

Procurement Plan for Tower Hamlets

Procurement Summary

1. Family Services

We intend to invite bids for approximately **1,380** New Matter Starts (NMS) for the provision of face-to-face Family Advice within the procurement area (PA) of Tower Hamlets.

Clients currently have a good level of access to a wide range of Family services in the area and we anticipate that this will continue to be the case. We will therefore invite providers to bid under **Service Specification A**.

- Providers will be required to tender for both the full range of private family work **and** public law children work.
- Providers will need to have a permanent presence in the PA.
- Providers will be required to tender for and undertake a minimum of **100** Legal Help cases per year 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.

There has previously been some demand for this service combination in the PA and we will therefore make available **200** Housing NMS for providers who wish to bid for a combined Housing and Family service.

Providers wishing to provide this service combination will be required to tender for and undertake a minimum of **50** Housing NMS per schedule year.

3. Social Welfare Law Services

We intend to invite tenders for approximately **4,580** NMS across the core Social Welfare Law (SWL) categories of Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits advice, **100** NMS in Community Care and **360** NMS in Employment.

There is currently access to SWL services across the PA and we wish to maintain good access to the full range of services. We will therefore invite these bids under **Service Specification A**.

Housing, Welfare Benefits and Debt 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 services either as a single legal entity or as part of a consortium.
- Providers delivering Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits will be required to have a permanent presence in the PA.
- Providers delivering Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits will be required to undertake a minimum of **100 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 SWL tenders are invited under **Service Specification A**, the requirement to employ an authorised litigator in Housing and / or Community Care will be an essential criterion.

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
Tower Hamlets	770	1,790	2,020

4. Access

There are no potential access issues within Tower Hamlets as the area is geographically small and good public transport links are available across the whole of the PA. Therefore no criteria will be used to select providers on the basis of their location and providers will only be required to have a permanent presence within the PA.

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 higher than that which we would expect to spend in SWL services according to the Indicative Spend Budget Model. It is therefore unlikely that we would wish to actively increase the provision of SWL services and matter starts will be carefully managed with the aim of remaining within the level of current spend.

6. Current Supply (September 08 – August 09)

Category	No. of Providers	NMS opened	Certificates issued
Family (public)	10	1,280	674
Family (private)	11		1,174
Debt	2	406	0
Housing	6	2,212	189
Welfare Benefits	6	2,699	1
Employment	2	406	0
Community Care	2	58	6

		Current SWL Services: number of providers delivering combinations of categories						Current Family Services: number of providers delivering public/private	
		Total providers	5 core SWL cats	4 core SWL cats	3 core SWL cats	2 core SWL cats	1 core SWL cat	Housing & Family	5+Public law certs
Solicitor	12	0	0	0	2	1	1	8	1
NFP	5	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	0