

# Consortium Arrangements for Social Welfare Law contracts in 2010

Update - February 2010

## Introduction

1. We previously published a paper outlining our arrangements for allowing providers to deliver the categories of debt, housing and welfare benefits as joined up services through a form of consortium.
2. We recognise that this has raised a number of questions about how the arrangements for tendering these services will work in practice and have produced this paper as supplementary information for providers wishing to tender as part of a consortia arrangement.
3. This paper is for information only, the Information For Applicants (IFA) will contain all the rules, instructions and terms and conditions of the tender process.

## PQQ and Essential Criteria

4. Each Applicant Organisation wishing to bid as part of a consortium will be required to individually complete;
  - a. a Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ)
  - b. the Essential Criteria within the Invitation to Tender (ITT)
  - c. the Selection Criteria (see below for further information on this stage).
5. Only Applicant Organisations who successfully passes the PQQ and Essential Criteria will be considered for a contract award or if necessary continue on to the Selection Criteria stage.
6. Where an Applicant Organisation is a member of a consortium and it fails at the PQQ or Essential Criteria stages, it will impact on other consortium members if that Applicant Organisation's failure means that the consortium, based on the tenders its members have submitted, is no longer able to deliver debt, housing and welfare benefits. In this instance, the tenders of all fellow consortium members in the relevant ITT will fail.
7. However, there may be scenarios where other bids of the other Applicant Organisations within the ITT may continue to stand, for example:

**Provider A** tenders to deliver debt and welfare benefits from Office 1 in a consortium with **Provider B** who is delivering housing. In response to the same ITT **Provider A** also tenders to deliver debt, welfare benefits and housing as a single entity from Office 2.

If **Provider B** fails the Essential Criteria and **Provider A** passes the Essential Criteria, the bid of Provider A from Office 1 will also fail because it is no longer able to meet the Essential Criterion of delivering debt, housing and welfare benefits either as a single entity or as part of a consortium. However, its bid from Office 2 will pass as **Provider A** in this instance is able to meet all the Essential Criteria.

8. Applicant Organisations will be required to submit information on the Tender Form (which will form part of the tender) about the office from which they are intending to deliver a presence in a Procurement Area or an Access Point. This will also include some information about who the other consortium members are and the services that they are tendering to deliver.

### **Selection Criteria**

9. After completing questions regarding Tender Information, Applicant Organisations will be required to complete the Selection Criteria. Selection Criteria will be answered in relation to each of the Applicant's Offices.
10. Selection Criteria will only be applied when the total volume of Matter Starts tendered for in a Procurement Area or Access Point by those passing the Essential Criteria is greater than the Matter Starts available in an Access Point.
11. The Selection Criteria will be considered either at Procurement Area or Access Point level according to the ITT and Applicant Organisations will need to respond as to how each individual Office meets the criteria in each category that it is tendering for. Where an Applicant Organisation's intends to deliver services at one of its Office as part of a consortium, it will only need to respond to the questions relating to the category(ies) of law it is tendering to deliver as part of the consortium.
12. Selection Criteria will be considered by category of law and the points for each of the three categories will then be added together to form the overall score.
13. Where a consortium is tendering, it will be given a composite score. This means that where there are three members of a consortium each tendering for an individual category, their scores from the Selection Criteria for debt, housing and welfare benefits will be added together to give an overall score for the consortium.
14. Where there is more than one member of a consortium tendering for a category of law (i.e. two members are tendering to deliver debt advice through the same consortium) the scores from the Selection Criteria of each member will be added together and divided by the number of members bidding to produce a total score for that category. This averaged score for each category will then be added together to the scores for the other categories to give the consortium an overall score.
15. Once we have calculated an overall score for each Office (bidding as a single entity) and consortiums within a Procurement Area/Access Point, these scores will be ranked – the higher the overall score the higher the ranking.
16. Following this ranking we will first award Matter Starts to the Applicant Organisation or consortium ranked the highest within the Procurement Area/Access Point and continue down the rankings until all available

Matter Starts at the Procurement Area/Access Point level have been allocated.

17. Where a consortium is ranked highest we will seek to allocate the number of Matters Starts bid for by each consortium member. Where a number of Offices/consortia are tied, we will pro rata available Matter Starts.