

Procurement Plan for Darlington

Procurement Summary

1. Family Services

We intend to invite bids for approximately **850** New Matter Starts (NMS) for the provision of face-to-face Family advice within the procurement area (PA) of Darlington.

The area currently has relatively good access to integrated family services and we anticipate that this will continue. We will therefore invite providers to bid under **Service Specification A**.

- Providers will be required to tender for both the full range of private family work and public law children work.
- Providers will need to have a permanent presence in the PA.
- Providers will be required to tender for and undertake a minimum of **75** Legal Help cases 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 and 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. Whilst there has previously been some demand for this service combination in the PA, to ensure that there are sufficient NMS available for the delivery of integrated social welfare law advice, we intend to invite bids for **100** Housing NMS.

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

3. Social Welfare Law Services

We intend to invite tenders for approximately **750** NMS across the core Social Welfare Law (SWL) categories of Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits advice, **100** NMS in Community Care and **100** NMS in Employment. There is currently access to SWL services but the market is not well developed, particularly in Housing. We will therefore invite these bids under **Service Specification B**.

Housing, Welfare Benefits and Debt will be advertised 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 Debt, Housing and Welfare Benefits either as a single legal entity or as part of a consortium.
- Providers delivering Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits will be required to undertake a minimum of **75** NMS in each category per schedule year.
- Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits providers will be required to have a permanent presence in the PA.
- 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
Darlington	250	150	350

4. Access

There are no potential access issues within Darlington as the area is geographically small and good public transport links are available across the whole of the procurement area. Therefore no additional criteria will be used to select providers on the basis of their location within the area and providers will only be required to have an office in the PA.

5. Budget

Current spend in this area is higher than that which we would expect to spend in Family services 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 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	NMS opened	Certificates issued
Family (public)	6	941	168
Family (private)	6		301
Debt	1	277	1
Housing	1	242	45
Welfare Benefits	2	387	0
Employment	0	0	0
Community Care	0	5	0

	Total providers	Current SWL Services					Current Family Services		
		Providers delivering 5 SWL cats	Providers delivering 4 SWL cats	Providers delivering 3 SWL cats	Providers delivering 2 SWL cats	Providers delivering 1 SWL cat	Providers delivering Housing & Family	Providers delivering 5+Public law certs	Providers delivering family private only
Solicitor	6	0	0	0	0	1	1	5	0
NFP	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0