



AT SCALE LTD: CASE STUDY



Successful Tender Support for integrated Sexual Health Service in Teesside

BACKGROUND

NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB) invited bids for Integrated Sexual Health Services across Teesside, serving a population of 650,000 people.

At Scale supported a consortium consisting of University Hospitals Tees and two GP Teesside Federations (Hartlepool & Stockton Health GP and ELM Alliance) in developing a successful bid. The service, previously managed by an external organisation, will commence in late 2025, focusing on integrated collaboration among the three organisations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When the consortium comprising University Hospitals Tees and two GP Teesside Federations, [Hartlepool & Stockton Health](#) and [ELM Alliance](#), decided to tender for the delivery of the Integrated Sexual Health Services (ISHS) for their area, one of their initial steps was to engage At Scale.



University Hospitals Tees



Having previously assisted them in twice securing their previous bid for Urgent Care Services, the consortium viewed At Scale as a trusted partner to help them succeed again.



At Scale's expertise ensured that contributions from various organisations effectively supported the development of a cohesive ISHS bid for the Teesside area, addressing the diverse health and community needs of its **650,000** residents.

At Scale collaborated closely with the consortium's Programme Management team to ensure the bid met the tender requirements, was uniformly high in quality, fully compliant, and submitted punctually. The consortium succeeded in winning the tender, and our partnership continues as we assist in preparing for the launch of the new service arrangements.

CHALLENGES

Tight Timescales:

Bidders were given limited time to respond comprehensively to the set questions, provide over fifty supplementary information requests, and submit their responses following the tender publication.

Commissioning Arrangements:

The procurement was conducted by four local authorities north and south of the Tees, led by one commissioner. The distinct needs of each authority and the separation of certain gender-specific services from the main Integrated Service complicated the operational delivery design.

Service Delivery Circumstances:

The incumbent had delivered the service for many years, making detailed understanding of local delivery circumstances challenging. Local arrangements within consortium teams required extensive review to determine variations and align with the new specification.

Differing Service Models:

Consortium members operated different existing sexual health service models, divided by geographic area. The tender required a unified approach for delivering whole-area services, necessitating significant inter-team discussion within tight deadlines.

Organisational Changes:

Organisational arrangements involving two Foundation Trusts were undergoing changes, requiring those modifications to be reflected in the tender submission.

Operational Pressures:

Operational pressures increased during the winter period, limiting access to essential staff and necessitating efficient use of their time.

Joint Bid Requirement:

Although the bid was submitted by a single named organisation, it was crucial that all voices from the consortium were heard and differences in service delivery approaches were resolved before submission.

WHAT WE DID

At Scale assumed overall responsibility, working alongside the consortium's Project Manager, to ensure timely bid submission and involvement of appropriate personnel in developing responses to core questions. We closely collaborated with the consortium's Project Manager and members, co-locating at their offices in Teesside. Our existing knowledge of the organisations, combined with the consortium team's expertise and understanding of internal governance arrangements, were pivotal in rapidly mobilising the bid. We provided strategic advice and, where necessary, acted as independent brokers to resolve differing opinions and issues.

OUTCOME

Through meticulous management and professionalism of the experts involved across the consortium, a comprehensive and fully compliant bid was submitted on time. Our quality review approach ensured consistency and continuity across the entire bid. An integrated sexual health service delivery model consistent throughout Teesside was identified and agreed upon by the consortium partners. The submission was signed off by respective Boards days before the deadline, allowing time for final comments and securing top-level support from each organisation. The consortium successfully won the tender, and our partnership continues as we prepare to implement the new service model.