

Procurement Plan for East Essex

Procurement Summary

1. Family Services

We intend to invite bids for **3,500** new matter starts (NMS) for the provision of face-to-face Family advice within the procurement area (PA) of East Essex.

Clients in this area currently have a good level of access to Family advice across the entire PA with the exception of the local authority areas of Maldon and Tendring where services have historically been more difficult to secure. We will invite tenders under **Service Specification A**.

- Providers will be required to deliver 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 **100** Legal Help cases per year 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 & Housing (Combined Service)

We will set aside a proportion of the available NMS in Housing for providers wishing to deliver a combined Housing & Family service.

There has previously been limited demand for this service combination within the PA and we therefore intend to invite bids for up to **100** NMS for providers wishing to deliver a combined Housing and Family service.

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

3. Social Welfare Law Services

We intend to invite bids for **3,180** NMS across the Social Welfare Law (SWL) categories of Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits advice and **100** NMS in Community Care and **280** NMS in Employment.

Current access is limited outside the main towns of Colchester and Southend-on-Sea. We wish to encourage the availability of services PA and 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 Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits either as a single legal entity or as part of a consortium.
- Providers delivering Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits will need to have a permanent presence in the PA.
- Providers delivering Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits will be required to undertake a minimum of **75 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 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
East Essex	1,040	1,000	1,140

4. Access

East Essex is comprised of a mixture of rural and urban areas with the major centres of population concentrated in the towns of Colchester and Southend-on-Sea. Public transport links from some parts of the PA to these centres are good but this is not the case across the whole PA.

The majority of the population is centred in and around the main towns of Colchester and Southend-on-sea (including Castle Point and Rochester). It is in these towns that the majority of services are currently accessed.

However, we wish to ensure services are available for clients across the PA and are developing criteria to prefer tenders from providers tendering for Family and / or SWL who can deliver a wider service across multiple locations in the PA, specifically including the provision of services in either Maldon and/ or Tendring from a permanent presence.

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)	18	3,892	1,060
Family (private)	23		1,157
Debt	4	890	7
Housing	7	1,133	77
Welfare Benefits	5	978	3
Employment	6	278	2
Community Care	3	63	30

	Total Providers	Current SWL Services						Current Family Services	
		Providers delivering 5 core SWL cats	Providers delivering 4 core SWL cats	Providers delivering 3 core SWL cats	Providers delivering 2 core SWL cats	Providers delivering 1 core SWL cat	Providers delivering Housing & Family	Providers delivering 5+Public law certs	Providers delivering family private only
Solicitor	22	0	1	4	0	1	0	15	5
NFP	5	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	0