

CASE STUDY

Procurement partner for innovative technology trial

THE BACKGROUND

NHS England selected four Clinical Commissioning Groups across the country to take part in a proof of concept to trial wearable health technology. The project was designed to procure and test solutions in the marketplace that could monitor the health of frail individuals with significant health concerns. The solution would provide real-time information about the individual's health, allowing early intervention and preventing health episodes that could result in the patient needing to access services such as their GP or Acute Hospital. West Essex CCG were selected to take part in the trial due to their proven ability to deliver innovative solutions across their practices. Having been their delivery partner for several of these initiatives, MiCO were selected again by the CCG.

THE CHALLENGE

West Essex CCG recognised the need for local assurance within the procurement process. To manage the project successfully, procurement expertise and coordinated stakeholder engagement would need to be delivered in a professional and structured way with local knowledge of the healthcare system and environment. One unexpected challenge was the low engagement from suppliers in the marketplace. While this is a high-profile area, many suppliers chose to partner with each other which reduced the overall number and others didn't meet the initial criteria of the Government framework. We needed to keep the team focused on the overall aim of the project and how it fitted with the wider strategy for the CCG, rather than falling into a situation of just choosing the best of what was available.

WHAT DID WE DELIVER?

Procurement expertise and governance

We used our previous experience and knowledge of managing technology-based procurement within the public sector to design an appropriate procurement process. This included establishing an evaluation panel with representatives from the CCG, Acute, Community and Council services. We also established a solid governance process, working with the existing CCG board and executive committee. We used our communication, facilitation and moderation skills to guide the stakeholders successfully through each stage of the process.

Project management

In line with the national programme of work, we established a series of milestones as the basis for our delivery plan, communications and activities. Working with senior stakeholder groups, particularly within healthcare, forward planning was essential to secure time in with key individuals for meetings against a strict timetable.

Stakeholder management

Working around extremely busy schedules, we planned and gained commitment for meetings and/or input from stakeholders as far ahead as possible. We also knew how important it was to be flexible. We worked with individuals one-to-one or in small groups if that was what was needed to get the job done. We structured our communications and sessions carefully to guide people through the process and make things as easy as possible for the individuals involved.

WHAT DID WE ACHIEVE?

We kept the procurement process on track, delivering to time and with successful input across all organisations involved to ensure a representative decision. Along the way, we built strong relationships with our stakeholders that allowed us to work at pace, make the process easier for the individuals involved and appropriately challenge when needed. The evaluation panel selected the best fit product and we fulfilled the required stages to formally complete the procurement process. The project delivered a well-managed and fair assessment and the product that is being taken forward is in line with the priorities of the overall organisational strategy.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Following the procurement process, we managed the clinical assessment for central sign-off. We were then asked to start the next phase of the work by engaging with GP practices and care homes to select suitable patients to take part in the pilot. This involved carefully defining the criteria for success, being extremely focussed on patient safety and planning for the practical delivery. It was vital to communicate clearly and engage potential candidates in the benefits of the work.

As a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, work has been placed on hold. However, we quickly responded to the situation, closing the project in a way that will enable it to be quickly re-started when appropriate.