

Procurement Plan for Sandwell

Procurement Summary

1. Family Services

We intend to invite bids for **1,870** new matter starts (NMS) for the provision of face-to-face Family advice within the procurement area (PA) of Sandwell.

Clients in this area currently have a reasonable level of service across the full range of Family services and we anticipate that this will continue to be the case. We wish to maintain client access to the full range of family services and will therefore, invite bids under **Service Specification A**.

- Providers will be required to deliver the full breadth of Family cases across both public **and** private family law.
- Providers will be required to undertake a **minimum of 100** Legal Help cases per year **and** at least **5** certificated cases in public law children work.
- Providers will be required to have a permanent presence in the procurement area.

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 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 previously been little demand for this service combination within the procurement area and we intend to invite bids for **100** NMS in Housing available 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 **1,270** NMS across the Social Welfare Law (SWL) categories of Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits and **100** NMS in Community Care and **140** NMS in Employment.

SWL services are not as well developed as those in place for Family. Although we have previously been able to attract new services through previous bid rounds, we wish to encourage further SWL service development. We recognise that it may take time for providers to develop to deliver the full range of SWL services including certificated work and we will therefore invite providers to bid under **Service Specification B**.

Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits 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 are 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**, we will **not** require providers to employ an authorised litigator in order to conduct Housing and/or Community care.

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
Sandwell	750	150	370

4. Access

There are no potential access issues within Sandwell. The area is geographically small although heavily populated and is bordered by the other

urban areas of Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Walsall and Dudley. There are good public transport links across Sandwell itself and across the borders, which means that there is likely to be significant movement of clients across the borders. We will not use criteria to select providers on the basis of their location within the area. Providers will only be required to have a permanent presence within the procurement area.

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/Aug09)
Family (public)	9	1724	809
Family (private)	12		582
Debt	2	793	1
Housing	1	54	8
Welfare Benefits	2	367	0
Employment	1	144	0
Community Care	0	0	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	12	0	0	0	0	1	0	6	3
NFP	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0