

Every Pound Has a Purpose: How Acorns Children's Hospice Unlocked Savings in Merchant Services

“ There is no hard sell or encouragement to move to preferred suppliers. After expert analysis of costs against carefully collated benchmarks, ERA will conclude they can save the organisation money, or not. If they can't, then there is no fee and there's useful evidence that the procurement arrangements in place are satisfactory, which is great assurance for Trustees. ”

acorns
children's hospice

STEVE WESTCOTT, HEAD OF FINANCE,
ACORNS CHILDREN'S HOSPICE



Value Delivered:



Merchant Cards 42%



Cash Collections / Bank Charges

Existing arrangements validated



Procurement Processes

On-site workshop and improved structure around policy, compliance and sustainability

The client

Acorns Children's Hospice provides specialist care and support for children with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions and their families. Alongside its care services, the charity operates a network of around 51 retail shops that help fund its work.

The challenge

ERA consultants Kevin Davies and Russell Baker worked with Acorns to identify priority areas where costs could be reduced without disrupting the charity's operations or trusted supplier relationships. With every pound saved able to support frontline patient care, the focus was on improving value rather than driving unnecessary change.

To support this, ERA brought in Alison Bettany to review procurement procedures and policy development, helping strengthen internal processes as the organisation and retail network continued to grow.

ERA consultant Stephen Whitlam then focused on merchant card services, where Acorns was keen to retain its existing provider relationship while exploring opportunities for better value. The review also identified further savings opportunities through modest process improvements, without requiring significant operational change.

The result

The merchant card services project reduced costs by around **42%**, generating five-figure annual savings while allowing Acorns to retain its incumbent provider and avoid operational disruption.

Stephen Whitlam also reviewed cash collections and bank charges, confirming that existing arrangements were already well managed and competitively priced.

The success of the initial work has since led to further projects across consumables, legal support, waste and IT, creating a broader partnership built on trust, insight and value.

