

AWARD[®] successfully defends against legal challenges for NHS Calderdale, achieving significant financial savings

Customer profile

NHS Calderdale Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), soon to be part of the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Integrated Care System (ICS), is a membership organisation consisting of 25 general practices. Their aim is to improve the health and lives of those living across the region.

By making sure they commission and provide good quality services, NHS Calderdale aims to improve the lives of local people through increasing life expectancy and reducing health inequalities.

They are responsible for devolved healthcare budgets of approximately £277 million.

Background – where it began

With a small procurement team, but responsibilities across four CCG's, Calderdale wanted to create greater efficiencies in their procurement process. They also wanted to move away from the traditional spreadsheet approach to minimise errors and ensure they had a robust audit trail of their decision-making process in order to protect them from bidder challenge. AWARD[®] provided an ideal solution to these requirements.

“Evaluators do not need any prior training, once complete the reports are clear, easy to read and provide the robust audit trail we need.”

- Procurement Manager, NHS Calderdale CCG

Our engagement

NHS Calderdale selected our AWARD[®] solution to support its evaluation and supplier selection activities, underpinned by over the phone support from our helpdesk and their dedicated Account Manager. AWARD[®] is accessed online, providing the immediate efficiencies they were looking for, along with an automatically-generated robust audit trail to defend their process and decisions in the event of any challenges from bidders. Moreover, AWARD[®] enabled NHS Calderdale to better manage and standardise its evaluation practices with repeatable processes; mitigating risk and assuring best practice across the organisation.



The role of AWARD[®] and the value added:

1. Successfully defending 7 legal challenges, and counting

The audit trail AWARD[®] provides as standard enabled NHS Calderdale to successfully defend themselves against 7 legal challenges to date, saving hundreds of thousands of pounds in legal fees, compensation and/or re-running competitions.

By presenting challenging bidders with the automatically generated AWARD[®] Debrief Report, Calderdale can clearly evidence the scores of losing bidders vs those of the winning bidder. The report includes detailed justification as to why the scores were given as well as relative advantages.

Unlike a spreadsheet, the evaluators' comments cannot be amended in AWARD[®], giving bidders further confidence in the evidence behind the decision-making process and the final contract award. Calderdale can confidently provide legal teams with robust AWARD[®] reports, free from the errors that a spreadsheet full of complicated formulas might contain.

2. Provides significant ROI

One of NHS Calderdale's aims is to avoid paying any initial challenge fees, which are currently £10,200 a time*. Through its robust audit trail and reports, AWARD® can immediately provide significant evidence to successfully defend their process and decisions and show that any challenge would not be successful, and thus no fees will be exchanged. For Calderdale, AWARD® more than pays for itself several times over due to the vast savings made by heading off a bidder challenge.

3. Provides efficient working for a busy procurement team

Enables remote working

AWARD® is delivered via a secure hosted service that allows users and evaluators to work from their own locations – all they need is a PC with internet access. This is invaluable for busy clinicians who are often called upon to evaluate outside of their core working hours. The Project Manager can easily keep an eye on everyone's progress, checking who has finished their tasks and who hasn't and sending out reminders if necessary. Once the evaluation is done, Calderdale can pull a report from AWARD® detailing all the scores and rationale against the questions and can share this amongst the consensus team ahead of the meeting – with an email audit trail to evidence this has been done along with noting any replies. The approach is legally compliant and delivers significant time savings whilst remaining robust. AWARD® bypasses the need to bring evaluators together in the same room for 3-4 days, with someone manually noting the consensus scores in a spreadsheet.

User-friendly

With the helpdesk on call to answer any functionality questions, and easy to follow guides, AWARD® is simple and intuitive for NHS Calderdale and their evaluators to use, regardless of their experience in the system.

AWARD's clear on-screen instructions for evaluators negates the need for Calderdale to run training sessions to explain how to score and provide rationale. AWARD® clearly sets out what is expected. Its drop-down boxes to complete, within a step-by-step process, guide the evaluators seamlessly through to completion.

Within AWARD®, evaluators can only see the questions that are relevant to their assessment, meaning that they can only consider their response to those questions. This minimises the risk of errors and keeps evaluators focused and on the right track.

The alternative is using spreadsheets which are not designed for the evaluation process – they require advanced knowledge of complex formulas and carry a huge risks of error. (In a recent sample of tender evaluation spreadsheets, 99% had some form of error).

Saves time and money

As well as the benefits of remote working, and the considerable costs avoided due to heading off legal challenges from bidders, AWARD® also saves time and money through its ability to pull automated reports, and by allowing all documents to be provided online through the system. The latter functionality also eliminates the need to print, saving money and resources.

Instills confidence

With the crucial audit trail AWARD® provides, the solution gives the team the confidence they need that their process is robust, free from errors and reduces risk. They can concentrate on securing best possible outcomes for their region, knowing they have a resilient record of what was scored at the time of evaluation, and why. This level of confidence wouldn't be present if they were using a spreadsheet.

“AWARD® evaluation software is a user-friendly system, each step of the process is easy to follow and all information just one click away. Their helpdesk has always responded to our questions in both a professional and timely manner.” – Procurement Manager, NHS Calderdale CCG

*source: <https://www.clarkslegal.com/Files/PDF/Procurement-Need-To-Know-Guide-Procurement-challenges.pdf>

About Commerce Decisions

Commerce Decisions provides the AWARD® strategic solution and expert services to support the effective planning, preparation and execution of procurements. For over 20 years AWARD® has been trusted to deliver some of the largest, most complex procurements globally across government, defence, transport and infrastructure, totalling over \$500 billion.

AWARD® has been proven to shorten time to contract, improve value for money, and reduce risk to support the delivery of the best possible outcomes.

The Commerce Decisions Services Team

Commerce Decisions expert services team provides support from the planning stages of your project right through to the evaluation and contract award. Our services include proven methods for building robust and defensible criteria and for weighting them effectively, defining value for money approaches, undertaking sensitivity analysis and developing risk and cost scenarios. We are also on hand to support teams with negotiation, competitive dialogue and other procurement procedures. Commerce Decisions consultants are JAGGAER accredited.

Training courses

Whether you're looking to excel in your job role, upskill your team, learn from the very latest in thought-leadership, or discover best-practice software tips, our range of training courses has got you covered.

Find out more about our expert-led training courses [here](#).

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steps to better procurement outcomes

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