

Managed costs and a framework for excellence in regional domiciliary care provision

Northamptonshire County Council



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Hedra, a Mouchel Group company, helped Northamptonshire County Council restructure its domiciliary care supplier base down to seven achieving £400k cashable savings and £1million non cashable savings whilst still positioning providers to respond to a changing market of social care.

What was the challenge?

Domiciliary care is the provision of valuable support services to vulnerable adults whilst in their own homes – and helps to lessen the local financial burden by delaying the requirement for more expensive residential care. With in excess of 60 providers delivering over a million hours of care per year to around 2,000 customers; Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) was having difficulty securing adequate supply at a realistic cost.

Faced with escalating demand and growing customer expectations – plus a pressing requirement to deliver against the government long-term care agenda for individual budget – NCC asked Hedra, a Mouchel Group company, to help achieve a smaller, more responsive and manageable supply base, and develop a new and sustainable commissioning strategy. High levels of service responsiveness and management information accessibility were key deliverables.

“Hedra was an excellent partner; they brought increased commercial expertise and realism about how this could be applied in an immature market. The outcomes have been improved performance without the necessity of long-term block contracts that reduce flexibility.”

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How did Hedra support Northamptonshire County Council?

Hedra has carried out many activities in support of the programme. These include:

- extensive internal research in order to understand the unique challenges and requirements; the demographic profile; the need for flexibility and innovation; and the longer-term requirements
- development of a shared and mature understanding of supply and associated best practice via external research. This included industry cost drivers; performance drivers; industry trends; and possible synergies with residential care strategy
- detailed definition and development of a requirements and sourcing strategy, taking into account benchmarked local authorities and the realistic ambitions of NCC's own social services
- a restricted tender process (encompassing a pre-qualification stage to minimise workload). 101 expressions of interest were received, followed by 51 full tender submissions. After panel presentations, eight providers also underwent a 'Best and Final Offer' submission stage and extensive references were sourced before contracts were awarded.

What was achieved?

Over the course of nine months, 60 disparate care providers were replaced by just seven - and over £1.5 million in cost and service annual benefits released as a result.

The programme has proved hugely successful for NCC, having delivered the following benefits:

- a more easily managed domiciliary care supply model, requiring less intensive resource from the Council
- a much reduced list of customers waiting for the provision of care (down from 1,650 hours to 500 hours per week or less)
- creation of the Provider Board (a business-as-usual innovation) whereby the care providers and NCC meet regularly to discuss issues and future developments required by the government's care agenda.