

## Procurement Plan for County Durham

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### Procurement Summary

#### 1. Family Services

We intend to invite bids for approximately **3,300** new matter starts (NMS) for the provision of face-to-face Family advice within the procurement area (PA) of Durham.

The area currently has a good level of service and this is anticipated to continue. However, there are a number of rural and semi-rural areas where there will not be large volumes of family work across the full range of public and private law. We will therefore invite providers to bid under **Service Specification B**:

- This will allow providers to tender for either the full range of private family work and/or public law children work.
- Providers will be required to have a permanent presence in the PA and in access point(s) tendered for.
- Where providers wish to undertake private family work they must bid for and undertake a minimum of **75** Legal Help cases per year.
- Those wishing to undertake only public law family cases must commit to undertake at least **5** public law certificated cases per year.

#### 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. There has previously been limited demand for this service combination in the PA and we therefore 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 place tenders for approximately **2,230** new matter starts (NMS) across the core Social Welfare Law (SWL) categories of Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits, **100** NMS in Community Care and **150** NMS in Employment.

Although there is access to services in SWL in the PA, it has historically been difficult to place services in this large and rural area. To encourage the

development of services we will 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 Debt, Housing and Welfare Benefits either as a single legal entity or as part of a consortium.
- Providers delivering Debt, Housing and Welfare Benefits will be required to undertake a minimum of **50** NMS in each category per schedule year.
- Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits providers will be required to have a presence in the PA within access point(s) tendered for as specified.
- 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:

<b>PA</b>	<b>Debt</b>	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Welfare Benefits</b>
Durham	1,230	450	550

#### **4. Access**

There are some potential access issues within County Durham as the area is geographically large and population centres dispersed. The main conurbations are not well linked by public transport.

To ensure sufficient access to services across the procurement area we will therefore make NMS available for particular access points within the PA.

In Family we require a permanent presence in the access point where the provider is bidding to provide services.

Historically, SWL services have been hard to place in some parts of the area and are often provided via a part time presence either from providers based within the PA or from across the wider County of Durham or Neighbouring PAs. Therefore, in order to deliver a service in one of the access points, a provider may have a part-time presence in that access point, so long as they have a permanent presence somewhere in the PA.

<b>Access Point</b>	<b>NMS allocated for Family</b>	<b>Presence Requirement</b>
Chester le Street, Durham City	950	Permanent
Derwentside	570	Permanent
Easington	630	Permanent
Weardale, Teesdale and Sedgfield	1150	Permanent

<b>Access Point</b>	<b>NMS allocated for Debt</b>	<b>NMS allocated for Housing</b>	<b>NMS allocated for Welfare Benefits</b>	<b>Presence Requirement</b>
Chester le Street, Durham City	370	100	160	May be delivered by part time presence for providers with permanent presence in the PA.
Derwentside	220	100	100	May be delivered by part time presence for providers with permanent presence in the PA.
Easington	210	100	100	May be delivered by part time presence for providers with permanent presence in the PA.
Weardale, Teesdale and Sedgfield	430	150	190	Permanent

## 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 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)	30	3,650	805
Family (private)	38		1,155
Debt	4	1,233	3
Housing	3	296	21
Welfare Benefits	3	545	0
Employment	3	158	1
Community Care	1	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
<b>Solicitor</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>NFP</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>