

Why care tenders fail

A practical guide for care and support providers

Common mistakes. Clear actions for your next bid.

For each problem, know what to check,
who will do it and when it must be ready.

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Required documents are missing

What goes wrong, and what you can do

A missing attachment can cost marks or cause rejection, depending on the rules.

What you can do

- 1** Request the tender upload list when the tender is registered, if someone is supporting your bid.
- 2** If you are doing it yourself, create the list from the pack, questions and portal upload fields.
- 3** Give each file an owner and due date. Check the final version is in the correct upload field.

Final check: open every uploaded file and confirm it is the right document.

Your tender upload list

An example to adapt to the documents your tender actually asks for

Document and question	Owner / due	Final check
Training matrix / Q4	Manager / [date]	Current, approved, uploaded
Business continuity plan / Q6	Director / [date]	Correct version, uploaded
Contract example / Q2	Bid lead / [date]	All required fields complete
Pricing schedule / Q8	Finance / [date]	Checked, approved, uploaded
Declaration / portal	Director / [date]	Signed where required

Also record: exact filename, upload field and who checked it.

You do not meet the entry requirements

What goes wrong, and what you can do

Strong answers cannot fix a mandatory requirement your organisation does not meet.

What you can do

- 1** Read the pass/fail requirements before you start writing. Check every lot you want to bid for.
- 2** Check registration, service experience and any minimum contract hours against your records.
- 3** If a rule is unclear, ask through the portal before the clarification deadline.

Final check: record the evidence behind every “yes” in your declaration.

The financial checks are left too late

What goes wrong, and what you can do

The tender may assess financial standing separately from your quality answers.

What you can do

- 1 Send the financial assessment rules to your accountant or finance lead at the start.
- 2 Check the exact accounts, ratios and other information the buyer asks for.
- 3 If you need another route, check whether the pack permits a guarantor or other evidence.

Final check: confirm the financial requirements before investing in the full bid.

The answer misses part of the question

What goes wrong, and what you can do

A good description of your service may still leave a scoring point unanswered.

What you can do

- 1 Copy each part of the question into a planning checklist, alongside the scoring criteria.
- 2 Use clear headings that reflect the question. Explain how your service will meet each part.
- 3 Ask a reviewer to match every requirement to a specific paragraph or permitted attachment.

Final check: the evaluator should not need to guess what you mean.

The answer makes claims without evidence

What goes wrong, and what you can do

“We provide high-quality care” does not show how you deliver it.

What you can do

- 1 Explain what staff actually do, who checks it and how often they check.
- 2 Add a real example or result that supports the claim. Use figures you can verify.
- 3 Name the policy, toolkit or standard the question asks for. State your actual status.

Final check: your answer, records and attachments must tell the same story.

The answer exceeds the word limit

What goes wrong, and what you can do

The buyer may stop reading at the limit or apply the rule stated in the pack.

What you can do

- 1 Check the limit and counting rules for each response, including headings and tables.
- 2 Count the final text you will submit. Recheck after you paste it into the portal.
- 3 Ask someone other than the writer to check. Cut repetition before cutting evidence.

Final check: every answer fits its own limit using the tender's counting rules.

Copied or AI-written text contains errors

What goes wrong, and what you can do

The wrong provider name, contract detail or unsupported claim can weaken your bid.

What you can do

- 1** Check names, registration numbers, locations and service details against your records.
- 2** Check every promise against the service you can deliver and the evidence you hold.
- 3** Have a person review the final submission. Recheck word counts and attachment references.

Final check: your organisation can stand behind every sentence.

Contract examples are incomplete

What goes wrong, and what you can do

The evaluator may not accept information scattered across different answers.

What you can do

- 1 Keep a live contract register with the customer, service, dates, value and contact details.
- 2 Choose examples that meet this tender's rules on service type, size and contracting route.
- 3 Complete every requested field in the required template. Check each example stands alone.

Final check: count only the experience and hours that the tender allows.

Your experience does not yet fit the tender

What goes wrong, and what you can do

The opportunity may require a delivery record you have not built yet.

What you can do

- 1** Identify the exact gap. It may be the contracting route, service type or delivery volume.
- 2** Look for suitable entry routes, such as an open purchasing system or secondary provider role.
- 3** Check each opportunity's rules and record qualifying delivery as you build experience.

Final check: select opportunities you can evidence truthfully today.

The mobilisation plan is too vague

What goes wrong, and what you can do

Dates alone do not show that your service will be ready for a safe start.

What you can do

- 1** Show preparation from award to service start, then how each person's support will begin.
- 2** Give each task an owner, deputy and deadline. Include the chart if the tender asks for one.
- 3** Show dependencies and readiness checks. Explain what you will do if a task slips.

Final check: staffing, information and systems will be ready when care starts.

You miss a change to the tender

What goes wrong, and what you can do

A revised document or clarification may change what you need to submit.

What you can do

- 1** Nominate someone to monitor portal messages and published clarifications throughout the bid.
- 2** Update the answer plan and upload list whenever the buyer changes the requirements.
- 3** Check the buyer, lot and contract arrangements in the live documents, especially during changes.

Final check: everyone works from the latest pack and the same deadline.

Files are uploaded, but the bid is not submitted

What goes wrong, and what you can do

Uploading or saving a draft may not complete the portal's submission process.

What you can do

- 1** Set an internal deadline before the buyer's deadline so you have time to solve problems.
- 2** Check every response, upload and declaration, then complete the portal's submission steps.
- 3** Confirm the status says submitted and save the receipt or confirmation. Recheck after edits.

Final check: keep evidence of successful submission before the deadline.

Your final check before submission

One person owns the submission. A second person checks it.

- 1 We meet the entry requirements and have checked the financial rules.
- 2 Every part of every question has an answer and supporting evidence.
- 3 Every required file is current, complete and in the right upload field.
- 4 Word limits, organisation details and declarations are correct.
- 5 The mobilisation plan explains how the service will start safely.
- 6 The portal confirms submission and we have saved the confirmation.

Contact HSCT.AI

Support with your next care tender

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