CareCubed Use Increases Transparency, Enhances Home-Finding Practices and generates £520,000 cost avoidance for Blackpool Council

CareCubed

The Challenge,
The Solution,
Why CareCubed?

The Challenge

- Understanding provider costs.
- Having knowledge of here the benchmarks for children's care should be.

The Solution

- Using CareCubed to benchmark existing and new placements.
- Breaking down barriers between the council and providers for open communication.

Why CareCubed?

- CareCubed is the only nationally recognised benchmarking solution used by commissioners and providers.
- CareCubed provides a transparent basis for negotiation.
- The CareCubed team provide comprehensive training, implementation services and support to ensure benefits are maximised.

Results

- Surety that all placements are person-centred and better provider relationships.
- Confidence that all costs are aligned with needs, outcomes and efficient support delivery

"Sometimes it's not about reducing the cost, it's about making sure your child is getting everything in the package that they should be."

Marie Clayton Home Finding Co-ordinator at Blackpool Council

Blackpool Council achieved a £520,000 reduction in spending after the first six months of using CareCubed.

Alongside the financial benefits, the Council felt that CareCubed has brought positive impact to its commissioning practices and provided greater insight into the true costs of care.

Blackpool Council identified a need for more understanding of what care costs and needed a clear comprehension of where the benchmarks for children's care funding should be. The council wanted to better understand provider costs, and what the children were receiving.

CareCubed delivered exactly what they needed, by breaking down barriers between the Council and their providers to allow for proactive communications. CareCubed provided the necessary benchmarks to help Blackpool Council better understand the position of providers, and whether they were getting value for money.

To maximise their usage of CareCubed, the team at Blackpool Council underwent training with CareCubed and then informed their children's providers that their processes were changing. This included a request to provide information about their costings by the 31st of January 2025. 29 of their providers submitted uplift requests ranging from 1.2% to 38.5%. Of the 36 children in semi-independent and residential homes, 14 placements were agreed across 4 providers. The 22 placements that remained were negotiated via CareCubed, and none had an agreement of an uplift in excess of 2.5%. This resulted in a cost avoidance of £520,000.

However, it wasn't just the financial benefits and cost insight that Blackpool Council appreciated from CareCubed. The Council underwent Home-Finding training, provided by the CareCubed team, immediately before implementation of the tool. They iterated that this was invaluable to them and helped them optimise their use of the tool into their processes. Rachael Slater, Market Review and Development Lead at Blackpool Council, also noted that this training and other support provided by CareCubed helped them get to where they needed to be to drive forward optimal use of the tool. "We wouldn't have got to where we are now without that support. We recommend it for all the Local Authorities."

The Council benefitted from the breakdown of costs and the benchmark for the specifics in children's social care. Marie Clayton Home Finding Co-ordinator at Blackpool Council

stated that "The benchmark cost is critical, because it gives you an estimation of where you should be for every single element of cost, and it's fine to be a bit over or a bit under. But it's when there's a massive difference, that is where you want to go searching and ask for evidence. Given the financial pressures, we must align costs with what is required and being delivered on the ground."

Having breakdowns and evidence from providers helped with negotiation and comprehension. Such as instances in considering the facilitation of hobbies for the children being cared for. Cases the council mentioned included an instance where there was a monthly cost for a piano tuner, but this turned out to not be as frequently used as it was claimed to be. CareCubed has helped the Council to ensure that children don't just have access to the basics of care but funding for fulfilling hobbies and improving the lives of children and young people too. Importantly, the costings reflect the reality and balance of the care, support and outcomes being delivered.

Blackpool Council has also found examples where costings should increase, such as

instances where clothing costs are below the benchmarked budget, so this is raised to meet the need and the benchmark. Having better transparency in costs with CareCubed, Blackpool Council have reported an improvement in the relationship they have with some of their providers.

Blackpool Council's significant cost avoidance and the transformation of commissioning and home-finding processes for children's care through CareCubed is going to continue to drive positive outcomes. With a better idea of the benchmarks and the confidence to challenge and ask questions, they will continue to use CareCubed to have better, transparent conversations with providers. This initial use case has delivered significant benefit to the council, but the intention going forward is to ensure all packages are clearly understood and person-centred, and that the costs paid are aligned to the needs, outcomes and delivery of support.

As well as making more use of the tool, Blackpool are also part of a new CareCubed pilot as well. The Council are now using a new template and some benchmark information provided by iESE to understand the true cost of placements in Independent Non-Maintained Special Schools and support the development of a similar tool over the coming months.

AN EXCESS OF 2.5% – RESULTED IN A COST AVOIDANCE OF

£520k

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