

## NHS Birmingham and Solihull ICB

Civica Declare helps ICB increase compliance from 30% to 96%

When NHS Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board (ICB) was a Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), they used a paper-based process for declaring conflicts of interest in line with NHS England Guidance. Because the process was laborious, only active decision-makers – those involved in contracts and purchasing – were asked to declare.

### Paper-based to paperless

As the NHS pursues its paperless strategy, the ICB decided to look for a digital system for capturing declarations. They chose Civica Declare as an easy-to-use solution that would make it feasible for all staff to make declarations, and would create evidence that declarations had been captured.

“We used to create mountains of paper records, all of which had to be stored for 20 years as part of due diligence,” says Ross Tommey, Head of Governance at the ICB.

“Now all our records are stored digitally by Civica Declare, and we

have much easier access to information whenever we need it.”

### 96% compliance

In financial year 2019/20, the first year of using Civica Declare, 81% of staff made declarations. As well as being a significant improvement over the 30% achieved with their paper-based process, it meant the ICB met NHS England’s key performance indicator (KPI) of 80% compliance, and took declarations off the ICB’s risk register.

“By financial year 2021/22, compliance had shot up to 96% - an exponential increase that takes us well above the national expectation, and beyond what other heads of governance tell me they’re achieving,” says Ross.

“Without Civica Declare, we wouldn’t be achieving that level of compliance, and wouldn’t have evidence to prove it, either.”

- 1 96% compliance, up from 30%
- 2 80% time saving for the Head of Governance
- 3 Transparency for auditors and the public

“Auditors recognise I’m providing a level of assurance that wasn’t previously possible. I can update them or answer questions at any time because Civica Declare puts all the stats at my fingertips.”

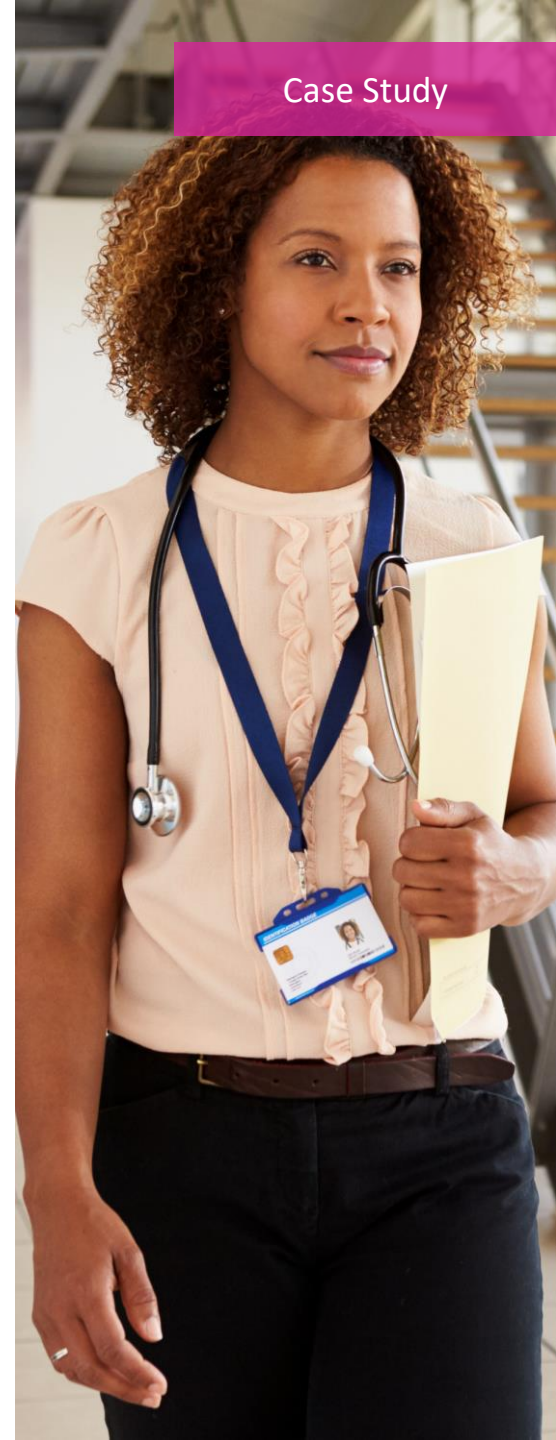
Ross Tommey, Head of Governance at NHS Birmingham and Solihull ICB

Learn more:

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“As well as saving us time and money, Civica Declare allows us to achieve an unprecedented level of openness and transparency that helps boost public confidence in the organisation.”

Ross Tommey, Head of Governance at NHS Birmingham and Solihull ICB

All ICB staff – around 500 permanent employees and 30 agency staff – are asked to make a declaration, even if they have nothing to declare.

“This means there are no grey areas. Everything is formalised and transparent, so auditors and the public can be confident there are no conflicts of interest,” says Ross.

Everyone receives a request to declare at the start of the financial year (or when they join), with automated weekly reminders if they don't do so within the mandated timeframe. Civica Declare maintains an audit trail of all communications, so the governance team have records and can follow up with individuals if necessary.

Civica Declare enables reporting against any criteria, so it's easier to meet audit requirements.

“Auditors recognise I'm providing a level of assurance that wasn't previously possible,” says Ross.

“I can update them or answer questions at any time because Civica Declare puts all the stats at my fingertips.”

### Increased transparency

Like any other ICB, NHS Birmingham and Solihull is legally required to make declarations of interest available to the public. Previously, individuals had to make freedom of information (FOI) requests, which took time and effort to fulfil when declarations were paper-based. Now, Civica Declare automatically publishes declaration information onto a public-facing portal that's integrated into the ICB's website.

“As well as saving us time and money, Civica Declare allows us to achieve an unprecedented level of openness and transparency that helps boost public confidence in the organisation,” says Ross.

He points out that the system also gives him the flexibility to hide declaration information that may be publicly sensitive or that the ICB isn't required to publish for other reasons.

### 80% time saving

Ross estimates that using Civica Declare means the time and effort he spends on processing declarations has gone down from about 20 hours a month to just four.

“I can use the hours I've got back to educate new joiners about our policy on accepting gifts and hospitality; and better scrutinise any declarations that need a closer look, which further reduces risk,” he says. He can also spend more time overseeing other workstreams within his remit.

Ross appreciates the combination of a positive working relationship with the responsive Civica team and a solution that fully meets his needs.

“Almost everyone finds Civica Declare intuitive and, because it now regenerates forgotten passwords automatically, the number of queries I get from users has gone down to about one a week,” he says.

“As an ICB we'll be picking up additional responsibilities from NHS England, which could mean we double in size. Civica Declare has the flexibility to scale up and help us handle any volume of declarations with ease.”



**Birmingham and Solihull**

Learn more:

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