

Procurement Plan for Bedfordshire

Procurement Summary

1. Family Services

We intend to invite bids for **2,590** new matter starts (NMS) for the provision of face-to-face Family advice within the procurement area (PA) of Bedfordshire.

Clients in this area currently have access to the full range of Family advice across this PA and we anticipate that this will continue to be the case. We wish to maintain client access to services and will invite providers to bid under **Service Specification A**.

- Providers will be required to deliver the full range of private family work **and** public law children work.
- Providers will need to have a permanent presence in the PA and in the access point(s) tendered for.
- Providers will be required to tender for and undertake a minimum of **75** Legal Help cases per year and **5** public law certificated cases per year.

Providers who wish to undertake only work for children will be able to tender for a specialist children contract with no requirement to undertake the full range of family services.

2. Family & Housing (Combined Service)

We will set aside a proportion of the available NMS in Housing for providers wishing to deliver a combined Housing & Family service.

There has previously been limited demand for this service combination within the PA and we therefore intend to invite bids for a total of **100** Housing NMS for providers wishing to deliver a combined Housing and Family service.

Providers wishing to provide Housing as part of this service combination will be required to tender for and undertake a minimum of **50** NMS in Housing per year.

3. Social Welfare Law Services

We intend to invite bids for **2,500** NMS across the Social Welfare Law (SWL) categories of Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits advice and **100** NMS in Community Care and **140** NMS in Employment.

We have historically experienced difficulty in securing Housing services in this PA, and in particular in Central Bedfordshire. We will therefore invite these bids under **Service Specification B**.

Housing, Welfare Benefits and Debt will be tendered together as a bundle of services and providers will be required to both tender for and provide services in all three categories.

- Providers may bid to deliver Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits either as a single legal entity or as part of a consortium.
- Providers delivering Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits will need to have a permanent presence in the PA and a presence in the access point(s) tendered for as specified.
- Providers delivering Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits will be required to undertake a minimum of **50** NMS in each category per schedule year.
- Providers delivering Community Care will be required to undertake a minimum of **20** NMS per schedule year.
- Providers delivering Employment will be required to undertake a minimum of **30** NMS per schedule year.
- Community Care and Employment providers will be required to have a part-time presence in the PA.
- As SWL tenders are invited under **Service Specification B**, the requirement to employ an authorised litigator in Housing and/ or Community Care will not be an essential criterion. However, where a competitive process is necessary to decide between bids, as part of the selection process we will prefer providers who can provide the best access to an authorised litigator. This might mean giving preference to those with an employed authorised litigator. We will also consider alternative arrangements but providers are advised that this may score lower in the ranking.

For Debt, Housing and Welfare Benefits, we will divide the available NMS for the PA between the three categories as follows:

PA	Debt	Housing	Welfare Benefits
Bedfordshire	1,210	440	850

Access Points	NMS allocated for Family	NMS allocated for Debt	NMS allocated for Housing	NMS allocated for Welfare Benefits	Presence required
Bedford and Central Bedfordshire (South & Mid Bedfordshire)	1840	380	150	270	Permanent
Luton	750	830	290	580	Permanent

4. Access

Bedfordshire is an area of great contrasts from the very urban areas of Luton to the predominantly rural areas of Central Bedford with very large distances between some of the towns and poor transport links. We wish to ensure access to services across the entire PA and will make NMS available for particular access points within the PA.

5. Budget

Current spend in this area is lower than that which we would expect to spend in Family Legal Help according to the Indicative Spend Budget Model. Therefore, the total number of NMS available in this area will be increased from that which is currently being delivered to enable an increase in access to services which moves closer to that suggested by the Model.

Current spend in this area is lower than that which we would expect to spend in SWL Legal Help according to the Indicative Spend Budget Model. Therefore, the total number of NMS available in this area will be increased from that which is currently being delivered to enable an increase in access to services which moves closer to that suggested by the Model.

6. Current Supply: September 08 – August 09

Category	No. of Providers	NMS opened	Certificates issued
Family (public)	19	2,346	684
Family (private)	24		828
Debt	5	1,209	3
Housing	5	294	51
Welfare Benefits	4	848	0
Employment	5	144	0
Community Care	0	5	0

	Total Providers	Current SWL Services						Current Family Services	
		Providers delivering 5 core SWL cats	Providers delivering 4 core SWL cats	Providers delivering 3 core SWL cats	Providers delivering 2 core SWL cats	Providers delivering 1 core SWL cat	Providers delivering Housing & Family	Providers delivering 5+Public law certs	Providers delivering family private only
Solicitor	25	0	0	2	1	2	1	11	5
NFP	4	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0