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Contract

NHS SY ICB - Non-Emergency Patient Transport - Additional Discharge

NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board

F03: Contract award notice

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-051170

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocids-h6vhtk-058d8d

Published 26 August 2025, 10:50am

Section I: Contracting authority

I.1) Name and addresses

NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board

197 Eyre Street

Sheffield

S1 3FG

Contact

Procurement department

Email

syicb.procurement@nhs.net

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UKE32 - Sheffield

Internet address(es)

Main address

<https://www.southyorkshire.icb.nhs.uk/>

Buyer's address

<https://www.southyorkshire.icb.nhs.uk/>

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

NHS SY ICB - Non-Emergency Patient Transport - Additional Discharge

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 85143000 - Ambulance services

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

It is estimated that around £460 million is spent on NEPTS a year across England – at an average cost of around £38 per journey. That represents about £1 in every £275 spent by the NHS, approximately the same as the total cost of radiotherapy. For people with a medical or severe mobility need, non-emergency patient transport services (NEPTS) provide an essential means to access the NHS, who otherwise might not be able to attend appointments or be discharged from hospital.

On average the Provider discharges a total of 11,268 patients per annum from Barnsley, Rotherham, and Doncaster hospitals, who otherwise would not be able to be discharged from hospital.

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: £3,617,670

II.2) Description

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKE3 - South Yorkshire

Main site or place of performance

Barnsley, Doncaster & Rotherham

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

It is estimated that around £460 million is spent on NEPTS a year across England – at an average cost of around £38 per journey. That represents about £1 in every £275 spent by the NHS, approximately the same as the total cost of radiotherapy. For people with a medical or severe mobility need, non-emergency patient transport services (NEPTS) provide an essential means to access the NHS, who otherwise might not be able to attend appointments or be discharged from hospital.

On average the Provider discharges a total of 11,268 patients per annum from Barnsley, Rotherham, and Doncaster hospitals, who otherwise would not be able to be discharged from hospital.

This contract will be awarded following the Direct Award Process C of the Provider Selection Regime.

The approximate lifetime value of the contract is - £3,617,670. This is based on the annual value of £723,534 and a 3 year contract with the option to extend for a further 2 years.

The contract will run from 01/10/2025 to 30/9/2028 with the option to extend for a further 2 years.

The name and address of the provider is:

First4Care
The Old Station,
High Street,
Edwinstowe,
Mansfield,
Nottinghamshire,
NG21 9HS

II.2.5) Award criteria

Quality criterion - Name: The existing provider is satisfying the original contract and will likely satisfy the proposed contract to a sufficient standard / Weighting: 100

Price - Weighting: 0

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: No

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

Key Criteria 1 - Quality & Innovation - Weighting 25%

There are no performance or quality issues with the First4Care Contract

First4care's recent CQC report rated them as good in every Key Line of Enquiry (KLOE) except Well-Led, in which it was rated Outstanding.

Quality of service is proven by the current and historic performance experienced by the 3 trusts (Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust & The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust). The ICB is confident that patient safety and effective patient care are provided via a myriad of combined factors implemented by first4care:

Their safe and effective NHS aligned recruitment process

Their 5-day bespoke tailored NEPTS training course plus 11 mandatory core subjects

Crews are trained to dynamically risk assess each patient's needs and determine the best course for their care & transport

Fleet of Ambulances are fit for purpose, maintained, serviced and inspected regularly and repaired promptly as necessary

Policies and procedures are in place for staff to rely upon and work to in order to provide safe and effective services

Management encourages, supports and effectively manages staff to provide safe and effective services and has robust, prompt processes in place should standards fall

The company has effective procedures and management of incidents, complaints, compliments, improvement actions and implements learning plans for the development of staff

Key Criteria 2 - Value - Weighting 20%

First4 Care is an independent provider of transport services and is flexible to take advantage of local workforce offering Value for money for the system and employability of people in the local area. This is reflected in the 'Outstanding' CQC rating results, with the inspection stating that First4Care has an innovative staffing model, based on grassroots ownership, which empowered staff in decision making to drive quality and service.

The provider is willing to deliver the service at the current contract value. The service cost value of service will not increase.

CQC registered and inspected with the latest inspection being 31 May 2023. First4Care have been rated as 'Good' in all areas and 'Outstanding' in the Well-led department.

The service meets the agreed response times and treats patients with compassion and kindness, respects their privacy and dignity and takes account of their individual needs.

first4care was the first independent NEPTS provider to deliver bespoke KPIs in 2011 for the Trusts and to demonstrate how improvements to the service could be made through changes it suggested. Their systems allow for monitoring, management and reporting of all journeys and all aspects of the discharge service delivery. The company can provide full-service reports monthly and meet regularly to discuss contract performance. First4care remodelled the Trusts' requirements through the provision of data analysis which continually improves their service delivery and performance against targets (e.g. Rotherham Hospital originally commissioned an overnight double crew stretcher ambulance shift but first4care's data showed only 1 stretcher patient travelled after 10pm so the service was remodelled to provide more efficient shift times and resource).

These elements, together with the competitive rates charged for the discharge service give the ICB great confidence in the value for money offered by first4care.

Key Criteria 3 - Integration, collaboration and service sustainability - Weighting 25%

The Provider works collaboratively with system partners ensuring greater regional alignment to create a consistent minimum service offer for patients and acute trust partners- simpler interface, avoiding delays and confusion

PTS Patient Charter explains the providers responsibilities and commitment to providing

the highest quality service to SY patients. It has been designed in conjunction with hospitals and other healthcare organisations and professionals in South Yorkshire.

The provider has actively listened to patients, staff, volunteers, our SY communities and our healthcare partners to make sure their strategy is reflective of their views and expectations:

The provider has committed to deliver the most clinically appropriate response for every patient, whenever and where they need it. Provide care that is personalised, joined up and coordinated with the wider healthcare system, deliver quality care that is evidence informed, person centred, safe and compassionate and provide support and care delivered by professional, kind and respectful staff.

first4care collects patient journey data for analysis and continuous improvement of their service; the Company actively and extensively engages with the ICB and enthusiastically works with YAS within South Yorkshire to improve patient experience and outcomes. The ICB is confident collaboration between first4care, and YAS will further improve over the life of this contract and lead to greater patient care and outcomes.

First4care's CQC report states:

The service worked closely with NHS trusts to develop policies and SOPs that reflected patient need and the experiences of crews working on a specific contract. For example, the service was working with a trust to develop defined policies for transporting patients being cared for at the end of life".

The remaining key criteria are detailed in section VI.3.0.1 below.

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 procurement falls outside the scope of application of the regulations

Explanation:

This is a Provider Selection Regime (PSR) intention to award notice. The awarding of this contract is subject to the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023. For the avoidance of doubt, the provisions of the Procurement Act 2023 do not apply to this award. The standstill period begins on the day after the publication of this notice. Representations by providers must be made to the relevant authority by midnight on the 5th September 2025. This contract has not yet formally been awarded; this notice serves as an intention to award under the PSR'

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

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: No

Section V. Award of contract

A contract/lot is awarded: Yes

V.2) Award of contract

V.2.1) Date of conclusion of the contract

22 August 2025

V.2.2) Information about tenders

Number of tenders received: 1

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

V.2.3) Name and address of the contractor

first4care

THE OLD STATION, HIGH STREET, EDWINSTOWE, MANSFIELD,
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE,

Mansfield

NG21 9HS

Country

United Kingdom

NUTS code

- UKE3 - South Yorkshire

The contractor is an SME

No

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

Initial estimated total value of the contract/lot: £3,617,670

Total value of the contract/lot: £3,617,670

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.3) Additional information

This is a Provider Selection Regime (PSR) intention to award notice. The awarding of this contract is subject to the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023. For the avoidance of doubt, the provisions of the Procurement Act 2023 do not apply to this award. The standstill period begins on the day after the publication of this notice. Representations by providers must be made to decision makers by [Add date]. This contract has not yet formally been awarded; this notice serves as an intention to award under the PSR.

Representations should be made by email to - syicb-sheffield.syicb.procurement@nhs.net

The award decision makers were - Informal Executive Group.

No conflicts of interest were identified.

As detailed in section II.2.14.1 above are continued below:

First4care shares patient journey data analysis and contract performance to demonstrate how Trusts' staff can contribute to that performance (e.g. by increasing the number of patients per journey, carbon emissions per patient are dramatically decreased therefore contributing the Trusts' Green Plan and net zero ambitions.

Key Criteria 4 - Improving access, reducing health inequalities and facilitating choice - Weighting 20%

The provider delivers a service that is accessible to all and makes reasonable adjustments to support those who need them:

- Develop the use of data, patient/community engagement and insight, evidence and evaluation to better understand access, experience, barriers and outcomes for specific population groups
- Increased use of analysis, intelligence and sharing of data to inform population health priorities and system prevention initiatives
- Develop organisational education/awareness programmes on reducing health inequalities
- Engage with SY ICB to develop more opportunities VCSE and local authority engagement
- Working in collaboration with people who have lived experience of health services, engaging with NHS England's Strategic Coproduction Group.

The company has a "Disability Confident Committed" which demonstrates they think

differently about disabilities and take action to improve disabled peoples' lives. This cultural belief naturally extends to the treatment and care provided to patients.

Key Criteria 5 - Social Value - Weighting 10%

The provider has a commitment to reduce energy consumption by 10% in the next 2 years and is looking at electric fleet vehicles.

Current Initiatives in line with the NHS Green Plan

Delivering Net Zero Strategy

Investment in local people and communities

Expansive and Award-winning apprenticeship programme

Career development pathways and volunteering programmes across all services

Investment in local economies

First4care recognises its responsibilities to the community it serves and has employed a visionary strategy since 2004 with a focus on sustainability of services and efficiencies in time and miles that aligns to (as then unheard of) more recent plans of the wider health economy and social value.

The provider pioneered a unique geographical workforce model utilising the local area population to deliver our Local Authority and NHS contracts ensuring our staff have local cultural empathy with the populations needs and requirements whilst reducing commute miles, in-shift miles and inefficiency.

Utilising a local geographical workforce model encourages economic benefits and local communities in ways such as,

staff in the local area - bringing employment to the area. Working with local job centres and welfare points

local geographic knowledge reduces in-shift mileage

low carbon emissions travelling to work - local crews can walk / cycle to work

drivers collect their crew mate therefore eliminating 50% of staff commute

vehicle servicing at a local level reduces miles travelled to service AND influences local communities

smaller staff meetings scheduled by managers in the different locations so that staff are not travelling long distances

The provider has a Carbon Reduction Plan and green plan in line with the NHS and intend to trial electric Ambulances during 2026 for our Rotherham discharge service.

VI.4) Procedures for review

VI.4.1) Review body

Independent patient choice and procurement panel

Wellington House

London

SE1 8UG

Country

United Kingdom