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Planning

Market Engagement for Positron Emission Tomography-Computed Tomography (PET-CT) (all ages)

NHS England

F01: Prior information notice

Prior information only

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-008281

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-04ea50

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Section I: Contracting authority

I.1) Name and addresses

NHS England

7&8 Wellington Place

Leeds

LS1 4AP

Contact

Surinder Kahlon

Email

surinder.kahlon@nhs.net

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UKE - Yorkshire and the Humber

Internet address(es)

Main address

<https://www.england.nhs.uk//>

Buyer's address

<https://www.england.nhs.uk//>

I.3) Communication

Additional information can be obtained from the above-mentioned address

Electronic communication requires the use of tools and devices that are not generally available. Unrestricted and full direct access to these tools and devices is possible, free of charge, at

<https://health-family.force.com/s/Welcome>

I.4) Type of the contracting authority

Body governed by public law

I.5) Main activity

Health

Section II: Object

II.1) Scope of the procurement

II.1.1) Title

Market Engagement for Positron Emission Tomography- Computed Tomography (PET-CT) (all ages)

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 85000000 - Health and social work services

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

NHS Arden and Greater East Midlands Commissioning Support Unit (AGCSU), on behalf of NHS England Specialised Commissioning (referred to as the Commissioner), is undertaking a market engagement exercise to understand the current and future capacity and capability for the provision of PET-CT services in England from potential providers within this specialised commissioning area. Interested parties are encouraged to register their interest and participate in the market questionnaire which will provide feedback to commissioners. Please note that this is not a call for competition although the commissioner would encourage all potential providers to respond to this market engagement exercise. PET-CT is a nationally retained service, meaning that services are directly commissioned by NHS England. Since 2015, PET-CT services in England have been commissioned in two separate groups of contracts known as Phase I and Phase II. This market engagement exercise relates to the Phase I contracts which account for around 50% of all PET-CT scanning in England.

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: No

II.2) Description

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 85100000 - Health services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UK - United Kingdom

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

NHS England would like to receive interest from potential providers for the provision of PET-CT service covered by the current Phase 1 contract in line with the service specification and associated Clinical Commissioning Policy.

This notice is to advise prospective providers in the market of the commissioner's intention to recommission of PET-CT services for the geographies covered by the current Phase 1 contract and to provide an opportunity to engage with and participate in a market engagement exercise. This market engagement exercise provides an opportunity for prospective providers to engage with NHS England to help support and inform the commissioning and procurement approach.

PET-CT is a specialist diagnostic imaging modality that uses a small amount of radioactive substance called a radiotracer. The radiotracer is injected into a vein about an hour before the scan to give it time to reach the right cells in the body. The scan involves both a PET scan and a CT scan and takes between 30-60 minutes to complete. This type of scan is predominantly used in the staging and management of cancer, however, the modality is also used in a growing number of non-oncological indications, particularly neurological. The service is a discrete component of clinical pathways and is only available through referral from secondary care.

The radiotracers used in PET-CT scans fall into two categories, standard and non-standard. Standard radiotracers, mainly comprising 'FDG' make up the majority of PET-CT activity in England. Non-standard tracers account for the remaining c10%. Non-standard tracers commonly have a short half-life and are normally produced close to the scanning service in radiopharmacy laboratories/units (RPU's). The provision of non-standard tracers will be linked to the procurement of scanning services in any future new contracts.

The existing Phase 1 contract was entered into following a nationally run competitive selection process and the contract is close to expiring. NHS England intends to secure continued provision of PET-CT services for the geographies covered by the current Phase 1 contract via competitive selection processes, which will begin in summer 2025. This market engagement exercise provides an opportunity for prospective providers to engage with NHS England to help support and inform the commissioning and future procurement approach.

NHS England requires market input on the following key areas:

- Procurement structure. It is proposed to link the provision of radiotracers to scanning

services and to secure standard radiotracer provision via a standalone selection process. This would mean that successful scanning providers would be required to provide scanning services for the full range of commissioned clinical indications and radiotracers (both standard and non-standard) within the lot geography. A second selection process for standard radiotracer supply would lead to successful bidders for radiotracer supply becoming mandated sub-contractors to scanning services contracted providers. The cost of standard radiotracers would be reimbursed by NHS England.

- **Lotting strategy.** The existing Phase I contract was divided into 4 geographical lots. However, the structure of the NHS is markedly different in 2025 than it was in 2014/15. For example, there are now Imaging Networks, Cancer Alliances and Integrated Commissioning Systems and Boards in place. In addition, the 4 lot structure does not reflect the current level of experience in the NHS in the delivery of PET-CT. It is proposed to offer 12 lots to the market, grouped by Region and reflecting a mix of existing activity flows and Imaging Network geographies.
- **Lot limits.** Whether lot limits should be applied to either/both: (i) scanning and non-standard radiotracer provision; and/or (ii) standard tracer provision. It is currently considered that the application of lot limits to both selection processes is appropriate and that they should be applied to the number of lots that can be bid for or won by a single organisation.
- **Price structure.** At present, it is considered that a fixed and marginal rate pricing structure will be applied to the scanning services element, supported by a price per patient dose for non-standard radiotracers and standard radiotracers. It is envisioned that volume-based rebates will be applied to the provision of standard radiotracers. The approach is designed to secure efficiencies based on economies of scale. Any cost of capital will need to be met by the provider and built-in to a pricing structure. It is also proposed that providers will bear the risk of inflation up to a pre-agreed limit.
- **New developments within the market.** The ability of the market to respond to new developments that are available over the life of the new potential contract. This means that providers will need to be able to implement new clinical commissioning policies published by NHS England and/or to comply with any mandatory guidance published by the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence.

The questionnaire and associated documents are available through the Atamis portal: <https://health-family.force.com/s/Welcome>

There will also be an opportunity to attend a market engagement event via Microsoft Teams at 13:30 on Tuesday 18 March 2025. If you would like to participate in this event, please email caroline.mpala@nhs.net by noon on Monday 17th March 2025. All slides and questions and responses will be made available to all potential providers following the event. You should express an interest on the portal should you wish to attend, please note only two

representatives per organisation is required.

The reference is C341675 and the closing date for submission of the completed questionnaire will be: 17:00 Wednesday 26 March 2025

II.3) Estimated date of publication of contract notice

15 August 2025

Section IV. Procedure

IV.1) Description

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

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: Yes