

AWARD® – Helping NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups to procure Healthcare Services

The NHS Commissioning Board recently announced, “Effective procurement is an essential component of commissioning improved services and outcomes for local patients and communities.”

With Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) now responsible for the procurement of health services, there is added focus on efficient procurement and transparency.



Procurement for CCGs

Commerce Decisions understands the responsibility placed on CCGs to manage their own activities, even if procurement is controlled by a Commissioning Support Unit. With over ten years experience working across Government delivering procurement expertise together with the eEvaluation solution AWARD®, Commerce Decisions is exceptionally well-placed to assist CCGs in making procurement exercises more effective and transparent.

In response to the rapidly increasing interest in AWARD® from across the NHS, Commerce Decisions has optimised AWARD® to support the cost effective delivery of both simple and complex procurements.

AWARD® – Supporting Clinical Commissioning Groups in procurement

For over ten years, NHS clients have used AWARD® to support their drive for more innovative, effective and efficient procurement. Based on the fundamental principles below, AWARD® is unique in that it can be used by CCGs on tactical or strategic procurement exercises.

- Making decisions openly and transparently
- Delivering a robust and defensible evaluation model
- Meeting public procurement regulations
- Reducing the risk of legal challenge
- Making value for money decisions

Why use AWARD®?

Reduce the risk of challenge

Supplier challenges to contract award decisions are on the increase across all sectors. Responding effectively to any

challenge and justifying why a decision has been made can take up valuable time and resources. Not only does AWARD® provide assurance that a robust process has been followed, but it also automatically captures and records user input, providing a full audit trail of the decision making process. Promoting an open and transparent strategy to decision making, AWARD® ensures project teams can respond robustly to any challenges to their judgements.

Enable confident decision making

Making sure your projects are setup correctly and are focussed on meeting procurement objectives can be challenging.

AWARD® is delivered with pre-configured templates, providing a proven platform for managing multiple projects. AWARD® templates feature the following:

- Incorporation of the client’s existing Excel-based methodologies

- A standardised and consistent set of procurement processes
- Support and guidance on the creation of the buying criteria
- Management of each stage of the tender
- Visualisation of the results with a set of preconfigured management reports
- Identification of bidders’ strengths and weaknesses

Project delivery on time

Preparing, configuring and managing projects takes up time, particularly where key stakeholders are geographically dispersed.

With AWARD®, time-consuming aspects of the evaluation such as the production of an audit trail, evaluation spreadsheets and reports are automated and can be completed instantly. Stakeholders can access AWARD® from their own desktops and work in parallel with other users. This results in fewer meetings, a



reduction in travel time and more time focussed on completing the procurement.

Collaboration

AWARD® actively guides and informs project teams and evaluators on the process being followed and the tasks they need to complete.

Stakeholder buy-in is encouraged and, by utilising AWARD®, project staff work and communicate with each other much more effectively. This factor alone is proven to dramatically improve a project's likelihood of success.

Proven track record

AWARD® is used extensively across the NHS and is established as an essential solution to support NHS procurement process. CCGs and Trusts are using AWARD® at all levels and the software has been used on a wide range of projects.

AWARD® is uniquely placed to support CCGs in making appropriate and effective procurement decisions.

AWARD® For Clinical Commissioning Groups - Walsall CCG case study

Recently established, Walsall CCG is a dynamic organisation covering 63 member practices with a registered population of over 269,000. Responsible for a budget of £346 million, the procurement department continues to work closely with local patients in the development of the next round of health service contracts.

Walsall CCG is drawing on its knowledge of local health needs in order to commission services related to its patients and population. The CCG's focus is to ensure that its budget is spent effectively by evaluating providers against a variety of criteria to enable the procurement of the highest quality healthcare services possible from a range of providers.

NHS Walsall has deployed AWARD® since 2010 to support both its simple and strategic procurements. The CCG is now building on this use and experience to support its drive to deliver effective, value for money decisions.

“Our experience with AWARD® has been a positive one - it has proved to be a user friendly system that provides us with a fully auditable tender evaluation process. The solution is popular with our evaluators and they have found it easy to use. It has helped us to adopt a more efficient and effective evaluation process particularly for some of our more complex procurements. Going forward, we see AWARD® as being an essential tool within the procurement process at Walsall CCG.”

Gary Arnold – Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group

AWARD® for Evaluators

Evaluators are key to a successful procurement and as such, it is essential that they are able to focus on their tasks rather than spending time working out where to start, what they are required to evaluate and wading through reams of bid documentation.

Evaluators simply log in to AWARD® and respond to the submissions and questions assigned to them. AWARD® ensures that evaluator responses are objective and consistent. Project user access and progress can be monitored by a delegated administrator, ensuring that the selection of preferred bidder is carried out effectively and within the allocated timescales.

AWARD® Consensus scoring

Each key area of the evaluation is overseen by a consensus scorer. The consensus scorer will review evaluators' collated responses and rationale in order to arrive at an overall score. Scores are weighted and aggregated to

provide a final result, in which suppliers are ranked against each other to form the foundation for selection of the preferred supplier.

Bidder debriefs

One of AWARD's key strengths is its ability to generate instantaneous bidder debrief reports. Clear and transparent information about how and why a decision has been made is presented in a format that can be given to bidders. This significantly reduces the risk of legal challenge, as well as the overhead associated with debriefing activities.

In summary

AWARD® is used throughout the Public Sector to support complex contract decisions, whilst ensuring compliance with the relevant procurement legislation. The system provides a wide range of benefits to project managers and decision makers in the delivery of successful strategic procurements.

AWARD® provides efficiencies above traditional paper and Excel-based approaches by providing a controlled and collaborative best practice method to supplier evaluations. AWARD® is proven to help reduce and manage risk effectively, and to significantly reduce administration bottlenecks.

By ensuring a well structured approach to evaluation, AWARD® contributes to the development of quality supplier relationships through the provision of detailed feedback. Effective communication with suppliers ultimately delivers successful procurements.

