

ACS 11054 - Appendix 3

ICES Staff views on the proposals

Introduction

The ICES staff and their representatives have been consulted on the proposals set out in the attached report. A number of comments and responses were received both by email and following a number of meetings with all parties. Whilst they agree that efficiencies are required, and are keen to achieve these, they doubt that the proposals will deliver savings above those that could be achieved by awarding the contract to Medequip for supply only. In addition they are concerned about the quality of the delivery service and the impact of the transfer of employment for existing Bromley Council employees.

Their views are set out below, together with a management response.

Staff Comments	Management Response
1. Savings could be achieved by moving the service from the Bath Rd depot to another site, where costs would be approximately half, with a supply only contract with Medequip	This is correct, but the savings from this option would still be lower than the recommended option of a contract with Medequip for supply and delivery.
2. Medequip will charge for failed deliveries such as no-one at home. These will not be fully monitored and will result in higher costs above the 20% currently experienced	Medequip will phone the service user the day before to check if they will be at home. Medequip will leave a card if there is no answer and make two further calls to arrange delivery. Only then will they charge for delivery whether the equipment has been delivered or not. This process should not result in higher costs and is similar to the current ICES arrangements.
3. The standard of the equipment is lower than that currently provided, and this reduction is not factored into the savings calculations, leaving the ICES appearing to be more expensive	All stock items were agreed by the multi-agency ICES Advisory Board. As the same items and costs apply to the 2 options (supply versus supply and deliver) there is no distortion
4. The costs of the satellite centres such as the Princess Royal University Hospital have not been included in the calculations	The cost of items to the NHS centres has been included in the financial model

5. The costs of fitting key safes, in the proposal, are far too high	The current cost for the fitting and supply of a key safe is higher than the Medequip quote which is half the cost.
6. The IT costs paid by ICES are too high, at £13k, and could be reduced by having a standalone system	This is true, but the proposed service includes software and hardware within its overall price and is cheaper.
7. ICES staff could carry out the Lola testing (checking items against maintenance standards) and so reduce costs	This would not cover the full service including visiting service users homes on a regular basis
8. The data cleansing required for the transfer to Medequip will be more expensive than shown in the calculations	There will be no charge for data cleansing and transfer of data
9. The higher costs of agency staff are included in the ICES costs and have distorted the comparison	Agency staff costs have not been included in the ICES figures, only the budget for permanent staff which managers have to work within
10. Items issued by others, e.g. NHS, will not be collected, or will be charged for by Medequip raising costs	These items will be collected and charged for just as other delivered items that require collection
11. The value of scrapped items will be lost to LBB	This is true, but the current value of the scrapped items is not quantified and is likely to be low.
12. Deliveries at specific times will cost more and these costs have not been included	Medequip will endeavour to deliver at specified times within the standard 5 day delivery timeframe at no extra charge
13. Recycling will not be as good and so costs will rise	Recycling will continue as at present. It should be noted that Medequip will be able to recycle more specialist items as they serve most of London and will be able to credit these values to LBB.
14. LBB will be charged more as the lower standard of equipment will result in more failures and so more delivery costs	The standard of equipment will be exactly the same as now. Over 50% of current stock items will be exactly the same as now. LBB does have the right to order specified equipment from other providers, up to 20% of the contract value, so this risk is minimal.
15. The quality of delivery will suffer as Medequip will not move furniture etc to assist individuals receiving large items such as beds	Medequip staff will, within reason, move furniture to assist in the placement/fitting of such items
16. The ICES service gets many compliments for the quality of its service	It is acknowledged that the current ICES service has been complimented favourably

17. Westminster are pulling out of the contract with Medequip due to the quality of the service	Westminster are not pulling out of the Consortium.
18. The traffic in Woolwich will slow down deliveries and reduce the volume of items delivered within 7 days	Traffic is a London wide problem and in general, Medequip have not had problems in maintaining delivery schedules.
19. Decontamination and cleansing at the Woolwich site operated by Medequip is not as good as ICES and will lead to infection control problems	Medequip adhere to the national standards set by the Department of Health and their advisory bodies. Their performance will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that this essential standard is adhered to.
20. Many of the requests received are incomplete, e.g. details such as addresses, and ICES staff spend time resolving these, but Medequip will not with a result of higher costs due to failed deliveries and loss of service to individuals who will wait longer	The right solution to this issue is to ensure that referrals have the accurate information. The proposed new software will have the facility to block the transmission of requisitions that are 'incomplete' or do not have the correct authorisation. In real terms costs should come down
21. Staff will not be able to transfer to the Woolwich depot used by Medequip due to the distance	The Woolwich depot is approximately 9 miles from the current depot. Staff will be consulted about these issues if the proposal is agreed by the Executive Committee as part of the formal consultation applicable to the transfer of staff in accordance with TUPE regulations.
22. Will the additional TUPE costs, shown in the costs for the proposed contract with Medequip, be reimbursed to LBB if staff leave Medequip.	Any TUPE costs payable by Bromley will cease for staff that terminate their contract of employment following transfer.
23. Does Medequip recognise Trade Unions and will it have the same terms and conditions as LBB	Medequip do recognise Trade Unions
24. Not enough information was provided to staff at the start of the consultation about the detailed costs of the proposed contract	Additional information was provided in response to detailed questions, such as the Boroughs in the consortium, whether their staff had been transferred, whether the contract was for supply only or supply and delivery, and the consultation was extended to give further time for responses. The consultation period was extended to allow further time to consider the additional information provided in response to the queries.

<p>25. A full Equality Impact Assessment has not been provided to staff as part of the consultation</p>	<p>As the service to the public is not being changed and the service specification remains the same as the current service, there will be no adverse impact on any particular groups as a result of the proposed changes. A full Equalities Assessment has been completed and will be available as an appendix to the Executive report.</p>
<p>26. Will LBB include a clause in the contract that the Terms and Conditions of employment of the staff transferred under TUPE will not be changed during the lifetime of the contract?</p>	<p>Given that no decisions have yet been made about the future of ICES this aspect has not yet been considered. In the event that a decision is made to transfer ICES to Medequip the Council will ensure that it informs staff and trade unions about the proposals and consults on any measures that a new provider might envisage taking.</p>
<p>27. Will a meeting with Medequip be arranged to discuss the details of the transfer arrangements?</p>	<p>As in 26 above</p>