

Procurement Plan for Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham

Procurement Summary

1. Social Welfare Law

We intend to invite tenders for **1,700** New Matter Starts (NMS) across the core Social Welfare Law (SWL) categories of Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits. The eligible population is highest in Reading but with significant levels in the other towns, it is unlikely that all providers will be able to conduct large volumes of work. We recognise that it may also take time for providers to develop SWL services in the area.

Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham is an Access Point in the Procurement Area of Berkshire.

Housing, Welfare Benefits and Debt will be tendered together and providers will be required to both tender for and provide services in all three categories.

- Providers may bid to deliver these services either as a single legal entity or as part of a consortium.
- Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits providers will be required to have a permanent presence in the Access Point
- Providers delivering Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits will be required to undertake a minimum of **50** NMS in each category per schedule year.
- As SWL tenders are invited under **Service Specification B**, the requirement to employ an authorised litigator in Housing will not be an essential criterion.

However, in the Service Specification B areas where a competitive process is necessary to decide between tenders, as part of the selection process we will prefer providers who can provide the best access to an authorised litigator. This might mean giving preference to those with an employed authorised litigator. We will also consider alternative arrangements but providers are advised that this may score lower in the ranking.

2. Access

Social Welfare Law

Because the Access Point is geographically large we will require providers to deliver services from at least one permanent office located within Access Point.

By 11 April 2011 the providers bidding must have an office which is a Permanent Presence in the Access Point.

Access Point	NMS Allocated for Debt	NMS allocated for Housing	NMS allocated for Welfare Benefits
Reading, West Berkshire, Wokingham	560	550	590

3. Budget

SWL

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.

4. Current Supply: September 08 – August 09

Category	No. of Providers	NMS opened
Debt	2	526
Housing	2	161
WB	2	1030

Current SWL Services: number of providers delivering combinations of categories

	Total providers	5 core SWL cats	4 core SWL cats	3 core SWL cats	2 core SWL cats	1 core SWL cat	Housing & Family
Solicitor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NFP	3	0	0	2	1	0	0