

CASE STUDY

STAFFORDSHIRE AND STOKE-ON-TRENT ICB & IBC HEALTHCARE

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICB & IBC HealthCare Explore How CareCubed Enhances Sector Relationships and Transparency

The Challenge, The Solution, Why CareCubed?

The Challenge

- Improving consistency in decision-making across care-packages.
- Buying the right least restricted care at the right cost.
- Optimising two high-cost, highly restricted cases in right-sized care and cost efficiency.
- Purchasing the right care, with the least restrictions, at the right cost.
- Evidence to rationalise care packages and understand the variations in spend.

The Solution

- Using CareCubed to benchmark existing and new placements with providers.
- Use of CareCubed to provide a transparent environment for providers and commissioners to share information and gain insight. Use of CareCubed to gain clarity around cost discrepancies for a variety of specialist care types.

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

- Right-sized packages deliver better care and reduce spend.
- Workforce sustainability is improved.
- Understanding of market nuances is enhanced for both parties.
- ~£364,000 per annum saving from 2 cases
- A consistent approach and greater transparency lead to strong, meaningful relationship between the ICB and its care providers.

“ In the sector, we want to make sure that their care is right-sized. We also want to make sure that staff are trained and invested in, so it is important to find that balance and CareCubed has helped facilitate conversations to make that possible. ”

Tracy Hammond-Morrall,
IBC Regional Manager



CareCubed Cost of Care (CareCubed) is the UK's leading tool for providing data-driven benchmarks and evidence-led insights into care costing negotiations.

In use across the UK by both commissioners and providers, CareCubed aims to bridge the gap. Creating an environment where transparent conversations and shared analysis become the sector standard.

In a recent case, the benefits of this integrated, collaborative approach to the relationship between care provider and care commissioner was fully demonstrated between Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICB (Integrated Care Board) and IBC Healthcare, a specialist care provider in England.

For Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICB, the need for a more innovative approach had been building for some time. While their existing method was built upon their own deep historic knowledge of the local market, the changing landscape and increased cost of delivering services meant there was a greater need to adapt to increasingly complex cases, higher expectations of transparency and significant budget pressures.

For IBC Healthcare, they were already placing greater value in approaching care commissioners with greater transparency and openness and were looking for ways to further improve their relationship with the ICB.

Luckily, CareCubed had already been adopted by both local authorities - Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, which meant that there was already a pool of familiarity within both sides to pull upon.

Deciding against implementing a new tool and mandating its use, Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICB committed instead to collaborative learning and shared outcome ownership with their local provider market. With the hope that this would ensure that any improvement in their local market would be a shared success.

As a specialist care provider across England who had worked closely with the ICB over the years, IBC Healthcare became the first provider to truly test this joint approach.

Both the ICB and IBC Healthcare were keen to find ways to enhance collaborative relationships in negotiations, and after receiving recommendations from the local

authorities for the ICB, IBC were invited to participate in the demos of CareCubed.

This began a shared framework for cross collaboration around understanding need, cost and quality in a way that would benefit everyone involved.

As neither organisation had used CareCubed previously, this created a sense of camaraderie as they learned together.

They undertook training together on a complex package, using the tool to breakdown benchmarks, analyse the main drivers of cost, and understand how staffing, needs and outcomes aligned and impacted funding.

This collaborative approach across the teams fostered a learning environment built on trust, where both sides would be able to assess the data, ask difficult questions and focus on the alignment of understanding.

Once the tool became embedded in everyday practice, both the ICB and IBC Healthcare found it invaluable for understanding how even small decisions were influencing cost, the sustainability of the market and the lived experiences of those receiving care.

For IBC Healthcare, the first impact was felt in workforce management, as social care staffing pressures meant that sustainability had become more challenging. Using CareCubed allowed IBC to examine staffing models at a person-centred level and understand where resources may have been misaligned.

Through this partnership with the ICB, they gained greater clarity on what was needed, how rotas could be optimised, and how staffing could better match the needs of the individual. The ICB benefited in turn with a reduction in expenditure while maintaining the quality outcomes they sought.

As IBC Regional Manager Tracy Hammond-Morrall explained:

“Attracting the right staff has become an increasing challenge in the sector, so having a structured, evidence-based way to ensure we

are getting our staffing right-sized is critical.”

One of the most powerful examples of this shared approach was for a transforming care patient in hospital on a discharge trajectory, assessed by IBC Healthcare as part of the MDT, as needing 4-to-1 support.

The ICB came in at this point and felt that the support package was not the right fit and proceeded to utilise CareCubed for the first time. Using the tool alongside IBC, Karen Webb and Tracy Hammond-Morrall, working together in collaboration, found that the fourth person was not needed. This led to a reduction in the package, and with further tailoring, created a package that was more suited to the patient.

When the case was first reviewed using CareCubed, neither the ICB nor the provider could find a clear rationale for the fourth support worker. Karen Webb, the Deputy SRO Learning Disability and Autism for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICB, stated:

“It wasn’t adding up. We couldn’t figure out what the fourth member of staff was doing. No one knew why it didn’t make sense, and years ago, we may have just paid it, but we can’t do that anymore and with CareCubed, we could look at it and reassess what the person really needed.”

This led to the patient moving into a new home with a package that included the right support, at the right cost. Their purchase of CareCubed had essentially paid for itself by the end of the first negotiation.

The second use of the tool was with a resident who was in the community with a residential care provider and was in crisis. The same approach was taken with CareCubed, sitting down together with IBC to work out the best package for the individual, and this resulted in this person moving into the same setting after the first person had settled. Initially, it was suggested that again a 4-1 package was to be used, but replicating the initial process and negotiation with the first patient meant that the package was changed. Since the move, support has been stepped down to 2-1 and then 1-1 support.

“It is key to have these open discussions with senior stakeholders to find new, creative solutions that work first and foremost for the individual - and for both the commissioner and the provider.”

It was noted that in the initial negotiations, both the ICB and IBC included senior decision-makers within the process. This led to a faster resolution and the feeling that everyone was on the same page. Going forward, the ICB now use this Case Study as part of their internal training to demonstrate the importance of communication, collaboration and best practice.

“ CareCubed has worked for us as a start of a conversation. We’ve made it clear that it is just a guide and gives us a sense of the science sitting underneath what we should pay. It’s all about being fair, transparent and balanced and CareCubed gives us the data to understand what we are looking at. ”

Karen Webb,
Deputy SRO Learning Disability
and Autism for Staffordshire and
Stoke-on-Trent ICB

The result of the process used in these cases was transformative: the individuals gained greater independence, autonomy and a level of personal progress that had not previously been anticipated.

For the ICB, it represented a financially responsible, person-centred optimisation in their processes and a benchmark for success. While, for IBC Healthcare, it supported

a sustainable workforce model without compromising outcomes and built a strong relationship with the ICB.

CareCubed became a catalyst for further conversations about staff training, costs, and service design. The ICB began to better understand the difference between effective training and ineffective training – and how each translated into costings.

IBC Healthcare also gained internal insight, discovering areas where their costs were higher than expected and others where they had potentially under-estimated. This level of transparent analysis in their use of CareCubed helped both organisations align their understanding of the market and strengthen shared accountability for decision-making.

CareCubed’s Commercial Director, Craig White, states, “The tool won’t capture the full nuance of every unique service, but it provides strong parameters based on robust data, a baseline of objectivity and a structured way to inspire transparent conversations.”

Overall, for both the ICB and IBC Healthcare, the overarching impact has been a shared focus on shaping packages in a way that is person-centred, financially responsible and operationally sustainable. Being creative and looking to innovative ways to deliver care and support is crucial given the financial pressures felt by commissioners and providers. This alignment has allowed them to create systems that are more streamlined and effective, while also improving the lives of the people receiving care.

Cases operating within this improved partnership has seen individuals gain greater independence, a reduced reliance on intensive support and in some cases, moves into more suitable accommodation.

Providers working with the ICB have sharpened their workforce models and gained new insights into their cost structures, and the ICB has strengthened their evidence base and improved the overall financial picture.

Looking to the future, Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICB is now turning its attention to CareCubed's outcomes-setting features.

They plan to undertake training with providers to strengthen consistency in goal setting and outcome tracking to demonstrate the quality delivered. This reflects their longstanding belief that when the system learns together, the system improves together – and that transparency, evidence and partnership should guide commissioning decisions from beginning to end.

For CareCubed, the success between the ICB and IBC represents further proof of the real impact that the Cost of Care platform can have between commissioner and provider, and the practical value it can bring to both parties in the commissioning process.



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