

Procurement Plan for Staffordshire

Procurement Summary

1. Family Services

We intend to invite bids for **3,840** new matter starts (NMS) for the provision of face-to-face Family advice within the procurement area (PA) of Staffordshire.

Clients currently have access to a reasonable level of services in the PA, which is made up of small towns and rural areas. Current access is centred in the main towns of Newcastle-under-Lyme, Cannock, Tamworth, Stafford and Burton-upon-Trent. Outside these centres, access is more limited given the rural nature of large parts of the PA, particularly in the Staffordshire Moorlands District, and we recognise that there may be lower volumes of eligible clients in these areas. We wish to ensure access to Family services across the whole PA and we will advertise these 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 procurement area and a permanent presence in the access points(s) tendered for as specified.
- Where providers wish to undertake private Family work they must undertake a **minimum of 75** 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 not previously been 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 **2,530 NMS** across the Social Welfare Law (SWL) categories of Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits, **100 NMS** in Community Care and **100 NMS** in Employment.

Clients currently have access to limited SWL services across the PA. The PA is geographically large and we wish to ensure that clients can access SWL services across the PA. We recognise that it may take some time for the market to develop, particularly outside the main towns and in recognition of this we will invite tenders 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 will be required to undertake a **minimum of 50 NMS** in each category per schedule year.
- Providers delivering Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits will need to have a permanent presence in the procurement area **and** a permanent presence in the access point(s) tendered for as specified.
- 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 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
Staffordshire	1,430	400	700

4. Access

Staffordshire is a large area with a number of distinct towns often some distance from one another. We have divided the area into 2 access points to better secure client access across the PA.

Providers delivering Family or SWL (Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits) will need to have a permanent presence in each access point in which they tender.

Access Points	NMS allocated for Family	NMS allocated for Debt	NMS allocated for Housing	NMS allocated for Welfare Benefits
East (including Staffordshire Moorlands, East Staffordshire, Tamworth and Lichfield)	1800	780	200	380
West (including Newcastle-under-Lyme, Cannock Chase, South Staffordshire and Stafford)	2040	650	200	320

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 (September 2008 to August 2009)

Category	No. of Providers	NMS opened	Certificates issued
Family (public)	23	3502	819
Family (private)	25		952
Debt	7	1584	3
Housing	1	88	11
Welfare Benefits	5	700	0
Employment	1	72	0
Community Care	0	77	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	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	2
NFP	7	0	0	1	5	1	0	0	0