

Streamlining Project Accounting and Management Reports across a confederation of 43 GP practices

CASE STUDY



City & Hackney GP Confederation Streamlines Project Accounting and Management Reports with Aqilla.

Formed in 2014 as a Community Interest Company, City & Hackney GP Confederation consists of 43 GP practices which are responsible for delivering primary care services across the London Borough of Hackney and the City of London. Funded on a contract basis by the City & Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Local Authority, local Education Networks, and by GP practice membership, the GP Confederation has a number of unique accounting needs in terms of how projects are treated and how GP surgeries are managed as both creditors and clients.

They chose Cloud accounting software Aqilla because of its ability to be configured in a flexible way, addressing their specific reporting needs yet costing relatively little by monthly subscription. The Confederation also liked the system's easy navigation and ability to integrate with Excel.

Before implementing Aqilla, the City & Hackney GP Confederation started out using custom-built Excel spreadsheets. **Russell Barnes-Heath, Director of Finance and Information at City & Hackney GP Confederation says,** *“Our processes were cumbersome and management reporting took a lot of time. Our reports were subject to error and difficult to amend. Aqilla makes complex reporting very easy.”*

Instant and accurate management reports

The Confederation still chooses to produce monthly reports in Excel and Word and Aqilla makes this easy by integrating with both Excel and with ShaperLight, Aqilla's preferred query-building tool. SharperLight is used to extract key data, live from Aqilla, and automatically populate Excel reporting templates which gives business intelligence on demand. **Russell Barnes-Heath continues**, *"With Aqilla, our reports are produced by following a much simpler process, saving us so much time."*

Hugh Scantlebury, CEO of Aqilla says, *"It makes sense to define reporting at the implementation stage so that essential management information can be released as normal. During implementation, we pre-designed queries so that vital data automatically populates the Excel report; the finance team can achieve continuity, a higher degree of accuracy, and enjoy major savings on management time."*

Increased visibility with project accounting

Exploring the reporting opportunities in Aqilla further, the implementation team was also able to configure the system for the Confederation's project accounting needs giving the management team instant and up-to-the-minute access to project incomes and costs. **Russell Barnes-Heath says**, *"By far, the most valuable feature in Aqilla for us must be the way in which it handles projects, allowing us to produce accurate reports and statements at any point in time."*

The GP Confederation bids for contracts, many funded by the CCG, and income is then paid to member GPs for delivering those contracts, or used to cover costs incurred

directly by the Confederation. It is vital that there is visibility so that the Confederation can monitor the profitability of each project/contract and so that 'open book' reporting by project can be presented to funders/commissioners as necessary. In Aqilla, each contract or programme is set up as a project account which allows ongoing monitoring of funds, expenditure and billing over the project's timeline.

Once the reporting needs of the Confederation's projects are defined, the project account is configured. Each new project can be easily replicated and set up within minutes. Within each project, Aqilla also allows for sub-projects. Aqilla is also able to group projects together and report upwards towards a consolidated P&L.

GPs – clients, creditors or both?

The 43 member GP practices receive payments from the Confederation for the delivery of certain contracts. At the same time, GP practices pay a membership fee to the Confederation and also reimburse the Confederation for the costs of any Confederation employed Salaried GPs that have been deployed to work in a practice. This makes them both creditors and debtors at the same time. Aqilla treats this by creating a special type of Client Account where the 3rd party can be a customer and a supplier, allowing the accounts team to post both purchase and sales invoices to the same account, and process supplier payments and receipts.

Other features within Aqilla which this Community Interest Company finds valuable include the treatment of VAT. The Confederation became VAT registered during implementation.

"Aqilla makes complex reporting very easy"

Aqilla's implementation expert was able to reconfigure the system to comply with HMRC's partial VAT rule. For a Community Interest Company, not all VAT is recoverable and Aqilla is working with the Confederation to be able to automatically calculate how much VAT can be recovered.

Russell Barnes-Heath also adds, *"One of my favourite features in Aqilla is its ability to do a "rough" posting. This allows you to spot errors and correct them before you commit to the actual posting and avoids an endless trail of journal entries."*

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Summing up

Summarising how he feels about the transition to Aqilla, **Russell Barnes-Heath concludes,** *"We chose Aqilla not only because it could be tailored to meet our more unusual needs, but also because it is very simple to follow. We find it easy to use. It is also good value for the price we pay per month. It is an affordable yet more sophisticated solution for our needs."*

City & Hackney GP Confederation has a plan in place to move Aqilla to the next phase, further automating processes and using Aqilla's flexibility to create and share better information.

Russell Barnes-Heath says, *"Our next project will be to integrate and automate bank payments through Aqilla. The functionality is there and it will be instrumental in streamlining our more admin-heavy processes."*

Now that we have transitioned smoothly in terms of book-keeping and management reporting, we will take a closer look at some of the smaller details in Aqilla which will help us share information better with suppliers and clients. For example, we will use Aqilla to enhance the information on remittances, making it easier for GPs to reconcile payments against projects."