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Contract

## **NHS24 Clinical Reasoning Engine**

NHS 24

F03: Contract award notice

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-007796

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-04b1b5

Published 4 March 2025, 11:23am

### **Section I: Contracting authority**

#### **I.1) Name and addresses**

NHS 24

Caledonia House, Cardonald Park, 140 Fify Pitches Road

Glasgow

G51 4EB

#### **Contact**

Samuel Torrance

#### **Email**

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#### **Telephone**

+44 1419515000

#### **Country**

United Kingdom

**NUTS code**

UKM - Scotland

**Internet address(es)**

Main address

[www.nhs24.com](http://www.nhs24.com)

Buyer's address

[https://www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk/search/Search\\_AuthProfile.aspx?ID=AA00230](https://www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk/search/Search_AuthProfile.aspx?ID=AA00230)

**I.4) Type of the contracting authority**

Body governed by public law

**I.5) Main activity**

Health

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**Section II: Object**

**II.1) Scope of the procurement**

**II.1.1) Title**

NHS24 Clinical Reasoning Engine

Reference number

NHS24/2024/826

**II.1.2) Main CPV code**

- 48180000 - Medical software package

**II.1.3) Type of contract**

Supplies

#### **II.1.4) Short description**

This is a Voluntary Ex Ante Transparency (VEAT) Notice. This Notice is to indicate that NHS 24 intends to enter in to Contract with Elsevier for the provision of their Clinical Reasoning Engine (CRE). The Contract duration will be an initial three year period with one optional two year extension. The total contract value indicated in II.1.7, includes the optional two year extension period.

#### **II.1.6) Information about lots**

This contract is divided into lots: No

#### **II.1.7) Total value of the procurement (excluding VAT)**

Value excluding VAT: £4,500,000

### **II.2) Description**

#### **II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)**

- 48100000 - Industry specific software package
- 72222300 - Information technology services
- 48000000 - Software package and information systems

#### **II.2.3) Place of performance**

NUTS codes

- UKM - Scotland

Main site or place of performance

Scotland

#### **II.2.4) Description of the procurement**

The Decision Support tool is a critical component of NHS 24 systems. It aids call handlers in providing safe, patient-centred care for services such as the Forensic Medical Examination (FME), Scottish Emergency Dental Service (SEDS), Mental Health Hub, and the 111 service.

The entire 111 service is designed around a clinically safe decision support tool to guide callers to the right endpoint.

The current tool, Arezzo, provided by Elsevier, manages clinical protocols and provides the ability to triage patients. During delivery of the replacement Contact Centre CRM, it was identified that the current tool is approaching end of life and becoming unsupported, with a replacement product (CRE) being offered.

Having undergone considerable procurement and market research, CRE was confirmed as the only viable option to balance, risk, cost, technical feasibility, ease of implementation and critically, patient safety.

### **II.2.5) Award criteria**

Price

### **II.2.11) Information about options**

Options: Yes

Description of options

The contract has one optional two year extension period.

### **II.2.13) Information about European Union Funds**

The procurement is related to a project and/or programme financed by European Union funds: No

### **II.2.14) Additional information**

NHS24 intends to award a contract for the Provision of a Clinical Reasoning Engine under the terms of Regulation 33(1)(b)(ii), Regulation 33(1)(c) and Regulation 33(4)(b) of the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015.

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## **Section IV. Procedure**

### **IV.1) Description**

#### **IV.1.1) Type of procedure**

Award of a contract without prior publication of a call for competition in the cases listed below

- The services can be provided only by a particular economic operator for the following reason:
  - absence of competition for technical reasons

Explanation:

Please refer to section VI.3) additional information in this notice for more detail.

#### **IV.1.8) Information about the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)**

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: Yes

### **IV.2) Administrative information**

#### **IV.2.1) Previous publication concerning this procedure**

Notice number: [2024/S 000-034795](#)

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## **Section V. Award of contract**

### **Contract No**

NHS24/2024/826

A contract/lot is awarded: Yes

### **V.2) Award of contract**

#### **V.2.1) Date of conclusion of the contract**

17 October 2024

#### **V.2.2) Information about tenders**

Number of tenders received: 1

Number of tenders received from SMEs: 0

Number of tenders received from tenderers from other EU Member States: 1

Number of tenders received from tenderers from non-EU Member States: 0

Number of tenders received by electronic means: 1

The contract has been awarded to a group of economic operators: No

**V.2.3) Name and address of the contractor**

Elsevier B.V.

125 The Wall

London

EC2Y 5AS

Country

United Kingdom

NUTS code

- UK - United Kingdom

The contractor is an SME

No

**V.2.4) Information on value of contract/lot (excluding VAT)**

Total value of the contract/lot: £4,500,000

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## Section VI. Complementary information

### VI.3) Additional information

Explanation:

NHS 24 is currently undergoing a Digital Transformation Programme (DTP) to implement a new integrated Contact Centre (CC) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. A critical component of this project is the Decision Support tool, which aids call handlers in providing safe, patient-centred care for services such as the Forensic Medical Examination (FME), Scottish Emergency Dental Service (SEDS), Mental Health Hub, and the 111 service.

The entire 111 service is designed around a clinically safe decision support tool to guide callers to the appropriate endpoint. The current tool provided by Elsevier manages clinical protocols and enables patient triage.

The scope of the DTP included the retention of the existing clinical decision support tool during the CC/CRM implementation. This decision was taken due to the complexity of the content, clinical safety and minimising any disruption and training needs for Call Handlers and Clinicians.

It was recognised that the current tool would require updating once the CC/CRM system was implemented due to the age of the product.

During the DTP, the current product was identified as end of life and the provider confirmed that they could not support it beyond October 2025. The product is obsolete and will not be available beyond October 2025 and it would not be possible for any other third party to manage and maintain the tool beyond its end of life for proprietary reasons.

It is essential to the progress of the CC/CRM implementation that a decision support tool is available for software testing by no later than December 2024, to ensure the essential functions of the application are working correctly. This is a vital programme milestone to ensure continuity of service and to maintain patient safety.

Extensive market research undertaken by Gartner on behalf of NHS24 and a Request for Information (RFI) conducted through NHS England's Health Systems Support Framework (Decision Support Tool & Integrated Care Management Lots) showed that there was no other viable solution off the shelf without risking clinical safety or a major change to NHS 24's triage process. There is not sufficient time to procure a bespoke (not off the shelf) solution as this would result in a gap in service provision and an unacceptable risk to patient safety.

Elsevier provides a specialised service through its updated Clinical Reasoning Engine (CRE), which is uniquely suited to NHS 24's needs for decision support in clinical triage and integrates seamlessly with its systems and processes, including significant NHS 24 IPR subsisting in decision tree processes which are designed to work with this tool and would require considerable time and significant additional financial investment to replicate with an alternative tool.

NHS 24 intends to proceed with awarding a contract under the negotiated procedure without prior publication of a contract notice on grounds of:

- Absence of competition for technical reasons, and;
- Extreme urgency, and;
- for additional deliveries by the original supplier which are intended either as a partial replacement of supplies or installations or as the extension of existing supplies or installations where a change of supplier would oblige the contracting authority to acquire supplies having different technical characteristics which would result in incompatibility or disproportionate technical difficulties in operation and maintenance.

in accordance with Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015.

It is NHS 24's intention to review how decision support is delivered in the future and to competitively procure a solution at the end of the advertised contract period.

NHS 24 will observe a standstill period of 10 calendar days following the publication of this notice.

(SC Ref:792221)

## **VI.4) Procedures for review**

### **VI.4.1) Review body**

The Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service - Glasgow Sheriff Court

Glasgow

Country

United Kingdom