

Procurement Plan for Berkshire

Procurement Summary

1. Family Services

We intend to invite bids for approximately **2,550** New Matter Starts (NMS) for the provision of face-to-face Family Advice within the procurement area (PA) of Berkshire.

There are six large towns in Berkshire where the population is concentrated. The areas of highest deprivation are in the Local Authority areas of Reading and Slough although there are significant levels of deprivation in the other four areas. Geographically, these towns are spread fairly evenly across Berkshire, which means that the surrounding population is able to reach these towns for family services. All of these towns require family services in both private and public law. However, the population sizes and the percentage of eligible clients in each of these towns is such that it would be unlikely that all providers would be able to conduct both private and public law in large volumes. We will therefore invite providers to bid under **Service Specification B**, which will allow providers to tender for either the full range of private Family work and / or public law children work.

- Providers will need to have a permanent presence in the PA and, where specified, in the access point(s) where they tender to provide services.
- Where providers wish to undertake private family work they must tender for and undertake a minimum of **50** Legal Help cases per year.
- Those wishing to undertake only public law children cases must commit to undertake at least **5** certificated cases per year.

2. Family & Housing (combined service)

We will also be inviting bids for housing and family services to be delivered together, with a minimum bid size of **50** Legal Help matters in Housing.

We will set aside a small proportion of the available NMS in housing for providers wishing to deliver a combined housing and family service. There has previously been little demand for this service combination within the procurement area and we therefore intend to set the housing NMS available for delivery of this combined service at **100**.

3. Social Welfare Law

We intend to invite tenders for **3,400** New Matter Starts (NMS) across the core Social Welfare Law (SWL) categories of Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits. We also intend to invite tenders for **100** NMS in Community Care and **130** in Employment.

The eligible population is highest in Slough and Reading but with significant levels in the other towns, it is unlikely that all providers will be able to conduct large volumes of work. We recognise that it may also take time for providers to develop SWL services in the area.

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

- Providers may bid to deliver these services either as a single legal entity or as part of a consortium.
- Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits providers will be required to have a permanent presence in the PA and, where specified, in the access point(s) where they tender to provide services.
- Providers delivering Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits will be required to undertake a minimum of **50 NMS** in each category per schedule year.
- Providers will be required to undertake a minimum of **20 NMS** in Community Care per schedule year.
- Providers will be required to undertake a minimum of **30 NMS** in Employment 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, in the Service Specification B areas where a competitive process is necessary to decide between tenders, 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
Berkshire	1,120	1,100	1,180

4. Access

Family

There are potential access issues in Berkshire as the area is geographically large, with six towns of similar sizes spread fairly evenly across the procurement area. Currently, clients are able to access family services in all of these towns, which is a position we would like to retain. We will therefore make NMS available for two access

points within the Procurement Area and will require providers to deliver services in at least one of these areas through a permanent office.

Social Welfare Law

Because the PA is geographically large, with towns of similar sizes spread evenly across the procurement area, we will make NMS available for particular access points within the PA and will require providers to deliver services in at least one of these areas through a permanent office.

Currently, clients access SWL services in Slough and Reading. However as more than 50% of the eligible population live outside of Slough and Reading there is a significant number of clients who would need to pay for transportation to access SWL services. There is a need for additional provision of services in other areas within the procurement area.

Within each access point, preference will be given to providers bidding for SWL contracts with a presence (permanent or part-time) in either Reading or Slough **and** one of the other areas specified in that access point.

Access Point	NMS allocated for Family	NMS Allocated for Debt	NMS allocated for Housing	NMS allocated for Welfare Benefits
Reading, West Berkshire, Wokingham	1,100	560	550	590
Slough, Bracknell and Windsor and Maidenhead	1,450	560	550	590

5. Budget

Family

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.

SWL

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)	24	2,316	857
Family (private)	29		858
Debt	4	982	3
Housing	3	1,209	65
WB	3	1,174	0
Employment	0	2	0
Community Care	0	10	1

	Total providers	Current SWL Services: number of providers delivering combinations of categories					Current Family Services: number of providers delivering public/private		
		5 core SWL cats	4 core SWL cats	3 core SWL cats	2 core SWL cats	1 core SWL cat	Housing & Family	5+Public law certs	Family private only
Solicitor	29	0	0	0	1	0	0	16	5
NFP	3	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0