

Bidding for extra Matter Starts - London Regional Delivery Plan (revised, 12 September 2005)

1 Introduction and Objectives

1.1 Introduction

To help more people get access to good quality legal advice, the LSC wishes to allocate around 10% more matter starts to suppliers.

This plan sets out London region's proposals to contribute to that target during the period April 2005 to March 2006 by funding a 10% increase in the number of Controlled Work new matter starts (NMS) in non-immigration cases.

In the twelve-month period April 2004 to March 2005 the London region supported 88,575 acts of assistance through its contracts. 72,295 of these were provided through contracts with private practice solicitor firms and 16,281 through contracts with not for profit organisations.

Our intention is to increase the number of acts of assistance provided by our suppliers by 8,800 (to a total of 97,375) for the period April 2005 to March 2006.

1.2 Objectives

We will wish to ensure that acts of assistance increase in accordance with our strategy for the Community Legal Service. The Commission will therefore be encouraging suppliers to provide integrated and seamless services across a number of areas of law, in areas of high deprivation, such as Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, providing access to client groups that currently do not access mainstream services and working to meet priorities identified in Regional Reports.

Our focus on **developing holistic social welfare law (SWL) services** to vulnerable client groups in particular means that, in this bid round, single contract categories will only be awarded

- Where they add an additional category to a supplier already supplying 2 or more categories of SWL or a supplier supplying family and 1 category of SWL
- Where they provide additional funding to a supplier already supplying 3 or more categories of SWL or a supplier supplying family and 2 or more categories of SWL.

By SWL categories for these purposes we mean all categories of civil non-family except immigration, clinical negligence and personal injury.

It is also important that the **increased case numbers represent additional clients and problems dealt with** - and we will be reviewing any proposals for expansion in that light.

Of course Controlled Work still operates within a fixed budget – and we will also be looking at **value for money** in awarding case starts. You should also note that this initiative does not affect contract reconciliations, which we will continue to carry out.

This plan therefore sets out:

- Our planned areas for expansion – linked to regional priorities (section 2 of this plan)
- The extra incentives that may be available to help suppliers expand (section 3 of this plan).

1.3 Applying for NMS under this bid round

Suppliers that are interested in extra matter starts or a contract to meet the priorities set out in this plan should write to Peta Sweet, Acting Regional Planning and Partnership Manager – contact details are set out in section 5 below – **by 12 midday on Monday 26th September 2005**

You should submit specific proposals to meet the relevant priority.

Proposals must set out:

- Details of how many matter starts you are seeking and in which categories.
- Details of how the service will be delivered i.e. how you will use those NMS requested. For example, any recruitment required or proposals for setting up any outreach services, including timescales for the start of delivery and how the scheme will operate in practice.
- Details of how the service will meet the relevant regional priority set out in this plan.
- If you are seeking CLS Development Funding, you should also give details of the amount sought and its purpose. (See section 3.2 of this plan for detail).

You are advised to mark any letters "Delivery Plan" so that they can be easily identified and to check that they have been received.

You are also advised to carefully read the process and criteria guidance document, frequently asked questions document and the LSC's strategy for the Community Legal Service to assist you in putting your proposal together. (See section 6 of this plan for details of where to find these documents on the LSC website.)

2 Priority areas for expansion of services

2.1 Priority areas of legal help provision

Our priorities are:

- To meet need for additional supply identified by the London Regional Legal Services Committee (RLSC) and set out in the London Regional Contracting Strategy 2005

In its update report 2004/2005 the RLSC identified debt and welfare benefits as key areas of need in terms of legal help provision in London. It also identified priorities in relation to housing, community care and mental health across the region. In particular the RLSC recommended:

- Increasing specialist welfare benefit and debt provision in West London
- Increasing specialist welfare benefit provision in South London
- Maintaining housing contracts at their current capacity and ensuring access to specialist housing advice and assistance
- Meeting need in the categories of mental health, community care and education through a sub-regional approach
- Increasing provision of specialist services in outer London boroughs

and

- To develop holistic social welfare law services, as defined in section 1 above, in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas in London.

2.2 Priority client groups

The RLSC has also identified the following key vulnerable client groups:

- Those in danger of losing their homes
- London's prisoners and their families
- Young offenders
- Those facing financial exclusion
- Those suffering domestic violence
- Children affected by relationship breakdown
- Those suffering mental health problems

2.3 Delivery models

We recognise the need to support innovative, holistic ways of delivering specialist advice in the priority areas to these vulnerable groups, for example through:

- Expansion of existing and development of new housing possession schemes within the court environment
- Prisoner/young offender advice provided within the prison/Young Offender Institute environment
- Outreach and emergency services for those suffering domestic violence
- The development of links with family-focused services, e.g. contact centres, extended schools programmes, Sure Start centres
- Outreach services to those suffering mental health problems.

The table below indicates the types of specialist advice services we are looking to fund through this process.

What?	Where?
<p>Funding the provision of extra Caseworkers across the London prison estate and within the Young Offender Institute environment to provide holistic social welfare law services: Housing, Debt, Welfare Benefits, Employment (back to work) and Mental Health advice.</p>	<p>Belmarsh, Brixton, Hounslow (private women's prison)</p>
<p>Expanding the provision of Housing Duty Court Schemes across London</p>	<p>Proposals are invited for the expansion of schemes in: Bow, Brentford, Edmonton, Romford, Shoreditch, Willesden and Uxbridge County Courts</p>
<p>Provision of Debt advice to outer London boroughs with poor or no supply as part of our expansion of holistic social welfare law services</p>	<p>Priority 1: Proposals are invited by existing SQM originations to deliver services, including via outreach, in Bexley as a high priority.</p> <p>Priority 2: Proposals are invited from existing SQM organisations to expand provision and deliver innovative services, including via outreach, in Croydon, Merton, Greenwich and Enfield.</p> <p>Priority 3: Proposals to expand provision in Kingston will also be considered.</p>
<p>Provision of Housing advice to outer London boroughs with poor or no supply as part of our expansion of holistic social welfare law services</p>	<p>Priority 1: Proposals are invited from existing SQM organisations to expand provision and deliver innovative services, including via outreach, in Sutton, Bromley and Waltham Forest</p> <p>Priority 2: Proposals to expand provision in Kingston will also be considered.</p>

Provision of Welfare Benefits advice to outer London boroughs with poor or no supply as part of our expansion of holistic social welfare law services	Proposals are invited from existing SQM organisations to expand provision and deliver innovative services, including via outreach, in Merton.
Specialist advice to those suffering domestic violence	We are looking to increase holistic supply across the region (i.e. from organisations with a family law SQM which also hold the SQM in social welfare law categories) which meets the needs of this vulnerable client groups, in particular <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • through outreach services based, for example, at refuges or other family-focused centres, and • through 24 hour/ emergency access schemes.
Specialist advice to vulnerable children	We are looking to increase the number of specialists able to take on Public Law childcare work across the region
Specialist advice to those suffering mental health problems	We are looking to increase mental health specialist advice across the region as part of our expansion of holistic social welfare law services
Holistic social welfare law services, in accordance with our strategy for the CLS	We are looking to develop holistic social welfare law services, in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas in London

The details given are provisional and may vary according to priorities and the level of interest that we receive.

3 Incentives and the CLS Development Fund

3.1 Incentives

All matter starts granted under this plan will be guaranteed until April 2007. This means that we will not remove the extra matter starts in year even if your running rate is low, or reduce them in the next schedule. Where you already have matter starts in the category concerned, the guarantee will therefore apply to them as well.

Where relevant to the particular initiative:

- We will also allow matter starts to be switched between priority categories of law in which suppliers have the SQM without seeking our authority.
- In priority areas we will also allow suppliers to self authorise additional matter starts up to an additional limit if demand proves higher than expected.

3.2 CLS Development Fund

Suppliers, whether solicitors or not for profit, can include as part of their application for new matter starts, a request for an amount from the CLS Development Fund – up to £300,000 available in this region – to pay expenses needed to support their proposed expansion in supply. Examples might be paying for:

- Training, recruitment or external supervision costs for new members of staff to deliver the nms
- Paying for the cost of outreach services
- Providing grants or loans to cover set-up costs for a new service

4 Contact

Proposals setting out the detail required (see section 1.3 of this plan) should be sent **in writing by post** to:

Peta Sweet
Acting Regional Planning and Partnership Manager
Legal Services Commission
London Regional Office
29/37 Red Lion Street
London WC1R 4PP

Telephone 020 7759 1750

To arrive no later than 12 mid-day on Monday 26th September 2005

5 Additional Information

Those submitting applications for NMS under this bid round are advised to carefully read the following documents

- A list of frequently asked questions has been prepared to assist any applicants and can be accessed at www.legalservices.gov.uk/docs/london/londonPSA6FAQs_0905.pdf
- Details of the allocation process and criteria can be accessed at www.legalservices.gov.uk/docs/cls_main/matterstartallocationguidance_0905.pdf
- The LSC's strategy for the Community Legal Service can be accessed at http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/civil/docs_for_consultation/civil.asp - reality