

Procurement Plan for Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin

Procurement Summary

1. Family Services

We intend to invite bids for **2,850** new matter starts (NMS) for the provision of face-to-face Family advice within the procurement area (PA) of Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin.

In parts of the procurement area clients have good access to services and we anticipate that this will continue to be the case. However, there are some areas where access to advice is more limited and where there are limited numbers of eligible clients, particularly in parts of Shropshire outside Shrewsbury. To encourage the development of services and in recognition of the fact that it may take time for the market to develop in the more rural parts of the PA, we will invite tenders 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 will need 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 undertake a **minimum of 50** Legal Help cases per year.
- Where providers wish to undertake public law children work they must commit to undertake at least **5** certificated cases per year.

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 Family & Housing service.

There has previously been some 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 **2,490 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.

Clients currently have differing levels of access to SWL advice across the PA and services are predominantly centred in Shrewsbury and Telford. We wish to ensure clients can access SWL services across the whole of the PA and whilst we would wish to see access 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, 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 are required to have a permanent presence in the PA **and** in the access point(s) as specified
- Providers delivering Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits will be required to undertake a **minimum of 75 NMS** in each category per schedule year.
- Providers will be required to undertake a **minimum of 20 NMS** in Community Care per schedule year.
- Providers will be required to undertake a **minimum of 30 NMS** in Employment 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
Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin	1,040	340	1,110

4. Access

There are potential access issues within the PA. The County of Shropshire is geographically large and sparsely populated, while Telford is a relatively new town with good transport links. Because of the size of the area it is unlikely that clients would be able to travel easily across the whole area. Therefore, we have divided the NMS available in both Family and SWL across the procurement area to reflect these issues.

We will advertise the available NMS by two specific access points:

- Telford & Wrekin
- Shropshire

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 Shropshire, they will be required to have a permanent presence in the access point. In Telford & Wrekin, 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
Telford & Wrekin	1420	Permanent	510	170	540	May be delivered by Part Time presence for Providers with Permanent presence in the PA.
Shropshire	1430	Permanent	530	170	570	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 to enable an increase in access to services which moves closer to that suggested by the Model

6. Current Supply (September 2008 to August 2009)

Category	No. of Providers	NMS Opened	Certificates issued
Family (public)	25	3161	493
Family (private)	30		785
Debt	5	1116	4
Housing	2	157	23
Welfare Benefits	4	1168	0
Employment	1	82	0
Community Care	0	19	0

		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	Providers delivering 5+Public law certs	Providers delivering family private only
Solicitor	32	0	0	0	2	5	2	14	5
NFP	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0