

Procurement Plan for Cumbria

Procurement Summary

1. Family Services

We intend to invite tenders for **2,630** new matter starts (NMS) for the provision of face to face Family Advice within the procurement area (PA) of Cumbria.

The area currently has a good level of service in the family category and we anticipate that this will continue to be the case. However, there are a number of access points within the area where the rural nature of the population means that demand for across the full range of public and private family work will be low. This is especially the case in the southern parts of the PA. We will therefore invite providers to tender under **Service Specification B**.

In the Carlisle/Eden access point we are keen to maintain access to services in both Carlisle and Penrith.

- Providers will be able to tender for 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 a permanent presence in the Access Point(s) tendered for as specified.
- 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 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**.

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

3. Social Welfare Law Services

We intend to invite bids for **3,250** new matter starts (NMS) across the core Social Welfare Law (SWL) categories of Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits advice, with an additional **100** in Community Care and **290** in Employment. We will invite tenders under **Service Specification B**.

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

In the Carlisle/Eden access point we are keen to maintain access to services in both Carlisle and Penrith.

- Providers may tender to deliver Debt, Housing and Welfare Benefits 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 where they tender to provide services.
- Providers delivering Debt, Housing and Welfare Benefits will be required to undertake a minimum of **100** 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, 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 |
|---------|------|---------|------------------|
| Cumbria | 900 | 1,330 | 1,020 |

4. Access

There are some potential access issues within Cumbria as the procurement area is geographically large, split between 6 districts and with poor transport links in some parts of the area.

We will therefore make NMS available by specified access points within the PA and use criteria that require providers to deliver services in at least one of these access points through a permanent presence.

Providers must have a permanent presence in the access point if they wish to tender for the allocated NMS.

| Access Point | NMS allocated for Family | NMS allocated for Debt | NMS allocated for Housing | NMS allocated for Welfare Benefits |
|-------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Allerdale | 470 | 180 | 260 | 200 |
| Barrow in Furness | 470 | 190 | 280 | 210 |
| Carlisle & Eden | 860 | 250 | 370 | 290 |
| Copeland | 450 | 140 | 210 | 160 |
| South Lakeland | 380 | 140 | 210 | 160 |

5. Budget

Current spend in this area is higher than that which we would expect to spend in Family Legal Help according to the Indicative Spend Budget Model. It is therefore unlikely that we would wish to actively increase the provision of Family services and matter starts will be carefully managed with the aim of remaining within the level of current spend.

Current spend in this area is also higher than that which we would expect to spend in SWL services according to the Indicative Spend Budget Model. It is therefore unlikely that we would wish to actively increase the provision of SWL services and matter starts will be carefully managed with the aim of remaining within the level of current spend.

6. Current Supply: September 08 – August 09

| Category | No. of Providers (offices) | NMS opened | Certificates issued |
|------------------|----------------------------|------------|---------------------|
| Family (public) | 26 | 2,923 | 604 |
| Family (private) | 31 | | 657 |
| Debt | 5 | 1,003 | 3 |
| Housing | 6 | 1,586 | 54 |
| Welfare Benefits | 5 | 1,133 | 0 |
| Employment | 3 | 322 | 0 |
| Community Care | 0 | 3 | 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 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 19 | 5 |
| NFP | 5 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |