

## **Building Bridges – Co-Operation in Action in Durham & Teesside**

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The demand for health care information is increasing rapidly. The information explosion, caused in part by the development of the Internet and other electronic services, has whet the appetites of an already information-hungry population. In addition, developments in health care, particularly around clinical governance in the UK and evidence-based practice, have increased the need for access to high quality information. It is no longer possible for a single library and information service to meet all the needs of its users. Co-operation is essential to meet these increasing demands and to enable information services to develop quickly, in the right direction and avoiding the reinvention of the wheel.

The Durham & Teesside Health Libraries Alliance is an example of co-operation in the UK health information sector. The "Alliance" is a partnership of NHS and higher education organisations whose vision is "to work in partnership to provide seamless, high quality library and information services to all health and social care staff and NHS-supported students on placement in the Durham and Teesside area". Co-operation is fostered between organisations and library services within the Alliance, and work relationships are being developed with other bodies, particularly social services, the private sector and voluntary services.

The main areas of co-operation in Durham and Teesside will be described, identifying benefits and challenges of effective joint working.