

# AWARD® supports North East Essex PCT in letting multiple procurement projects

## Customer profile

The NHS North East Essex PCT was set up in October 2006 and provides treatment for routine injuries and illnesses from a range of healthcare professionals including GPs, nurses, dentists, pharmacists and opticians. The PCT is also responsible for ensuring that residents have access to these healthcare services and for commissioning (purchasing) many other services from the NHS and the independent healthcare sector. It is an independent statutory organisation responsible for assessing the health needs of its local population, working to meet those needs within the resources available, improving the health of local people and reducing health inequalities. NHS North East Essex holds the NHS budget for the residents of Colchester and Tendring – some 315,000 people in the 255 square miles covered by Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council.

## Project overview

The North East Essex PCT purchased AWARD® in early 2009, and has since deployed the solution on a number of procurements of different sizes and natures. A recent example of a project where the use of AWARD® has had a significant impact is the ReachOut Scheme. The ReachOut Scheme is an initiative targeted at the communities with the greatest needs across the Tendring district. It focuses on working with people in their own homes, taking a 'people first' approach to dealing with a range of issues. The aim is to gain people's trust and to work with individuals and families to provide information, guidance and advice, working in partnership with a range of agencies. In this way, the project seeks to address some of the underlying health-related issues in the community.

## Procurement project challenges

The key challenges of this project were:

- to encourage competition and demonstrate openness and transparency to the market
- dealing with an innovative set of service requirements
- ensuring that the project met the objectives of the stakeholders

- coordinating a geographically dispersed multi-disciplinary evaluation team
- ensuring the effective debriefing of the bidders

## Role and value of Commerce Decisions and AWARD®

The ReachOut project is one of several projects on which the procurement team at North East Essex PCT has used AWARD®.

"With the limited resources we have here, we recognised AWARD's value as an effective evaluation tool. It is available online and can be configured to suit our own processes and approach. What we had not anticipated was how well the evaluators and users were going to respond to AWARD®," said Alison Shaw, Head of Procurement, NHS North East Essex.

AWARD® was introduced at the Invitation to Tender (ITT) stage with the procurement team receiving support from a Commerce Decisions consultant to set it up. The responses to the ITT were then loaded into AWARD® ready to start the evaluation process. The evaluation team of seven, who were all trained in-house, then set about evaluating the responses over a two week period. "The ease with which AWARD® can be used means that we plan to become self sufficient in using the tool on all projects valued from £30,000 upwards.



## North East Essex

The ease of use is demonstrated by the fact that I was able to deliver all the training that the evaluators required," observed Ben Farrelly, Commercial Services Project Manager, NHS North East Essex.

The feedback from the evaluators was very positive. They found AWARD® intuitive and easy to use, and it also gave the procurement team the ability to monitor in real time the progress of the evaluation and the evaluators themselves.

"I have been involved in tender evaluations using the old paper system, which is complex and time-consuming, particularly where the evaluators are geographically dispersed. Papers get mixed up or mislaid, and each document must be manually searched to find relevant material and references.

**"The facility to list all evaluators' scores and narrative at the moderation stage enables 'remote moderation' via email or phone, rather than spending hours in meetings. This software is a major advance in efficiency in tender evaluations."**

**Alyson Taylor, Head of Quality Management-  
NHS North East Essex**



Communications between evaluators can be similarly difficult, especially for clarification questions, and negotiation for moderation is particularly inefficient.

“The AWARD® system removes all of these barriers, by enabling communication between evaluators, moderator and the bidders in a timely manner. I am particularly keen on the referencing capacity – so that the relevant part of a document is ‘bookmarked’, just click on a link and be taken to the relevant section of a document. This saves literally hours of work. I can track my own progress and jump between bidders and questions at will. I like being able to see issues and clarification questions asked by other evaluators. “

The facility to list all evaluators’ scores and narrative at the moderation stage enables ‘remote moderation’ via email or phone, rather than hours spent in moderation meetings. In short, this software is a major advance in efficiency in tender evaluations, in comparison with my previous (although somewhat limited) experience,” observed Alyson Taylor, Head of Quality Management, NHS North East Essex.

“Following the evaluation process we used the information from AWARD® to allow us to achieve consensus and agreement with the team quickly,” said Ben Farrelly.

Once the contract was awarded, the suppliers were given a full debrief using information generated from AWARD®. “AWARD® enabled us to provide high quality supplier debriefs at the end of the project. It gave us all the necessary feedback we required in order to do so,” said Ben Farrelly. “Overall we think AWARD® is an excellent product, easy to use, provides clarity and is a valuable tool to assist in procurement project management.

“ This project had a value of about £80,000, which demonstrates the value that AWARD® can bring to small as well as large and complex projects.

“Based on our experience, we plan to use AWARD® on all full tender projects greater in value than £30,000,” said Alison Shaw.



## 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 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.