' assessment of the bids was "consistent with their obligations to act in a transparent and proportionate way and to treat providers equally".

Monitor says it will investigate whether the commissioners' process to select a provider enable them to assure themselves of the quality and efficiency of the services. Care UK said that the CCGs placed too much weight on price and too little weight on quality in the criteria they used to evaluate bids; therefore Care UK thinks the process did not allow the CCGs to identify a provider most capable of meeting patients' needs and improving the quality and efficiency of services to comply with Procurement, Patient Choice and Competition Regulations.

Care UK had revenues of almost £730m in 2014, with

underlying profits of around £53m. The care provider, whose nationwide portfolio includes hospitals, GP surgeries and mental health centres, is owned by the private equity firm Bridgepoint Capital.

Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust said it was extremely disappointed by the investigation and warned that it would delay the opening of a care centre. The trust insisted that its successful bid had provided the best value for money, which was why it was chosen by the CCGs. "Putting the elective care centre into NHS hands means that patients will have better continuity of care, and waiting times will be reduced," it said.

Care UK said it welcomed the investigation, adding that the current situation could potentially cause loss of patient choice and raise issues around price competition.

"Care UK is committed to continuing to operate the service to the highest possible standards and continuing to support the local NHS in addressing its performance challenges during the period of Monitor's investigation," it said.

A spokesman for the CCGs said: "Barking and Dagenham, Redbridge, Havering, and Waltham Forest clinical commissioning groups are disappointed that this investigation has been launched. We will of course cooperate fully with Monitor to help them collect the information they require.

"The CCGs remain confident that our arrangements to select a provider of these services were in the best interests of patients, in accordance with the NHS rules on procurement, choice and competition."

Andrew Gwynne, the shadow health minister, said: "This is a worrying sign of what lies ahead for the NHS under the Tories," Gwynne said. "David Cameron promised to put doctors in control, but his competition rules allow large private health companies to challenge the awarding of contracts to the NHS. It's a ridiculous state of affairs that ministers need to urgently address."

Richard Vautrey, the deputy chair of the BMA's general practitioners committee, said "GPs had concerns about complicated tendering processes, which could favour commercial companies. We remain concerned that valuable resources that would be better spent on patient

Monitor to Investigate NHS Contract Setting

News Article

care are being diverted into an expensive tendering process and, potentially, into legal challenges about the outcome of contract awards”.

This article highlights the risks associated with public sector procurement and the increased potential of receiving a legal challenge. If you have concerns regarding your procurement processes or merely require piece of mind, our procurement specialists are on hand to provide the required support, direction and advice.

Source: www.onmedia.com

Linea is a results focused organisational excellence consultancy with a track record of delivering sustained superior performance that meets and where possible exceeds client expectations.

We combine the credentials of a top tier firm with the depth of expertise and flexibility of a niche practice to support clients in addressing their most pressing organisational issues through the provision of highly professional, innovative, customer focussed solutions which deliver expected business benefits on time every time.

With an exceptional track record of delivering multi-million pound savings for prominent Public and Private Sector clients, our Organisational Excellence approach provides the skills and capability required to support clients to maximise efficiency, improve quality and reduce cost.

News Article Ends