

Procurement Plan for Herefordshire & Worcestershire

Procurement Summary

1. Family Services

We intend to invite bids for **3,610** new matter starts (NMS) for the provision of face-to-face Family advice within the procurement area (PA) of Herefordshire & Worcestershire.

Client access to services is currently centred around Worcestershire and we would wish to see access increase particularly in Herefordshire. The PA is largely made up of small towns and very rural areas and we recognise that there may be lower numbers of eligible clients in some of these areas. To encourage service development and in recognition of the low client volumes in some parts of the PA we intend to invite bids under **Service Specification B**.

- Providers will be able to tender for **either** the full range of private Family work **and / or** public law children work.
- Providers are required to have a permanent presence in the PA and a 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 public law children cases must commit to undertake at least **5** certificated cases per year.

2. Family & Housing (Combined Services)

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

There has not previously been demand for this service combination within the procurement area and we intend to invite bids for **100** NMS in Housing for providers wishing to deliver a combined Housing and Family service.

Providers wishing to provide 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 **2,550** NMS across the Social Welfare Law (SWL) categories of Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits advice, **100** NMS in Community Care and **100** NMS in Employment.

Currently clients can access SWL services in this PA although a significant proportion is only available on a part time basis and not all of the bundle of Debt, Housing and Welfare Benefits is available in all parts of the PA. Whilst we would wish to see access to improve in the longer term, we do not consider that the conditions currently exist to support the higher level of service specification. Therefore, we will invite bids for services 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 are required to have a permanent presence in the PA **and** at least a part time presence in further access points as specified.
- Providers delivering Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits will be required to undertake a **minimum of 50 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.
- 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.

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 may mean giving preference to those with an employed authorised litigator. We will 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
Herefordshire and Worcestershire	1,300	600	650

4. Access

There are potential access issues within Herefordshire and Worcestershire, as the area is geographically large, much of it very rural with low population concentrations outside the main towns of Hereford and Worcester. We wish

to ensure that access to services is not compromised because of the geography and have divided the NMS available across the PA to reflect this.

We will advertise the available NMS by the two specific access points of Herefordshire and Worcestershire and will use criteria that will require providers to deliver services in at least one of these areas through a permanent presence as specified.

For Family, providers will need to have a permanent presence in each access point in which they tender.

For SWL (Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits) providers will be required to have a permanent presence in the PA. Where providers tender for work in Worcestershire, they will be required to deliver services from a permanent presence in the access point. In Herefordshire, we will give preference to providers who can deliver a service from a permanent presence but this will not be an essential criteria.

Access Points	NMS allocated for Family	Presence required for Family	NMS allocated for Debt	NMS allocated for Housing	NMS allocated for Welfare Benefits	Presence required for Debt, Welfare Benefits and Housing
Worcestershire Malvern Hills, Bromsgrove, Redditch, Worcester, Wychavon and Worcester City	2630	Permanent	1150	450	500	Permanent
Herefordshire	980	Permanent	150	150	150	May be delivered by Part Time presence for Providers with Permanent presence in the PA.

5. Budget

Current spend in this area is lower than that which we would expect to spend in Family Legal Help according to the Indicative Spend Budget Model. Therefore, the total number of NMS available in this area will be increased to enable an increase in access to services which moves closer to that suggested by the Model

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 to enable an increase in access to services which moves closer to that suggested by the Model

6. Current Supply

Category	No. of Providers	NMS opened (Sept 08/Aug 09)	Certificates issued (Sept 08/Aug 09)
Family (public)	26	3328	719
Family (private)	31		1048
Debt	5	1294	0
Housing	2	616	8
Welfare Benefits	1	494	0
Employment	1	62	0
Community Care	0	1	0

	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	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	6
NFP	6	0	1	0	0	5	0	0	0