Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust uses AWARD® to manage the procurement process for £100 million development at the Churchill Hospital

Customer profile

The Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust is one of the largest teaching Trusts in the country, with a national and international reputation for the excellence of its services and its role in education and research. It provides high quality general hospital services for the local population in Oxfordshire and neighbouring counties, and more specialist services on a regional and national basis. The Trust employs over 9,000 staff and is one of the largest employers in Oxfordshire. It has four hospitals: the Radcliffe Infirmary, the John Radcliffe Hospital, the Churchill Hospital, and the Horton Hospital.

The four core objectives of the Trust are; to provide the best quality care; to use resources wisely; to develop teaching and training; and to remain a leading centre for research and development.

Project overview

The Churchill PFI is a major £100 million redevelopment of services at the Churchill Hospital. The aim of the project is to construct a new Cancer Centre, due to open in 2007, to provide a wide range of medical and surgical services for patients, including three new operating theatres.

The Oxford Cancer Centre at the Churchill Hospital will revolutionise the provision of cancer care within Oxfordshire and the surrounding counties by integrating services across both NHS and inter-agency boundaries. It will also facilitate the delivery of new models of care within an environment fit for patient care in the 21st century, and promote research and development of new treatments and protocols.

The process for raising the funds started in 2001 with the approval of the strategic outline. The requirement was published through the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) in October 2002, and this started the PFI procurement process. It was at this point that Commerce Decisions was introduced to support the bidder selection process.
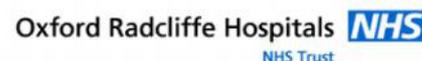
Project procurement challenges

A project of this size represented a significant challenge to the Oxford Radcliffe Hospital NHS Trust PFI project team. Key challenges were:

- Ensuring the full involvement of and rapid response from a large number of external evaluators, representing all the stakeholder groups (circa 100), many of whom were remote

- Automating a previously cumbersome spreadsheet-based process potentially open to error

- Aggressive timescales

- Providing regular and robust audit reports during the project lifecycle

- Managing and collating answers to a huge number of questions (circa 300)

- Making internal IT resources available to support the project

The role of AWARD® and Commerce Decisions Professional Services

Commerce Decisions was introduced at the PQQ stage and subsequently involved in the ITN. The built-in flexibility of AWARD® ensured that it was easily configured to support the specific approach taken by the NHS in PFI projects of this nature. In addition, the approach was modified during the procurement and AWARD® was sufficiently flexible to manage this.

At each stage of the procurement process there was a huge amount of information to record and interrogate. AWARD® enabled the data to be stored in a structured way and accessed whenever it was required. The Trust would have found this very difficult using the previous spreadsheet-based approach.

Any project of this size and complexity involves a large number of external evaluators who need to be able to access the information and deliver their responses as required.

"Allowing the large number of external stakeholders to input their data directly into AWARD® via the web made it much easier for them. It allowed them to do it when it was convenient for them and had the effect of speeding up the whole process and, I believe, enhanced the quality and contribution they were able to make."

**Rob Elek PFI Project Manager
Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust**

Many of the external evaluators were given direct access across the web. This enabled them to enter their input at times to suit their own working patterns. This had a significant effect on the timeliness of the project, and allowed the project team to maintain control over the process. Where web-access was not available, key contributors, such as user groups, were able to input their response offline.

Because the project team did not want to burden the stretched resources of the internal IT Department any further, the project team opted to use the AWARD® hosted service offered by Commerce Decisions. Closely controlled and managed, this allowed the project to get up and running fast, allowing remote and secure access for all external advisors and stakeholders.

Throughout the process, the project team was able to generate audit reports at will. This is a particularly key requirement in the public sector, but had not been the case when spreadsheets were used. At the end of the project, the project team was able to give the losing bidder comprehensive feedback on why the bid had failed, and to help progress and direct the subsequent negotiation activities. Similarly, AWARD® allowed the project team to give the preferred bidder feedback on where it could improve its submission. AWARD® gave the Trust more control over the project. The level of scrutiny over projects of this nature is continually growing.

AWARD® enabled the Trust to respond quickly and effectively to both regular and ad hoc audit requests, and to give improved feedback to all the bidders, both losing and the winning.

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.

Commerce Decisions
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