

# Case Study

## Women's Counselling and Therapy Service

### Overview

Client: **Women's Counselling and Therapy Service**

Year of completion: **2021**

Healthcare Sector: **Mental Health**

Project Category: **Bid writing & management**

**HealthBid and Women's Counselling and Therapy Service (WCTS) are longstanding partners. We have worked together since late 2019, supporting them in their tendering needs due to a lack of capacity, resource, and tender experience through being a small mental health service provider.**

We initially supported them through a Mental Health Service Provider **Framework** for Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. We then provided support across a variety of Market Sounding Exercises and the eventual formal tender process for the Therapy and Counselling Service for Women for Leeds City Council, for which they were incumbent. We have built a trusted relationship and in-depth understanding of WCTS' uniqueness, passion, and indispensability to the women that they support. WCTS know that they can rely upon HealthBid to deliver high-quality content that effectively captures their ethos and strengths (or **win themes**) while they focus on providing their vital service to the women of Leeds.

### The Opportunity

Brought to Market Engagement stage in March 2021, this project was Therapy and Counselling Services for Women in Leeds. As the incumbent provider, WCTS engaged HealthBid's support for the Market Sounding Exercises, which were short tender-like responses to discuss how they would approach the service. The tender was later released in October 2021, including similar questions to that of the

Market Sounding Exercises, but requiring a significantly higher level of detail and a substantial Social Value element.

It was also a largely unusual procurement with complex compliance elements. Our wider procurement knowledge and experience were crucial in supporting WCTS to deliver a compliant bid.

Knowledge sharing across our **BidEngine** model provided the project team with detailed knowledge and insight of WCTS, the service, and previous projects, including the Market Sounding Exercises for this specific opportunity earlier in the year. The project team successfully leveraged the insight provided by the previous project team, their knowledge of WCTS and the service, and Market Sounding Exercise work already completed to create a solid foundation from which to craft compliant, compelling tender responses. By conducting a **gap analysis**, we were able to identify gaps based on our existing knowledge and dedicated WCTS bid library to deliver a targeted **Pink Team** Zoom call, enabling a tailored, efficient process. Crucially, being armed with previous, detailed knowledge reduced the stress and time pressures on WCTS, enabling them to relax in the knowledge that their bid was in good hands with a well-informed and invested team who had the knowledge and expertise to guide them through the complex, unusual procurement process.

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### The client's barriers

- Lack of time and resource to appropriately write and manage a bid whilst delivering a vital service to the women of Leeds.
- Lack of understanding of the complexities involved within the general tender process, but also this specific opportunity, including the extensive Social Value **Portal** element alongside the tender process.
- Lack of experience of in preparing and project managing a bid.

### Our Approach

HealthBid's knowledge and experience of bid management were essential to WCTS. We understand the complexities of taking on the challenges associated with bids. Bid administration is built into our project timelines, enabling clients with fewer resources to submit excellent, compliant content, on time, every time.

We were able to lead WCTS smoothly through this unusual tender process that would otherwise have been a significant challenge to their time and resource.

We delivered tailored, comprehensive bid management support alongside compelling content creation from the start of this unusually complex procurement exercise to suit the specific needs of WCTS and the tender requirements.

This included **portal** management, clarification question management, support on tender documentation and certificates, writing and editing of the tender responses and submission on their behalf.

Combining our in-depth knowledge of WCTS, their inexperience in bidding generally, and of this specific opportunity from working together on previous projects, we began this project from a position of strength, ensuring an excellent foundation to build on.

Immediately, we provided proactive support on areas that we knew were unknown to WCTS prior to the project, before issues or stress occurred. For example, we walked them through the requirements of the Social Value **Portal**, making suggestions and recommendations based on our previous experience of supporting National Themes, Outcomes, and Measures (TOMs) commitments.

Also understanding that this project would be delivered alongside their day-to-day service delivery, we were able to be flexible, accommodating WCTS' busy schedules while they continued frontline service delivery.

This included measures such as arranging project meetings to meet WCTS needs and supporting communications through flexible working hours where it enabled an efficient, productive working relationship.

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Furthermore, prior to the **Pink Team**, we conducted a comprehensive **gap analysis** exercise using our existing knowledge and dedicated WCTS bid library to highlight key areas that required more detail or had no previous content. This extensive pre-meeting work ensured that we delivered a targeted, condensed **Pink Team** that guided WCTS' thinking, removing stress and minimising the time spent away from delivering their service.

Similarly, we deviated from our usual **Red Team** process, receiving track changes to the written responses prior to the meeting. This enabled us to read feedback ahead of time in a simple way, compile and agree a list of changes that could be applied across the bid without further discussion, and identify any changes that need to be discussed in more depth.

Again, this enabled us to target the **Red Team** meeting so that it was focused on key areas of discussion, reducing the meeting time to half of the time we expected, and giving WCTS time back so that they could return to their day-to-day service delivery much more quickly. Our inherent flexibility as a team enables these kinds of adjustments that deliver such big impacts to our clients to making bidding as easy and seamless as possible.

### Our Successes

The main success of this project was to support a well-deserving client that genuinely makes a difference to their service users lives to submit a compliant, compelling tender response, which they would not have been able to do without considerable stress and difficulties if not for our support.

We successfully reduced the time they needed to spend on the tender project, enabling them to focus their attention, rightfully, on the therapy and counselling services that they deliver for the women of Leeds. Their inexperience of tendering would also have meant an extensive amount of stress, which we minimised by managing the whole tender process for them in an efficient and streamlined way.

This included tender response writing, editing, **portal** and clarification question management, and the often-intimidating **portal** upload.

### Glossary

**BidEngine:** HealthBid's bespoke team-of-teams approach, with built-in resilience and bid expertise distributed evenly across our teams to give us the dynamic agility to respond to demand.

**Win themes:** Differentiators that set bidders apart, but that are relevant to the opportunity and/or Commissioner and offer tangible and obvious benefits.

**Framework:** A framework is a means of procurement whereby suppliers or providers can become pre-approved for the supply of certain materials or services, enabling purchasers to buy direct or begin another tender procedure without having to confirm preliminary elements usually included in Selection Questionnaires, such as exclusion grounds or financial standing.

**General Medical Services:** The range of healthcare that is provided by General Practitioners (GPs) in the Primary Care setting.

**Pink Team:** The HealthBid team's project kick-off meeting, where we ask targeted questions to better understand your organisation and service model, and ensure mutual understanding of the tender documentation, opportunity, and process.

**Portal:** The platform on which tenders can be submitted.

**Red Team:** The HealthBid team's review meeting, where you provide your prepared feedback on our first version of the tender responses, providing extra content where required.

**Gap Analysis:** A comparison of previous/available content against a new specification or set of requirements or questions to establish whether there is any missing content to be obtained.

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