NHS North West Mental Health Collaboration

A collaboration between seven Mental Health and Community NHS Trusts operating within the North West of England was established in late 2010 to procure a framework of Clinical Information Systems. The Trusts provide a range of services to patients of all ages including, but not limited to, mental health, drug and alcohol treatment and psychology services.

Problem
The collaboration was established in 2010 with the purpose of procuring a framework of Clinical Information System (CIS) suppliers to meet the combined requirements of the seven organisations. A project management solution was needed to support the project team of 50 throughout this process.

The key challenges were:
Ensuring that all seven organisations kept pace with the project. There was a very tight schedule of 13 months which was determined by a contractual date of one of the collaborative member organisations;

Ensuring that all seven organisations had equal input to defining the requirements and later evaluating the bidder responses. Both of these processes involved reviewing large volumes of documentation and supporting information, which needed to be accessible to every team member;

Ensuring that the procurement process was transparent and the vast amount of documentation was version controlled;

Ensuring that each organisation achieved its own local objectives from the procurement.

“Projectplace not only ensured we could overcome our challenges, it made our project more robust because we could collaborate productively to help achieve every organisation’s specific goals within a tight timeline.”

Nadine Fry, Programme Manager
Solution

Projectplace was selected for its planning and document management features and ability to facilitate open communication between project members. Because Projectplace is web-based, all seven of the collaborative organisations had equal access to the project tools and documentation. This was critical, not only because the team members needed to be able to access information whether they were working in the office or remotely, but because seven organisations were involved with different technological infrastructure and needed to be granted access to certain documents easily.

Transparency was also an important factor in selecting Projectplace. Projectplace’s document management solution offers a central place to store documentation with robust version control. Team members can see who is working in a document and who has made changes.

The team found Projectplace to be quick and easy to implement and was pleased with the training and support programmes.

Benefits

Projectplace streamlined communication for the team in a way that would have been impossible using email. At one stage during the bid process, the team had 40 staff involved in evaluating several supplier bids, with each team member responsible for evaluating certain sections of the bids. Without Projectplace, project managers would have had to email many tens of documents to the staff and then collate the responses, an extremely time-consuming process that is prone to error due to potential issues such as documents going missing or version control issues.

Projectplace’s document management feature significantly improved the team’s efficiency. With a central place for storing documentation and an audit trail, the team has been able to easily request reviews without worrying about different versions being in circulation. In addition, project managers can set up staff groups and manage permission controls to ensure that the right people see what is relevant to them.