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Information request

The number of disability assessment centres provided by the controversial IT company Atos will only be one seventh of the number it promised when it won a £184 million government contract, Disability News Service (DNS) can reveal.

What action, if any, will be taken against ATOS, for its flagrant deception to win a major contract [Personal Independence Payment assessments] that has seen its bosses salary boosted to an unprecedented level, while the disabled have been stripped of benefits by poor medical reports.....

DWP response

The providers for the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessment service were appointed following a robust, open and fair competition and were assessed against established and published selection criteria.

In their bid, published on the Contracts Finder service on the GOV.UK website, Atos described their delivery model, based on working with supply chain partners already established in the healthcare sector. On 18 February 2013 Atos published its full list of those partners. The Disability News Service story refers to Atos tender for Lot 3 (London and Southern England) and changes to their supply chain since the original tender.

It is usual for there to be changes between contract award and delivery and the Department would not expect any bidder to have entered into binding contractual arrangements with potential subcontractors at the tender stage. What is important is that Atos has kept the Department informed about these changes. The mention, or not, of any particular organisation in the bids to deliver PIP was not material in the evaluation of the competition and had no impact on the decision. It was the subcontract delivery model and Atos' ability to develop and manage a diverse and local supply chain which was evaluated.

Any of Atos' partners' sites could be used for PIP consultations providing they meet DWP's requirements and as such represent a large, flexible network of sites including back up locations and additional capacity in the event that volumes are higher than forecast. Atos have demonstrated they have sufficient coverage to meet the current forecast demand for assessing new

claims for PIP and will make additional sites from their network available as the volume of PIP assessments increases during the lifetime of the contract.

DWP is working closely with Atos to ensure that we deliver PIP in a way that meets the needs of disabled people and is confident the providers in each lot have been properly selected.