

# **Legal Services Commission Preferred Supplier Pilot Scheme (Solicitors) Information for Applicants**

## **1. The Scheme**

The Legal Services Commission invites expressions of interest from existing contracted solicitor suppliers who wish to participate in a pilot scheme for preferred suppliers.

The Preferred Supplier Pilot ("Pilot") will run from June 2004 with a full evaluation conducted at the 6-month stage in the Pilot, at which point a decision will be reached on feasibility for operational rollout. It will explore how we can identify; work with and reward our preferred suppliers more efficiently and effectively, and investigate how we can encourage all suppliers to operate at this level.

The Pilot will test the new ways of working with 25 suppliers. We are looking for 5 suppliers in each of the Birmingham, Brighton, London, Manchester, and Nottingham Legal Services Commission Regional Office areas. When choosing suppliers for the Pilot, we will try to select a mix of suppliers so we can assess how the Pilot works with suppliers of differing size, spread of work and location. Beyond this, selection will be based on objective assessment of performance against published criteria.

Following the feasibility evaluation in December 2004, we envisage operational rollout of 'preferred' status for solicitors from April 2005.

We hope to run a similar pilot scheme for Not For Profit suppliers later during 2004.

## **2. What the Preferred Supplier Pilot will offer**

Suppliers who are selected for the Pilot will assist us in testing a range of innovative business incentives and processes, including:

- Specialist support available from a Relationship Manager, providing one to one consultancy and assistance to support your business development
- Business incentives
- Simplified systems and processes
- Enhanced information sharing with your Regional office

Further details of the Pilot incentives are set out at ['Preferred Supplier Pilot Rewards and Incentives'](#)

### **3. What we will expect from Preferred Suppliers during the Pilot**


In return, we will expect Pilot suppliers to work in close partnership with the Legal Services Commission during the Pilot, and in particular;

- Fully participate in [quantitative and qualitative research](#), including a 180° evaluation of your Relationship Manager, and to participate openly in at least 3 formal evaluations during the Pilot as well as submitting files on the usual notice for the purpose of pilot evaluation (for research only)
- Work with your Regional Office to help meet the strategic needs of their business plan (including consideration of business expansion and outreach packages).
- Aspire to developing full use of LSC online and to conducting e-business with the LSC
- Maximise use of New Matter Starts

### **4. Selection for the Pilot**

We wish to test the new incentives and processes during the pilot with suppliers who have demonstrated that they are committed to legal aid work, are financially sound, and who deliver good quality of advice to their clients. We invite any suppliers who think that they meet the initial Pilot eligibility criteria to contact us if they wish to be considered for the Scheme. In order to verify if you meet the eligibility criteria, please contact the appropriate Relationship Manager for your Pilot region. Contact details are set out under [FAQ's](#) section.

#### **How to apply**

Initially, you must discuss with the Relationship Manager for your region whether you meet the initial pilot eligibility criteria set out in the [Rules](#). You should then submit your [Expression of Interest Form](#)  to us at the address below including additional documentary evidence and self-declarations required.

All applications should be marked "Preferred Supplier Pilot":

Edward Shuttleworth  
Preferred Supplier Pilot  
Supplier Development Group  
Legal Services Commission  
85 Gray's Inn Road  
London  
WC1X 8TX

These need to be received by the above contact no later than **4pm on Tuesday, 13th April 2004.**

### [The selection process](#)

The selection process is designed to identify those suppliers who will work in partnership with us on the Pilot and to select a group who are representative of the types of supplier and range of work undertaken so we can test the new incentives and processes in different environments. The selection process has 4 stages (see further detail set out in [Rules](#)):

- [Stage 1: Application of initial pilot eligibility criteria](#)
- Stage 2: Targeted financial assessment of suppliers' accounts
- Stage 3: Peer review of suppliers who meet stage 1 criteria
- Stage 4: Selection of final 25 Pilot suppliers on basis of size, spread of work, and location.

**Suppliers should note that due to time constraints we will not be able to extend deadlines for submitting information or files under any stage of the selection process. If suppliers wish to plan for absences of key staff during the selection process, they may discuss the precise sort of information required at each stage with the Relationship Manager.**

We acknowledge that because the Pilot will only run in 5 Regions, and because we must limit the number of Pilot suppliers to 25, we will not be able to offer participation in the Pilot to many of the valued suppliers whom we would expect to attain preferred supplier status when the full Preferred Supplier Scheme is introduced operationally from April 2005.

### **More than one office**

If you have more than one office you may apply to have a number of offices included in the Pilot or just one. However, you must nominate a 'lead' office for us to work with in the Pilot, and all the offices nominated must be within one Pilot region. In addition to this, we will not be able to accept applications

relating to offices, which are handled by other regions not included in the Pilot. Please go to the [FAQs](#) for further guidance on this.

### **Holders of criminal and civil contracts**

Under the Pilot we wish to test how the new processes work in relation to the 'complete' relationship between a supplier's office and the Commission, therefore an application for the Pilot in respect of an office must cover both civil and criminal contracts (if appropriate) and all categories of civil work undertaken at that office.

### **Rights and obligations under the Pilot Scheme**

Pilot suppliers will be required to sign an amendment to the General Civil and General Criminal contracts covering their rights and obligations under the Pilot. Pilot suppliers will be allowed to leave the Pilot on giving 1 months' notice and we will be able to ask any or all of the Pilot suppliers to leave the Pilot on giving 1 months notice.