



Barclaycard Business helps Sandwell Homes work in partnership with suppliers

Sandwell Homes is a non-profit organisation set up in October 2004 to manage and maintain council homes in the Sandwell area. The company provides high quality housing and services to over 29,000 homes. By delivering sustainable quality homes and excellent customer services, Sandwell aims to be nationally recognised as a best practise social housing provider. Its committed and motivated employees are the key to achieving this target.

The company employs over 1,300 people, the majority of which are engaged in the management and maintenance of council homes. In order that the workforce can perform their jobs to the highest standards, it is essential they are able to easily purchase goods. Barclaycard Business' wide range of services makes this possible.

Sandwell Homes first started working with Barclaycard Business in May 2006 when it acquired fourteen Government Procurement Cards (GPC Visa), one for each key area of the company. Before the cards were introduced staff had to complete a payment voucher to request Accounts to raise a cheque and this process caused unnecessary delays.

Nigel Arthur Rent Control and Accounts Manager says:

“The Barclaycard Business GPC Visa scheme is an important element in modernising our procurement. The internal bureaucracy has been reduced saving both time and paper. Staff can now quickly buy whatever they need ranging from books to timber. However, we are still able to keep control of expenditure through transaction data supplied by Barclaycard Business.”

DELIVERING
together
A DIFFERENCE

A key priority for the company is to be viable and demonstrate value for money. The development of purchasing cards is a key action in the companywide procurement strategy designed to ensure modern and efficient purchasing. In addition the company has also implemented an embedded card scheme. The embedded purchasing card is a virtual version of an ordinary purchasing card, but with some additional benefits. The account details are securely embedded in the company's e-procurement software with the card number stored within the user's profile, meaning when an order is placed the information is automatically transmitted.

Nigel Arthur says:

“The embedded card pilot scheme we embarked on with our supplier Sentry Doors was a huge success. We quickly expanded the service to include two more suppliers; Edmundson Electrical and Jays Engineering. They are able to see the benefits of the card and plans are in place for some of our other suppliers to join the scheme in the near future.”

Nigel Arthur explains some of the tangible benefits Sandwell Homes has witnessed since implementing the embedded and GPC Visa Schemes. These include:

- **Increased efficiency:** the embedded cards mean that there is no need to key in card details every time a purchase is made and the GPC Visa means that cheques no longer have to be raised prior to purchase
- **Partnership with suppliers:** the embedded cards have strengthened Sandwell Homes' relationship with preferred suppliers
- **Retain control:** the flexibility of the GPC Visa allows goods to be purchased as soon as they are needed whilst control of expenditure remains with budget managers who continue to approve spend

“These benefits mean that we continue to review our procurement policies to seek ways to incorporate more suppliers and budget managers onto the schemes.”

Sandwell Homes is complementary of the excellent customer service provided by Barclaycard Business. Their dedicated relationship managers ensure that the scheme runs smoothly.

Nigel says:

“The customer service is excellent. During set up our Relationship Manager was very helpful and since then Barclaycard Business has been flexible and efficient in dealing with our requests.”

For more information please visit Barclaycard Business –
www.barclaycardbusiness.co.uk/publicsector