

CASE STUDY

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

# Cambridgeshire Council – Supporting person- centred value-for-money commissioning across the County

# The Challenge, The Solution, Why CareCubed?

## The Challenge

- Significant financial pressures due to spiralling health and social care costs.
- Having a clear understanding of care costings in the market.
- Lack of data and evidence to support a transparent conversation between provider and commissioner.
- Difficulty realising value for money in commissioning.

## The Solution

- Using CareCubed to benchmark existing and new placements.
- Use of CareCubed tool to understand progress-focused placement costing.
- Implementation services to support culture change and give Home-Finding Officers confidence to challenge.

## 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.
- CareCubed enables an individual-focused approach to costing high-needs placements.

## Results

- Clarification of the true cost of care and operational service delivery.
- £180,166 savings made between April 2025 – December 2025.
- Confidence in benchmarks and provider relationships.
- Implementation of long-term goals for placements with beneficial financial modelling.

“ Through CareCubed we know what to look for in quality care for our young people, not just in a budgetary sense but for that young person who can have a lot of positive progress. We’ve had a few young people over the last year who have de-escalated and are in much stronger positions regarding their prospects than they would have been if we hadn’t had the correct data available to us from CareCubed. This enabled us to place them in the right environment to live their best lives – and importantly build the skills they need for adulthood. ”

Cambridgeshire County Council



When reviewing their systems around children's social care, Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) identified a need to improve transparency and accuracy in the costing of placements.

Historically, these placement costs were determined by CCC through referencing previous provider rates. Without a comprehensive benchmarking system, this limited the council's ability to ensure value for money and made it challenging to negotiate effectively with providers.

To address these challenges, the council implemented the CareCubed Children's module — the nationally recognised benchmarking tool.

CareCubed was used to provide a benchmark for both existing and new placements, analyse the breakdown of costs, and provide a more transparent basis for negotiation with providers.

According to Gavin Mullin, Commissioning Manager at Cambridgeshire County Council, CareCubed has enabled the council to move from broad package estimates to more detailed, area-specific costings, enhancing transparency and supporting informed negotiations. CareCubed has also provided insight into previously underestimated cost drivers, such as broadband, property rent, and energy.

Gavin and his team also gained insights into some of the maintenance costs across homes.

“CareCubed prompted us to look at the costs across the whole home, each week, for everybody in that home, and when we find it's a bit higher than expected. This is when we can start asking questions and find out why these figures are higher.”

“For most of us, our bills are monthly, and we don't break it down per person, but CareCubed can do this for homes, and this offers more insight into how things are costed and gives us information that is valuable when negotiating with our providers.”

Access to the robust benchmarking data has enabled CCC to engage in evidence-based negotiations with providers, in pursuit of fair and sustainable pricing. The data-driven approach has also strengthened commissioning relationships, fostering greater trust and transparency between the council and its partners.

This relationship building has been critical for the local authority as they experienced a very potent shift in dynamic between them and one of their providers.

Prior to the use of CareCubed, the provider in question was requesting a 60% uplift, and felt any price below was unacceptable. This created an unproductive environment in which everyone was left disappointed.

But thanks to a combination of negotiation training from CareCubed and utilisation of the Cost of Care tool, recent discussions with the provider have proved far more productive.

Gavin compared the situations, stating: “It's been much more of a discussion than it had been in the past. The approach has been more focused on trying to figure out what they need and what we can do, then if it is the same, great, if not, let's talk about what the differences look like and why the needs are greater.”

This more transparent form of discussion led to an agreement of a 13% uplift this year

that allowed both parties to walk away happy and ensure the needs were met with Gavin describing the outcome saying, “this has made for a much more positive working relationship”.

The relationship with the provider has also improved to the point that it has led to discussions about more provisions with the provider for fair-costed homes, by enabling the provider to know they will have CCC as a customer of these homes as long as they are fairly costed, bringing benefit to both the provider and the local authority.

Alongside the benefits to provider relationships are the internal discussions around a more progressive approach to long-term care costing.

It was noted how the council is now looking at improvements for the long-term planning for high-needs care placements, including a willingness to spend more on a high-cost placement for suitable needs-based care which can progressively improve behaviours and independence for the young person.

The aim being that over time this can help achieve positive outcomes from young people in care while also building sustainability into the long-term finances of the council.

A more progressive, needs-based approach to commissioning is a primary goal of the CareCubed platform, and by focusing on right-sizing placements and investing in provider relationships, the council can allocate resources according to individual needs, supporting both cost efficiency and improved outcomes for young people.

“You can choose a provider who will deliver the right quality support and what is currently perhaps a 2-1 situation could be 1-1 in six

months and then lower. The right support is very important, and the tool helps us to understand what that looks like for a young person.” said Gavin when speaking about the how the CareCubed Cost of Care tool was helping the council in finding support.

Going forward from the initial impact CareCubed has made, CCC is reviewing individual cases and applying their new internal process into deep analysis of placements to ensure they are person-centred and delivering outcomes for the young person – at a fair price.

“Often the focus is on high-cost placements, but we find smaller savings made can really add up. You may only be focusing on £200 to £400 per case, but over a year that adds up.” Commented Chris Howard, Commissioning Manager at Cambridgeshire County Council, highlighting how looking at smaller wins can add up, delivering savings on existing placements and cost avoidance on uplift requests.

Speaking on the work with CCC, Nik Jones, the Business Development Manager at CareCubed said: “Cambridgeshire County Council’s journey with CareCubed highlights perfectly the impact the tool can have. It isn’t just about the bottom-line of financial statements but building the processes and culture around sustainable social care and working towards positive outcomes for those in care.”

SAVINGS MADE BETWEEN APRIL 2025 – DECEMBER 2025

# £180k

Find out more

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