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Janet Davies A.M.
Chairman Audit Committee
National assembly for wales
Cardiff Bay
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Dear Ms Davies

Cardiff LHB has informed me that your committee is considering the Auditor general's report into the Cardiff Out of Hours (OOH) service on November 10th.

I am writing as the Chairman of Cardiff Integrated Care Consortium, the organisation that was rejected at the final stage of the OOH tender process. Also as the author of the element of the Cardiff LMC submission to the Auditor General relating to the company status of Clinical Solutions UK Ltd (CSUK).

Whilst the Auditor Generals report is largely welcome there is one aspect that I must disagree with.

The report states in no uncertain terms that the tender process was "Robust and fair". We found this comment surprising, as the submission did not ask the Auditor general to examine the Tender process. Also at no stage were the other agencies involved in the tender process asked for information or opinion.

We feel the Tender Process was unfair and invalid for the following reasons:

1) Information presented during the evaluation process was inaccurate and misleading. This information was critical in the decision process by the panel.

Evidence in my submission, accepted in the report, shows that the claims made by CSUK to be a multinational company with widespread international experience in OOH provision were untrue. These claims were made throughout the tender process and were an integral part of their presentation at the tender assessment meetings.

It is clear from the notes made by the panel members and from the interview with Dr Watkins on the TV program Taro 9 that these claims influenced the decision to award the contract to CSUK. Misleading the panel with information CSUK knew to be untrue must invalidate the tender process.

It is possible that at the time of the initial decision to award the contract to CSUK the LHB Executive were not aware of the true facts. However the tender process cannot be considered finalised until background checks have been made. We know from the report that these checks by the LHB were incompetent, if done at all.
The LHB were informed by CICC that the information regarding CSUK's international & UK experience was incorrect. However they chose to ignore this without checking its validity.

2) Failure to evaluate the credentials of one tendering organisation whilst having full access to information about the other, including accounts and complaints, is unfair practice.

3) The LHB changed the tender specification after the 2nd tender evaluation to the disadvantage of one tendering organisation.

The third area of concern was the change to the Tender Specification following the Second tender assessment meeting.
At this time the LHB requested that C.I.C.C. re-cost our bid on the basis of no activity being transferred from the A&E department to the Primary Care OOH service. The appropriate transfer of patients is essential in an integrated service by any accepted model.
This was a major change to the original specification that called for an integrated service.
Cardiff Integrated Care Consortium consisted of Cardiff & Vale trust, the ambulance trust and Cardiff Doctors on Call (CADOC). Clearly integration and appropriate transfer of patients was integral to our bid and had been clearly indicated throughout the whole process.
Demanding that it be withdrawn and re-costed with no time to look at the implications clearly put our organization at a huge disadvantage.
(I enclose a copy of the letter sent to the LHB at that time)

We felt at the time that this was grossly unfair and made a complaint only to be told there was no mechanism we could appeal to. Dr Allan Jones also wrote to the WAG regarding this issue.

Clearly there are several issues and further information relating to this letter.
If you would like to discuss it further with Dr allan Jones or myself we would be hapy to do so.

Yours Sincerely

Trevor Thompson

Dr. Trevor Thompson

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Dear Alison

Re: Cardiff Integrated Care Consortium – Submission of Tender

I refer to your letter of 23 March requesting that the Consortium submit a revised price schedule which:

- Removes the assumed transfer of activity from A&E services to the out of hours service
- Is based on the UHW out of hours service being open 7 days a week between 6.30 p.m. and 8.00 a.m. only.

I am writing to advise you that following much consideration the Consortium has decided not to submit a revised price schedule on the basis you request.

Our reasons for this are:

- The Consortium is firmly wedded to the establishment of an Integrated Emergency Care Service as outlined in your Service Specification and our tender response. Your new request does not reflect this service model. If you wish a tender to be submitted against this new model a revised Service Specification should be issued.
- The risks associated with the establishment of the Out Of Hours service within the Service Specification are significant; however, our belief is that the tender which we submitted managed those risks to within reasonable limits. We are not prepared to take on the risks associated with your revised service model at such short notice.

We are also concerned to discover that the LHB does not yet have the approval of the Welsh Assembly Government to use the CRI site for the provision of Out of Hours Services from October. The Consortium raised this issue in the tender response and at the first selection panel where we were given a verbal assurance that the Assembly had given this agreement.

The Consortium strongly believes that the service model which we propose in our tender response provides the best possible solution for the population of Cardiff. Any diminution of this would impose significant risks in terms of the Out of Hours service, the remaining NHS services and to the public in Cardiff .

We still wish to be involved in the provision of services in Cardiff if the original Service Specification were adhered to. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with the LHB to discuss how this can be taken forward on a partnership basis between the Consortium and LHB.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Siân Harrop-Griffiths
Head of Partnership Development