

A woman with dark hair, wearing blue scrubs, is looking down at a handheld device. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor setting.

Shared vision
Better together



Shared Business Services

» CASE STUDY

From Administration to Strategy: How SmartTogether Increased Procurement Capacity Through Dotted Line

SmartTogether is an NHS procurement shared service hosted by Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, providing procurement and supply chain services to Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, and Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust.

To support procurement transformation across the shared service, SmartTogether contracted EcoVate Group via a Direct Award under the NHS Shared Business Services Consultancy and Advisory Services for Health Framework Agreement to deploy Dotted Line, EcoVate's AI-driven Procurement Optimisation Engine™.



Dotted Line has genuinely increased the strategic capacity of my team and has become a meaningful part of our procurement transformation."

Pia Larsen

Chief Procurement Officer
Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

www.sbs.nhs.uk

» THE CHALLENGE

NHS organisations are being challenged to improve productivity, deliver greater value from limited resources and maintain robust governance, procurement teams are under increasing pressure to do more with less.

Across the SmartTogether shared service, procurement professionals were spending significant time on manual, repetitive administration, reducing capacity for strategic commercial activity across the four partner trusts. Much of this effort centred on three key document types:

- Tender packs
- Evaluation and moderation frameworks
- Award communications

Strict governance requirements, audit trail obligations and duplicated documentation processes further increased the administrative burden. Recognising the need to release capacity for higher value work across the shared service, SmartTogether appointed EcoVate Group via Consultancy and Advisory Services for Health, providing a compliant and efficient route to market with pre-agreed terms and conditions, so no need to redraft terms for each call-off.

In a healthcare system facing significant financial and operational pressures, addressing this challenge was critical to improving productivity and enabling procurement teams to focus on higher-value activities.





» THE SOLUTION

The objective was simple: automate repetitive tasks so procurement professionals could focus on strategic value creation.

SmartTogether partnered with Dotted Line, EcoVate's AI-driven Procurement Optimisation Engine™, which manages procurement end-to-end, from early planning through to contract award, in a single structured workflow. This proved a quick and reliable route for SmartTogether to contract EcoVate's support on behalf of the shared procurement service.

This ongoing engagement commenced in July 2025.

By automating the most repeatable elements of the procurement lifecycle, SmartTogether could reduce preparation time while improving:

- Consistency
- Audit trail
- Compliance
- Quality

Implementation was embedded directly into live procurements, onboarding was practical, and all documentation remained fully editable and reviewable. This ensured teams retained control and confidence throughout.

Using the NHS SBS Framework Agreement enabled SmartTogether to engage EcoVate quickly and confidently, accelerating deployment and supporting procurement transformation without lengthy procurement processes.



Rather than being seen as a compliance exercise, procurement became a strategic lever.

Between July 2025 and April 2026, 284 procurement documents were generated through the platform. 233 working days of procurement capacity was released – representing over 1,800 hours of procurement capacity redirected into strategic sourcing decisions, supplier engagement, evaluation quality and stronger commercial outcomes.

The partnership with Dotted Line, EcoVate's Procurement Optimisation Engine™ was established and onboarded on time, adding significant value across the SmartTogether Procurement Service.

As an ongoing procurement support project, all procurement documentation and deliverables have been provided to SmartTogether within agreed timescales throughout the engagement.

The project demonstrates how AI-enabled procurement can increase productivity while maintaining governance and compliance. The result is a procurement function better equipped to support organisational priorities, deliver value and improve outcomes for patients.

- 284 procurement documents generated
- 233 working days of capacity released
- 36 days saved in April, the strongest month on record



Adopting Dotted Line has been one of the most impactful productivity changes we have made in recent years. Critically, none of this has come at the cost of governance.”

Pia Larsen

Chief Procurement Officer
Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

To find out more about EcoVate Group and Dotted Line, visit, ecovategroup.com. To learn about NHS SBS's framework agreement, contact sbs.hello@nhs.net