

## CASE STUDY: NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

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The Lyons review will see 20,000 civil servant posts relocated out of London and the South East by 2010, redistributing jobs and bringing about substantial cost savings for the public sector.

Following the review, a number of non-departmental public bodies (NDBPs) have seen full relocations, while some central departments have moved posts out of London.

The National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is one organisation taking an alternative approach - working towards a complementary split between London and Manchester. Like the General Medical Council (GMC) and the British Council, NICE is basing itself in both cities and making cost savings as a result.

NICE - a Special Health Authority of the NHS which provides national guidance on promoting good health and preventing and treating ill health - began considering a relocation in January 2006. Following an options appraisal on five Northern cities, Manchester was chosen as the preferred location, offering cost savings, a good skills base, excellent travel links and a good quality of life for employees.

MIDAS was on hand to offer support and guidance to NICE in finding a suitable property. Offering advice on developments around the city region, MIDAS also set up meetings with property agents, arranged tours of Manchester and accompanied the NICE team on extensive tours of all potential permanent offices in the city region.

"MIDAS was fantastic from the start," says Mark Salmon, Corporate Services Director at NICE. "The team was open, objective and easy to deal with and ultimately wanted the best for us. It's a fantastic welcome for a new organisation in Manchester."

Currently, NICE is temporarily based at Peter House on Oxford Road in the heart of the city centre. Home to the Healthcare Commission and other organisations looking for a temporary base in Manchester, Peter House offers managed office space with room for expansion.

From a starting point of one desk, NICE now occupies a whole floor with 55 desks and a capacity for a further 15 desks.

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“Managed office space is a great initial solution whilst your organisation grows,” says Mark, “and it has been easy to add more desks and re-arrange the space. However, ultimately we needed to find a permanent long term base, which is where MIDAS has proved invaluable.”

With help from MIDAS, NICE has now identified a permanent office at Bruntwood’s City Tower, offering them a large floor plate of newly-refurbished Grade A space near Piccadilly Gardens.

The 20,000 sq ft office on City Tower’s first floor will, by the end of the year, be home to around 70 staff initially, but will have a capacity for up to 150. Designed to NICE’s specification and at a very affordable rent, the office will also provide flexible desk space for visiting employees from London.

The overall aim is to have a half and half balance of staff between the London and Manchester offices within the next five years. NICE’s recruitment drive in Manchester to date has been an undisputed success and the organisation has filled all vacancies quickly.

MIDAS has also been able to provide NICE with contacts across the city, particularly within the University, with which NICE now proposes to work with more closely.

“One of the reasons NICE came to Manchester was to tap into the belt of northern universities,” Mark explains. “We did have some reservations about recruitment because many of our staff need a high degree of technical expertise but we have had a great response in terms of quality of applicants and technical, project management and administrative positions have been filled from a good field of applicants. We now have an excellent new team who have welcomed the opportunity to work for a national organisation.”

Technology has played a part in bridging and coordinating operations between London and Manchester. An investment in video conferencing technology has been particularly important and successful in maintaining close links between the two sites and in reducing the requirement to travel. Having clear operational policies and procedures and a commitment to supporting detailed staff induction and training has also been important. As Mark explains: “The fact that we can draw from pools of talent in both London and Manchester makes the organisation much stronger.”

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Currently NICE is working with London employees who are considering a relocation to Manchester. MIDAS is on hand to provide relocation services, offering reconnaissance days, information on house prices, schools and lifestyle as well as seminars with other public sector agency staff who have made the move to Manchester.

“Relocating can be a big step and MIDAS can provide a welcome platform for staff and pull together all the advice and information about Manchester that they might need.”

Already six employees have relocated to Manchester, including Mark, who has relocated with his family and now lives in the Peak District and enjoys the countryside setting as well as the comparatively short commute to work.

“Manchester offers a great quality of life. It’s a vibrant city, with a very strong skills base and great transport links” Mark says, agreeing that the complementary working between London and Manchester had already delivered substantial cost savings. “The running costs for the Manchester office are a fraction of what they are in London.”

“My advice for other organisations considering a move to Manchester would be to send a small forward team to provide a base from which you can build up your organisation, gather intelligence and fully research the accommodation options. Consider managed office space as an intermediate step while you grow your organisation and enlist MIDAS’ help to provide you with information about local contacts and expertise. The services are free of charge and they can provide invaluable support to your team with many aspects of your relocation plans.”