

Procurement Plan for Somerset

Procurement Summary

1. Family Services

We intend to invite bids for approximately **3,320** new matter starts (NMS) for the provision of face-to-face Family advice within the procurement area (PA) of Somerset.

Family advice services are currently available across the PA of Somerset. However, outside of the city of Bath, the PA is predominantly rural and we wish to ensure access to Family services continues in towns across the PA.

We recognise that the market outside Bath may take time to develop to offer clients the full range of family services and will therefore advertise these tenders as **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 access point(s) tendered for.
- 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 only public law children cases 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 Housing and Family service.

There has historically been a demand for this combination and we will therefore make a total of **300** Housing NMS available across the procurement area for providers wishing to deliver Family and Housing services together.

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 per schedule year.

3. Social Welfare Law Services

We will invite tenders for approximately **3,480** NMS across the Social Welfare Law (SWL) categories of Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits advice, **100** in Community Care and **100** in Employment.

The market for SWL services is well developed with clients currently largely having access to the full range of services. We will advertise these tenders as **Service Specification A**.

Housing, Welfare Benefits and Debt will be tendered together as a bundle 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 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 A**, we will require providers to employ an authorised litigator in order to conduct Housing and / or Community Care services.

In the categories of Debt, Housing and Welfare Benefits, the allocation of NMS is divided within the procurement area as follows:

| PA | Debt | Housing | Welfare Benefits |
|----------|-------|---------|------------------|
| Somerset | 1,320 | 920 | 1,240 |

4. Access

There are potential access issues in this rural area. Somerset is predominately rural with a number of small towns without easy transport links to the larger centres of Taunton, Yeovil and Bath. A significant number of the population live in relatively isolated locations.

To encourage access to services across the whole PA, we will therefore make NMS available for two specific access points within 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 Point | NMS allocated for Family | NMS allocated for Debt | NMS allocated for Housing | NMS allocated for Welfare Benefits |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Access Point 1 (BANES & Mendip) | 1060 | 520 | 360 | 490 |
| Access Point 2 (Sedgemoor South Somerset, Taunton Dean & West Somerset) | 2260 | 800 | 560 | 750 |

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 from that which is currently being delivered 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 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) | 25 | 3,262 | 1,184 |
| Family (private) | 31 | | 889 |
| Debt | 8 | 1,326 | 4 |
| Housing | 4 | 1,217 | 81 |
| Welfare Benefits | 7 | 1,106 | 2 |
| Employment | 2 | 55 | 0 |
| Community Care | 1 | 51 | 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 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 18 | 6 |
| NFP | 8 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |