

NHS Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit delivers innovative procurement services supported by AWARD®

The AWARD® solution is fundamental in assisting NHS Midlands and Lancashire CSU with the delivery of efficiency savings and meeting its objectives for managing compliant and transparent procurements.



NHS Commissioning and Procurement

With a new clinically-led strategy which aims to bring improvement across many levels, the setting up of the new clinical commissioning system gives the NHS the opportunity to modernise the health service and focus on patient safety, quality, innovation and public participation.

The formally established NHS England organisation holds a key position in modernising the health service, with an objective to secure the best possible health outcomes for patients by putting them at the centre of every decision it makes.

Working with NHS England and with a responsibility for £65bn of the £95bn NHS Commissioning budget are the newly formed Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). CCGs comprise over 8,000 GP practices, who along with other key healthcare professionals are tasked with delivering primary care commissioning to their local communities.

One of the aims of the health reforms is for CCGs to help deliver savings in healthcare procurement. To support this aim, and to work with both NHS England and CCGs, are the new Commissioning Support Units (CSUs). CSUs have been set up to offer a cost effective, locally sensitive and customer focused market and procurement management service to their member organisations.

The client profile

The Midlands & Lancashire CSU is an innovative organisation made up of experienced staff from across the NHS in the Midlands.

Working alongside NHS Commissioners and Partners involved in the delivery of healthcare services in the heart of Central England, the Midlands & Lancashire CSU offers flexible procurement and market management services to its member CCGs.

Alongside the partnership that the Midlands & Lancashire CSU has with its member CCGs is the

essential contribution it makes to the Department of Health's plan for the NHS to make savings of £20bn in the four years up to 2014-15. The Midlands & Lancashire CSU recognises that the CCGs need professional solutions to manage their risks and reputations, particularly in high profile situations, and to ensure compliance with statutory duties and national standards.

Using expert advice and creative know-how, Midlands & Lancashire CSU's vision is to create a new era of commissioning support that drives forward transformational improvements in healthcare services.

As part of their procurement service offering, the organisation is helping CCGs deliver against commissioning priorities with the provision of electronic tender evaluation and contract award functions.

The procurement challenge

Ensuring that Midlands & Lancashire CSU offers an electronic procurement function that maps to its members' needs was essential.

Procurements being managed by the CSU range in complexity and scale; all have a

common goal that projects must be completed on time and in line with public contract regulations, conducted in a transparent and fair way.

Working hand in hand with its CCGs, it is critical that projects managed by Midlands & Lancashire CSU are delivered to agreed work plans. Procurements involving multiple stakeholders spread across a geographical region adds a further level of complexity and all supplier evaluations on clinical procurements must be carried out in a controlled, efficient and robust manner.

In order to meet its goals of using innovative technology and to deliver an excellent service in procurement delivery to its clients, the CSU adopted the electronic supplier evaluation solution AWARD®.

Role and value of Commerce Decisions

With over 12 years experience of working across the NHS with the delivery of the electronic evaluation solution AWARD®, Commerce Decisions is widely recognised for supporting clients in making efficiency gains and in reducing the risk of legal challenge when evaluating suppliers on various procurement exercises.



Commerce Decisions is partnering with CSUs across the country to provide AWARD® on a scalable and flexible basis that meets the demands of healthcare procurement projects.

The AWARD® solution is a comprehensive supplier evaluation tool delivering an efficient approach to projects involving different levels of complexity and risk. Midlands & Lancashire CSU selected AWARD® because of its proven track record in optimising value for money and for the contribution it makes to improving existing procurement processes.

Midlands & Lancashire CSU is constantly seeking new and innovative ways of delivering healthcare procurement services across the region. We selected AWARD® as an agile and highly configurable solution to support our business requirements, and also in delivering value for money and robust procurements to our customers. AWARD® is key to the CSU meeting the challenges associated with the delivery of transformational improvements in healthcare services”

Mike Evans – Head of Contracting and Procurement, Midlands & Lancashire CSU

AWARD® – supporting Commissioning Support Units in the delivery of clinical procurement services by:

- Producing compliant tenders in line with EU regulations
- Facilitating the management of the workload of team members to ensure projects meet programme timescales
- Providing part of a modular, scalable service to CCGs
- Delivering a consistent and standardised decision-making strategy to member organisations
- Provision of a tender evaluation service that requires the users’ full contribution to the decision-making process
- Overseeing of tender stages in a controlled and robust way
- Automatically capturing evaluation information for audit purposes
- Flexibility to move with changes in project scope
- Supporting stakeholder buy-in and involvement through distributed team collaboration with little or no training.

AWARD® for Evaluators

Forming the core part of the evaluation, evaluators securely log in to AWARD® and respond to the relevant number of submissions and questions assigned to them. AWARD® ensures that evaluators’ responses are made objectively and consistently. Project user access and progress can be monitored by a delegated administrator, making sure that the selection of preferred bidder is done effectively and on time.

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 to arrive at a final score. Scores are weighted and aggregated to provide a final result, where suppliers are then ranked against each other forming 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, allowing clear and transparent information to be presented to bidders about why a decision was made. This significantly reduces the risk of legal challenge.

In summary

AWARD® is used throughout the NHS community to deliver on contract decisions. The system provides a wide range of benefits to project managers and decision makers working on 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® Benefits

AWARD® delivers a transparent audit trail that underpins the bidder debriefing process and manages any challenges to the outcome of the procurement.

AWARD® is highly flexible, enabling full integration of the tender requirements and policies.

AWARD® enables project users to be managed centrally, optimising the time spent on evaluating suppliers .

AWARD® is delivered via a security-accredited hosted service. Users can access AWARD from any workstation or device with an internet connection and web browser.

Powerful reporting capabilities allow a range of selected reports to be generated quickly and tailored to your project.

Enhanced controls allow better management of tender stages leading to efficiencies and on time project delivery.

AWARD® provides a structured and compliant approach to the execution of a procurement.

AWARD® is proven to help reduce and manage risk effectively, and remove administration bottlenecks.

By adopting a structured evaluation approach

AWARD® contributes to the development of quality supplier relationships through the provision of detailed constructive feedback, which supports effective communication with suppliers. This ultimately results in the delivery of successful procurements.