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Exclusive: South London Healthcare Trust's suitors revealed

1 October, 2012 | By [Ben Clover](#)

Details have emerged of the plans of many of the 39 bodies that have written to South London Healthcare Trust's special administrator to express an interest in running trust services.

Matthew Kershaw, the special administrator brought in to work out the future shape of health services in south east London, has received bids from private companies, social enterprises and other NHS trusts.

HSJ understands there have 39 been expressions of interest. [For the full list of organisations bidding to take over South London services see today's HSJ Local briefing](#)

Less than a third of the 39 expressions of interest are being taken forward by the administrator, with many of them seen as too small.

It is not known which bids were still being considered but Mr Kershaw must submit his interim report making recommendations to health secretary Jeremy Hunt by the end of October. HSJ understands no bidder has indicated an interest in taking over South London in its entirety.

Among the options being considered are combining Lewisham Healthcare Trust with South London's Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Lewisham, a neighbouring £222m-turnover district general hospital, has confirmed its plan for becoming an independent foundation trust "will need to be rewritten".

A merger with Queen Elizabeth Hospital could have implications for the future of Lewisham's accident and emergency, HSJ has been told.

There is more interest in taking over the other two main sites run by South London, Queen Mary's Hospital in Sidcup and the Princess Royal Hospital in Bromley.

One senior source told HSJ there had been "lots of keenness on assets, surgery, cardiology and the Bromley private practice" from bidders but that "everyone was less keen on [Queen Elizabeth hospital's] PFI".

South London Healthcare Trust was one of seven nationally that the government has confirmed will receive support for their PFI running costs.

However, senior figures told HSJ South London's problems were only partly down to the repayments on the PFI, with internal inefficiencies and being underpaid for some activity comprising equal parts of the deficit.

The trust, which finished the 2011-12 financial year with a deficit of £69m, was placed in the failure regime in July by then health secretary Andrew Lansley.