

# ActionAid reaps time and cost savings with new card solution

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**TONY QUANT,**  
Lloyds Bank Client  
Development Manager

**In a sector where every penny counts, payment efficiencies are vital. Combining physical cards, app-based reconciliation and digital payment capability, has helped ActionAid achieve time and cost savings.**

ActionAid has been operating for 50 years, working with women and girls living in poverty. The organisation has worked to promote human rights, tackle economic inequality, and respond to humanitarian crises around the world.

Ensuring that the organisation's banking and financial processes work as efficiently as possible underpins that work and was the catalyst behind ActionAid's decision to put its banking out to tender. Having encountered various issues with their incumbent bank, Peter Essen, Finance Business Partner at ActionAid, says the time was right to change: "There would often be payment issues; there'd be missing information, for example, which would cause delays. With the work we do, every penny counts and every second counts in order to spend those funds where they're needed."

### **Supporting seamless implementation**

When it came to its preparedness and the level of detail included in its presentation, Peter says that Lloyds Bank stood out

from the pack. But it was the breadth of the bank's product offering, particularly in the Commercial Card space, that he found impressive. "The team were very forward thinking, which was refreshing," he says. "Their card offering and the contactless terminals we'd seen other charities use were a big draw."

Lloyds Bank Client Development Manager, Tony Quant, spent time with ActionAid's Finance team to understand exactly what they needed from their cards solution, before building a bespoke system to deliver to that need.

"I am really proud to have helped implement a card scheme which has had such a major impact at ActionAid," says Tony. "Our solution has helped alleviate the administrative burden and simplify the expenses process for Peter and his team."

The switching process went smoothly, adds Peter: "Everyone knew what they needed to do. We had regular meetings, and we were supported every step of the way."



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**PETER ESSEN,**  
Finance Business Partner,  
ActionAid

### Time-saving technology

One of the most significant benefits for ActionAid has been Lloyds Bank's online capability, across both its banking relationship and its card solutions. By using Lloyds Bank's Commercial Cards Data Management (CCDM), an app-based data and expense management solution, ActionAid's business expenses are coded in real time which means they no longer have to wait to receive physical statements—the data is automatically uploaded into the organisation's own accounting system.

### Security, control and efficiency

ActionAid uses Lloyds Bank's ePay Virtual, a digital payment solution that provides unique virtual card numbers for individual purchases, enabling the organisation to control usage and spending. "ePay Virtual gives us much better management of expenses," says Peter. "Reconciliations are far timelier which increases productivity, and from a governance perspective the added security and control is useful. If reconciliations are behind, we can suspend cards, for example."

The charity's supplier relationships have also seen efficiencies from the card solutions. "The sheer volume of invoices coming from our suppliers was huge,"

says Peter. "Using ePay Virtual takes the financial administration away from people who aren't in the Finance team, which frees them up to do the parts of their job that they enjoy and that add value."

### Cost savings add up

Using both the physical Commercial Card solution and ePay Virtual has provided ActionAid with the flexibility it needs to operate in a fast-moving environment, backed with reliable and easily reconcilable data. "In the case of recent events, where we had to deploy staff around the world, we could quickly increase capability and spend," says Peter.

In a sector where value for money really matters, an additional benefit is the rebate that ActionAid received on its card spend. "It means we're making money by spending money, which is great for us as a business," he adds.

But the biggest benefit by far, he explains, is the remarkable time efficiencies having the Lloyds Bank Commercial Cards solution in place has delivered for ActionAid. "It's streamlined the whole process," says Peter. "We estimate that it's saved us about 24 hours each month, which equates to huge cost benefits to the organisation and time saved by non finance staff."

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