

Anchor Trust praise 4C's 'invaluable expertise and guidance'

Anchor Trust is the largest not-for-profit provider of housing, support and care for the elderly in England. The Trust, which was first formed in 1968 as Help the Aged (Oxford) Housing Association, aims to improve the lives of older people by providing a range of important services. Made up of a number of businesses which provide these services, including Anchor Homes, the largest not-for-profit provider of residential and nursing care in the sector, the Trust now employs 10,000 staff and provides housing and/or support to 50,000 customers across the country.



4C has helped Anchor Trust to improve & update their telephony infrastructure

Planning for a successful future

If they were to meet the challenges created by changes within this highly competitive environment, senior management at the Anchor Trust realised that they needed a thorough review of the organisation's ICT infrastructure. The purpose of the review was to ensure that the Trust was best placed and appropriately equipped to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the marketplace. As part of this process, Anchor Trust identified that its network was becoming mission critical and would be the foundation on which the future success of the business would be built. Key issues driving the need for review included:

- Inconsistent performance across the wide area network
- Obsolescent telephone systems
- Inability to support new ways of working to:
 - (a) improve customer service
 - (b) increase productivity and
 - (c) reduce the carbon footprint
- Lack of management information on voice and data utilisation
- Lack of in-house expertise to support the ICT infrastructure.

To help address these issues, Anchor Trust retained 4C Strategies as ICT consultants to assist with the development of an appropriate ICT strategy and the subsequent procurement. The project began early in 2007.

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Acting as expert advisers, 4C produced a comprehensive ICT strategy report for the Trust. Their consultancy work also included the preparation of a procurement specification, assistance with the OJEU procurement and a tender evaluation report. In addition, 4C prepared a feasibility report on the proposal to move to an integrated extension number range.

The outcome of the strategic ICT review was that Anchor Trust should outsource the supply of a new managed, innovative and cost effective wide area network (WAN) service, which would serve approximately 1000 locations, to an external specialist provider. In addition, Anchor Trust was advised to outsource the management of the on-site ICT infrastructure to the same provider to realise the benefits of an integrated and converged ICT solution.

The outcome of the procurement was that NTL Telewest was awarded the contract to supply and manage a wide area network on behalf of Anchor Trust. The contract also included the provision of ongoing support and management services for the on-site ICT infrastructure. 4C continued to act in an advisory role throughout the process by supporting the rollout of the new infrastructure and networking testing to confirm the satisfactory performance of the new network. At the time of publication, the new ICT infrastructure has been deployed into a small number of pilot sites prior to a full rollout across all Anchor Trust sites in England.

Keeping on top of the competition

As the rollout nears completion, the provision of the new high tech ICT infrastructure has enabled Anchor Trust to operate more effectively within the marketplace and keep pace with its competitors through a state of the art communications network. The new infrastructure will also enable the Trust to:

- Improve customer service by routing incoming contacts to the right place first time
- Increase staff productivity by facilitating a work anytime, anyplace, any device culture

- Reduce costs by reducing the need to travel and also by facilitating site rationalisation
- Decrease its carbon footprint by reducing the need to travel.

Staff at Anchor Trust have been delighted with the way that the review and procurement was managed by 4C – and with the end result. Ian Morris, Head of Information Systems at Anchor Trust felt that 4C's input was an integral and critical factor in the project's success. "4C Strategies provided invaluable expertise and guidance to Anchor, in both the technical appreciation and in the selection of our chosen provider from a number of competing suppliers. 4C also helped us to navigate our way successfully through the OJEU process. I would rate 4C's input as being essential to the whole process that we were engaged in, and I would have no hesitation in recommending them for similar work."

To find out how you can make more of your communications by having a clear strategy in place, contact 4C to arrange for an initial no-obligation fact finding consultation. **Visit our website www.4c.co.uk, call 01858 438 938 or email office@4c.co.uk.**

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