

Procurement Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taff & Merthyr Tydfil

Procurement Summary

1. Family Services

We intend to invite bids for approximately **2,620** new matter starts (NMS) for the provision of face-to-face Family advice within the procurement area (PA) of Rhondda Cynon Taff & Merthyr Tydfil.

There is currently a good level of access to family services in the PA and we anticipate that there will be competition for the available work. Significant demand for public law services is evident in this procurement area and these clients may require advice across a wide range of family issues.

So that clients may continue to access the full range of Family services we will invite bids 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 and in the access point(s) tendered for
- Providers will be required to tender for and undertake a minimum of **100** Legal Help cases and **5** public law certificates 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 small proportion of the available NMS in Housing for providers wishing to deliver a combined Housing and Family service.

We have seen some level of demand for this service within the procurement area. We will therefore make **150** NMS in housing available for providers wishing to deliver a combined Housing and Family service.

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

3. Social Welfare Law Services

We intend to invite tenders for approximately **2,030** NMS across the Social Welfare Law categories of Housing, Welfare Benefits and Debt, **100** in Community Care and **100** in Employment.

Historically Debt, Housing and Welfare Benefits services have primarily been available in Pontypridd and have been hard to place in some parts of the procurement area. Access in some categories away from Pontypridd has depended largely on delivery via outreach. To encourage access to services across the PA, we will invite providers to bid under **Service Specification B**.

Housing Welfare Benefits and Debt will be tendered together and providers will be required to bid 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 and in the access point(s) tendered for.
- 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.
- Community Care and Employment providers will be required to have a part-time presence in the PA.
- As 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. 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
Rhondda Cynon Taff & Merthyr Tydfil	770	550	710

4. Access

Rhondda Cynon Taff and Merthyr Tydfil covers a diverse geographic area, with a number of separate valleys and towns. We are concerned that if we organise bids around the whole of the procurement area we will not ensure adequate access across the whole area. We have therefore divided the PA into two access points to ensure services are available across the PA. Providers (other than those delivering Community Care and Employment –

see above) will be required to have a permanent presence in the access point(s) in which they deliver services.

Access Points	NMS allocation for Family	NMS allocated for Debt	NMS allocated for Housing	NMS allocated for Welfare Benefits
Merthyr Tydfil	570	200	130	190
Rhondda Cynon Taff	2,050	570	420	520

All providers delivering services in this procurement area must be able to deliver those services taking account of clients whose language of choice is Welsh.

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 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 September 08 – August 09

Category	No. of Providers	NMS opened	Certificates issued
Family (public)	16	2,906	635
Family (private)	20		840
Debt	4	771	1
Housing	2	*650	3
Welfare Benefits	3	596	0
Employment	0	1	0
Community Care	1	6	0

*Includes Housing NMS delivered in the PA by way of outreach.

		Current SWL Services						Current Family Services	
	Total Providers	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 only	Providers delivering 5+Public law certs	Providers delivering Private Family Law only
Solicitor	20	0	0	0	1	2	1	14	4
NFP	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0