

legal services

COMMISSION

The Legal Services Commission (LSC) focuses on helping people get quality legal services that tackle real needs. It runs two schemes, the Community Legal Service (CLS) and the Criminal Defence Service (CDS).

In December 2003 the LSC announced its plan to develop a new way of working with its best suppliers. We would now like to invite applications from firms of solicitors who would like to be included in a pilot, to help us to develop this approach.

The approach is an innovative step for the LSC and it will provide us with a unique opportunity to engage with those providers of legal services who can demonstrate a high level of performance across areas of cost, contract and quality of advice. The pilot will explore different relationships and packages with individual firms that focus on improved communication, working in strategic partnership and realising tangible benefits for them, for us, and most importantly, for legally aided clients.

The pilot will initially be limited to 25 suppliers with contracts managed by the following five LSC Regional Office areas - Birmingham, Brighton, London, Manchester and Nottingham. We are inviting applications from solicitors' firms who deliver advice in at least one of the following categories – Crime, Family and Immigration. Ultimately, we are working towards a national rollout (from April 2005) which will see preferred status available to all who meet specified performance criteria, irrespective of location or areas of law covered. It will not only be applicable to an elite few, but something that we will want to encourage all our suppliers to aspire to, and work towards.

The pilot will run from June 2004 with a full evaluation conducted after six-months.

Firms of solicitors will be selected for the pilot on the basis of:

- Financial soundness
- Costs profile
- Quality of advice
- Commitment to publicly funded work

Firms in the pilot will benefit from innovative business incentives and processes including:

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

In return, we will ask participants to help us evaluate the success of the pilot and work with us to offer creative solutions to the provision of legal services.

Full details of the pilot scheme including **information on how to apply, benefits of participating, eligibility criteria and the selection process are available at www.legalservices.gov.uk**. To discuss any aspect of the pilot further, please contact the appropriate Relationship Manager for your region:

Emma Archer*	Birmingham	0121 665 4735
Margot Coates	Brighton	01273 878 834
Anne Campbell	London	0207 759 1817
Sarah Kavanagh	Manchester	0161 244 5078
Natalie Pedley	Nottingham	0115 908 4310

Expressions of interest for inclusion in the pilot must be received no later than 4pm on Tuesday 13th April 2004.

* Between 15/03/04 – 06/04/04, please contact Alistair Adan on 07710 580 679