

CostMaster facilitates Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust's transition to patient level costing

Civica delivers a more transparent, user-friendly and future-proofed approach to costing



A revolution is under way in how the NHS calculates the cost of treating patients. By 2021, all NHS Trusts will have moved from providing annual top down reference costs to bottom up, patient level costing.

To support this transformation, Trusts need to start with a system that delivers the necessary patient level detail, has the ability to evidence clearly how allocations are made and to easily extract information through flexible reporting.

Royal Berkshire were seeking an alternative costing system

Roger Bovell, the Trust's Head of Finance Systems & Costing, wanted to upgrade the system used by Royal Berkshire to support costing.

Visibility on cost allocations in the existing system was poor, it was un-structured and extracting data was time-consuming and inconvenient. So relatively high-level coding skills were needed. Lack of clarity on how data was handled also raised potential audit issues.

After a market evaluation process, the Trust identified CostMaster as the best solution. The thorough pre-purchase evaluation confirmed that it to be the right platform from both a configuration and usage perspective.

CostMaster provides the functionality the Trust needs

A year on, Roger sees several ways in which CostMaster has been a good upgrade choice.

1. Implementation and ease of use

The new system was implemented with just 10 days of consultancy assistance, on time and in budget with Royal Berkshire not needing any additional consultancy.

2. Structure and control

This is important from an audit perspective as CostMaster allows the Trust to show the procedures validating the accuracy of cost allocations. Roger says, "control means it's easy to document" - good news in terms of meeting audit requirements.

3. Transparency

Roger says, "CostMaster offers reports to verify whether the allocations you've used have worked in the way you intended. The readily available suite of reports allows you to get to the answers quickly, to see the effects of the apportionments. It's all transparent." Being able to reconcile the data as you go along is a big plus.

"Applications that require a lot of scripting are okay for people familiar with coding but it's tough for the costing person without that knowledge or experience. You risk it becoming a black box with one key individual who understands it while everyone else is in the dark."

Roger Bovell
Head of Finance Systems & Costing
Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

The benefits

- ▶ **Transparency - Users can see immediately how outputs have been arrived at.**
- ▶ **Ease of use - The user interface is easily usable by non-technical specialists.**
- ▶ **Low cost of ownership - Everything a Trust needs is included in the package.**
- ▶ **Easy implementation - Trusts can be up and running with the system quickly.**
- ▶ **Standard report structure means staff don't need high level SQL skills.**
- ▶ **Stepping-stone to PLICs - The system delivers the bottom up data needed.**

4. User friendly interface

CostMaster's user-friendly interface is accessible to non-specialists, which is important, as costing staff aren't familiar with coding. As Roger says, "Anyone who can use Excel can use CostMaster." This reduces dependence on key individuals. "Everyone is a generalist, so there's less risk of failure if someone leaves."

5. Ongoing development

Civica's ongoing commitment to updating CostMaster is key. As Roger says: "It's clear that Civica is constantly developing the product and is responsive to the needs of the market."

6. Cost

CostMaster's pricing structure is attractive. The annual fee includes the licence, support and access to the Service Desk, minimising the need for additional consultancy services. The system's simplicity also generates savings on staff, for example, eliminating the need for an SQL specialist. "Cost-effectiveness was the cherry on the cake," says Roger. "We realised a saving by switching. Few companies can match Civica's pricing structure, its good value for money."

CostMaster is a great platform on which to develop patient-level costing

The fact that CostMaster can do it all – from Reference Costs to service level costs and on to patient level costs - makes it the ideal platform for Trusts starting to build the bottom up cost model needed to underpin PLICs.

"It's the suite of front-end reports that sets CostMaster apart. And as you tweak the model, you want feedback to see the real-time effect on allocations. The process of validating that what you're doing is having the intended effect is crucial. CostMaster is transparent."

Roger Bovell
Head of Finance Systems & Costing
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