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THE BIG PICTURE

Doctors shine light on legal fight against PPE contracts

Alison Shepherd

Activist doctors took their fight for ministers to be accountable for decisions made during the pandemic to the streets of London last week, illuminating government buildings with questions for Matt Hancock, England's health secretary.

EveryDoctor, a company set up by doctors to campaign on behalf of doctors and patients, aimed to highlight the start of the High Court hearing into government decisions to award contracts worth £650m (€755m; \$920m) to inexperienced companies to provide personal protective equipment.

Buildings targeted by the group included Department of Health and Social Care and NHS offices and the ExCeL Centre, former home of a Nightingale hospital for covid patients.

Julia Patterson, EveryDoctor's chief executive, said, "We wanted to get the message across to the public about just how important this case is. Hundreds of millions of pounds were handed out to firms that, in many cases, had few assets and little or no experience of manufacturing or procuring PPE. We want to know why."

She added, “For too long NHS staff up and down the country were given faulty gear and sometimes had no PPE at all. So many lives were lost, including more than 880 health and social care workers.”