

Further Procurement of the Housing Loss Prevention Advice Service in England and Wales from 1 September 2023

Housing and Debt Information for Applicants

Introduction

The Legal Aid Agency (“**LAA**”) is inviting Tenders to deliver the publicly funded Housing Loss Prevention Advice Services (“**HLPAS**”) to commence on 1 September 2023. Successful Applicants will be awarded a Schedule to provide HLPAS Contract Work.

This procurement process is separate to those which opened on 17 November 2022 and 6 February 2023 and closed at 12pm on 19 December 2022 and 12pm on 1 March 2023 respectively. This procurement process seeks to identify organisations wishing to deliver HLPAS in a small number of areas only, where the LAA did not receive compliant bids. Applicants can find further information about the HLPAS areas covered under this procurement process at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-loss-prevention-advice-services-hlpas-and-housing-and-debt-services-from-august-2023>

Applicants who have already tendered to deliver HLPAS Contract Work do not need to tender through this procurement process unless they wish to bid to deliver HLPAS, and, where relevant, Housing and Debt Contract Work in the areas covered by this procurement process

Schedules will form part of the 2018 Standard Civil Contract (“**2018 Contract**”) which is the primary contractual arrangement between the LAA and contracted organisations delivering civil legal aid services.

It will be a requirement that holders of a HLPAS Schedule hold a 2018 Contract which includes a specific authorisation to conduct Housing and Debt Contract Work (“**Housing and Debt Contract**”) i.e. the face-to-face delivery of legal aid advice on Housing & Debt matters that are not covered by HLPAS.

It is **not** a requirement that Applicants tendering for a HLPAS Schedule **currently** hold a 2018 Contract. The LAA welcomes Tenders from any Applicant which meets the rules of this procurement process and is able to deliver HLPAS Contract Work. Applicants can bid for a Housing and Debt Contract through this procurement.

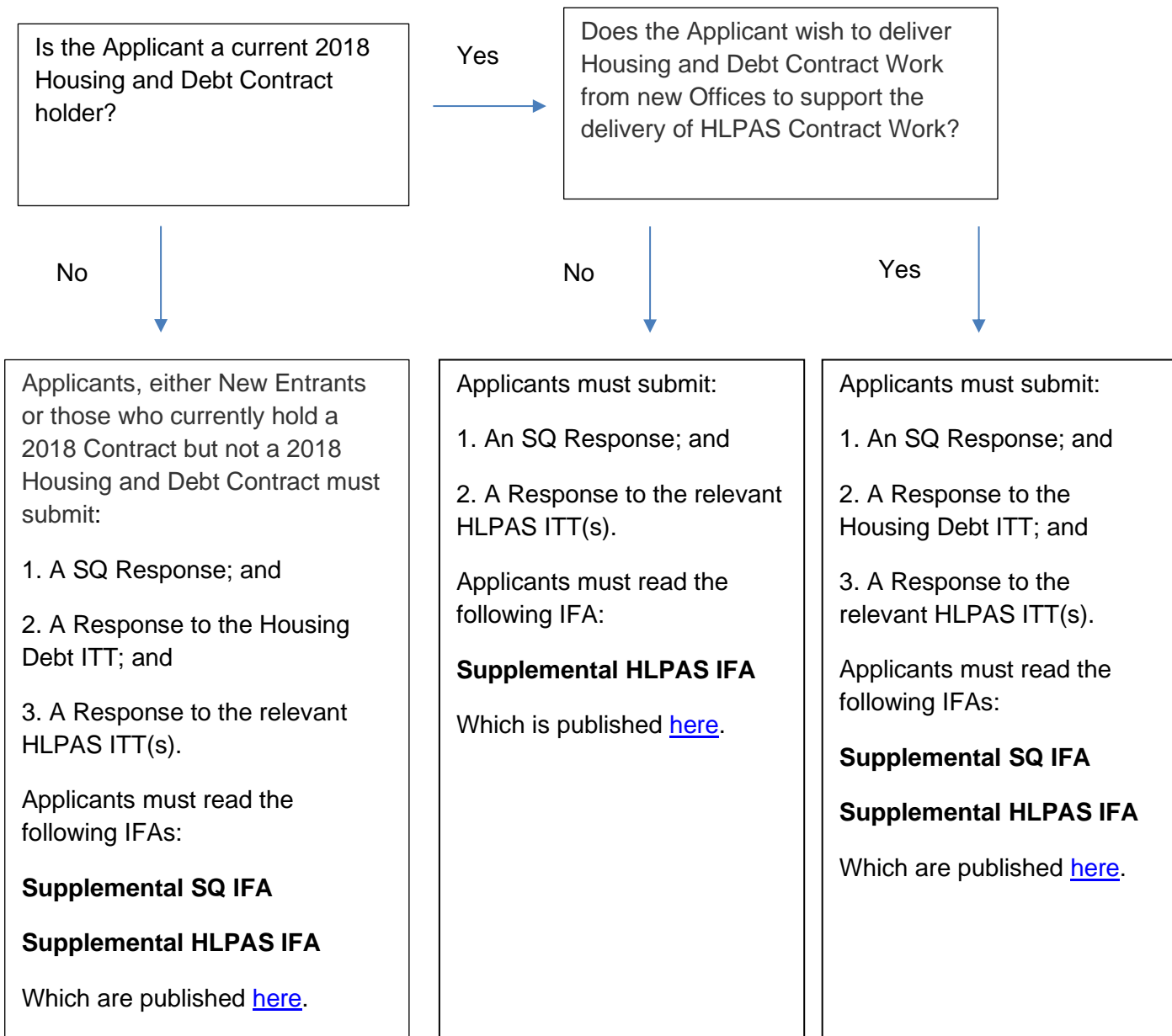
A compliant Tender consists of a Response to:

1. the Selection Questionnaire (“**SQ**”); plus
2. at least one Housing Loss Prevention Advice Service Invitation to Tender (“**HLPAS ITT**”);

and, where the Applicant is not a current 2018 Housing and Debt Contract holder, or is a current Housing and Debt Contract holder and wishes to deliver Housing and Debt Contract Work from new Offices to support the delivery of HLPAS:

3. the Housing and Debt Contract Work ITT (“**Housing and Debt ITT**”)

The ITTs to which an Applicant must submit a Response is dependent on its current status as set out below:



The Deadline for submitting a Response to the SQ, HLPAS ITT and, where relevant, the Housing and Debt ITT is 12pm on 28 April 2023 (“Deadline”)

The HLPAS will replace the Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme (“**HPCDS**”) and an Applicant currently contracted to deliver a HPCDS will fall into the category of a 2018 Housing and Debt Contract holder.

Where an Applicant who already holds a 2018 Housing and Debt Contract is unsuccessful in their Tender to deliver HLPAS Contract Work, their 2018 Housing and Debt Contract will not be affected.

Where an Applicant submits a Housing and Debt ITT Response, is notified that it has been successful and is subsequently notified that it has submitted compliant verification information but is not successful in being awarded HLPAS Contract Work under this procurement process, the Applicant will still be awarded a Housing and Debt Contract in accordance with the process set out in the IFA.

This IFA

This Information for Applicants document (“**IFA**”) provides information about the Housing and Debt Contract Work stage of this procurement process, including how Applicants submit a Response to the Housing and Debt ITT, and the rules of the procurement process.

Before submitting their Housing and Debt ITT Response, Applicants must read this IFA and the SQ / HLPAS IFAs (as applicable) for this procurement process in their entirety and all supplementary information provided, such as Frequently Asked Questions (“**FAQs**”) and HLPAS Guides.

Applicants must also read the 2018 Contract and specifically sections 1 - 6 and 10 of the 2018 Standard Civil Contract Specification (“**Specification**”) containing details of Housing and Debt and HLPAS Contract Work requirements (available at [Standard Civil Contract 2018 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)) in full to ensure that they understand the full nature and extent of the obligations they are committing to accept.

Where an Applicant is notified of the LAA’s intention to award it Contract Work subject to verification, it is the Applicant’s sole responsibility to ensure they provide all necessary verification information.

Where not defined in the body of this IFA, capitalised terms are either defined in the glossary at Annex B of the SQ IFA, or in the 2018 Contract. References to ‘procurement process’ are related to the process of the procurement of a 2018 Housing and Debt Contract Work under this IFA.

Late submissions will not be considered under any circumstances. It is the Applicant’s sole responsibility to ensure that the LAA receives its Housing and Debt ITT Response before the Deadline.

It is the Applicant’s sole responsibility to ensure that its Housing and Debt ITT Response has been correctly completed to fully and properly represent the Applicant’s bid for Contract Work offered under this procurement process.

Timetable

For guidance purposes only, a list of indicative dates for key activities of the procurement process is set out below. Where there are significant changes to the dates for key activities relating to the procurement process, the LAA will notify Applicants through the eTendering system.

Activity	Timescale
Procurement process opens and is available via the LAA's eTendering system	11 April 2023
Final date for submission of questions about this procurement process	23.59 on 18 April 2023
'Frequently Asked Questions' to be published	Week commencing 17 April 2023
Deadline for submission of Tenders	12 pm on 28 April 2023
Notification of outcome of Housing and Debt ITT Responses assessment	Week commencing 15 May 2023
Deadline for submitting compliant verification information for Individual Housing and Debt Bids	23.59 on 31 May 2023
Contract Start Date	1 September 2023

Due to the need for contracts to be in place to allow services to commence on 1 September 2023, the timescale from launch to the deadline for submission of tenders has been set at 17 days.

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

About the LAA and this procurement process

- 1.1 The LAA, on behalf of the Lord Chancellor, is responsible for commissioning and administering legal aid services (publicly funded advice and representation) across England and Wales in accordance with the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 and associated legislation. All contract documentation is issued by the LAA on behalf of the Lord Chancellor.

What are Applicants tendering for as part of this stage of the procurement process?

- 1.2 Where an Applicant:
- (a) **is not** a current 2018 Housing and Debt Contract holder; or
 - (b) **is** a current 2018 Housing and Debt Contract holder and wishes to deliver Housing and Debt Contract Work from new Offices to support the delivery of HLPAS Contract Work,

the LAA is inviting Tenders for the delivery of Housing and Debt Contract Work in all Housing and Debt Procurement Areas in England and Wales.

- 1.3 Any organisation who meets the minimum contract requirements may tender to deliver Housing and Debt Contract Work.
- 1.4 Applicants should note that to be eligible to Tender for a 2018 Housing and Debt Contract as part of this procurement process they **must** have submitted a compliant Tender to deliver HLPAS Contract Work.
- 1.5 Applicants should refer to Section 10 of the Specification for detail on the scope of work included in the Housing and Debt Categories of Law.
- 1.6 There is no limit to the number of Housing and Debt Contracts that may be awarded under this procurement process.

Who can submit a Housing and Debt ITT Response?

- 1.7 Any organisation who meets the minimum contract requirements may tender to deliver Housing and Debt Contract Work.
- 1.8 The LAA will not accept subcontracting or consortia arrangements but the use of Agents is permitted if the conditions in paragraph 2.5 of the Specification are satisfied.
- 1.9 The LAA will only contract with single legal entities (including individuals who are sole traders). Should existing organisations wish to merge or join with others to apply to deliver Housing and Debt Contract Work, they must form a single legal entity. It is not necessary for the contracting entity to have been formed at the time an Applicant submits its Tender, however, where this is the case the LAA will require them to confirm that the contracting entity has been formed as part of its verification process.

SECTION 2: APPLICANTS' QUESTIONS

- 2.1 If an Applicant has a question about the Housing and Debt Contract Work stage of this procurement process, to which they cannot find a response in this document or guidance provided in the eTendering system, it will be able to direct it through two different channels depending on the type of question.
- 2.2 The two different question types are:
- (a) questions about the content of this IFA; and
 - (b) technical questions about how to operate the eTendering system.

Questions about this IFA

- 2.3 If an Applicant has any questions about the content of this IFA, it may submit them up until **23.59** on **18 April 2023**. This is referred to in the eTendering system as the 'End date for supplier clarification messages'.
- 2.4 All such questions must be submitted using the eTendering system message boards for this procurement process.
- 2.5 Applicants should assume that questions and answers will be published. Questions that the LAA considers to be of wider interest will be collated and answered centrally in writing to ensure that all potential Applicants have equal access to information. Questions and answers will be published on the LAA's tender pages at [Housing Loss Prevention Advice Services \(HLPAS\) and Housing and Debt services from August 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Technical questions about how to operate the eTendering system

- 2.6 There is a helpdesk to provide technical support to Applicants' using the eTendering system. The helpdesk is unable to assist with problems with Applicants' own computer hardware or systems. For these types of issues Applicants should contact their usual IT support.
- 2.7 Questions for the helpdesk should be emailed to: help@bravosolution.co.uk Alternatively, the telephone number for the helpdesk is 0800 069 8630 and lines are open from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday.
- 2.8 The LAA recommend that Applicants start to complete their Tender early so that they can identify any areas in which they need help as soon as possible as the helpdesk is likely to be very busy in the days leading up to the Deadline. The LAA cannot guarantee that queries received close to the Deadline will be dealt with before the Deadline.
- 2.9 All Tenders must be completed and submitted using the eTendering system.

SECTION 3: ETENDERING SYSTEM

- 3.1 The eTendering system can be accessed either through a link on the [tender pages](#) of the LAA website or directly at <https://legalaid.bravosolution.co.uk>.
- 3.2 Applicants must review the information regarding the operation of the eTendering system set out in Section 3 of the SQ IFA and can be found at [Housing Loss Prevention Advice Services \(HLPAS\) and Housing and Debt services from August 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

SECTION 4: HOUSING AND DEBT CONTRACT WORK

What Contract Work will be awarded under this procurement process?

- 4.1 Successful Applicants will start delivering Housing and Debt Contract Work on 1 September 2023 and the Contract will run until 31 August 2024 (subject to the LAA's rights of early termination).
- 4.2 Applicants will be awarded 100 Matter Starts in Housing and 10 Matter Starts in Debt in each full Schedule period. Schedules run from 1 September to 31 August each year.
- 4.3 Housing and Debt Contract Work is delivered at individual Offices which will be based in a corresponding Procurement Area. A Tender to deliver Housing and Debt Contract Work from a particular Office is known as an "Individual Housing and Debt Bid".
- 4.4 An Applicant wishing to deliver Housing and Debt Contract Work from multiple Offices must complete an Individual Housing and Bid for each Office.
- 4.5 It is the Applicant's sole responsibility to ensure they provide the LAA with all the necessary information to evidence they meet the relevant verification requirements either as part of the Housing and Debt ITT Response or by no later than 23.59 on 31 May 2023.

The 2018 Contract and Housing and Debt Contract Work

- 4.6 Contract documentation is available on the LAA's website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standard-civil-contract-2018>.
- 4.7 Housing and Debt Contract Work is divided into two broad areas:
 - Controlled Work: generally basic levels of advice and assistance prior to issue of proceedings; and
 - Licensed Work: generally representation – issue and conduct of proceedings and advocacy.

- 4.8 Controlled Work cases are known as ‘Matters’ or ‘Matter Starts’. Controlled Work permits Providers with available Matter Starts to assist clients directly without prior authority from the LAA.
- 4.9 There is no limit to the volume of Licensed Work that a Provider may undertake. However, funding applications must be submitted to the LAA for each Licensed Work case.
- 4.10 Whilst the LAA may allocate a certain volume of Matter Starts to Providers, no guarantee is provided in relation to the volume or value of work which individual Providers will receive/be paid for under any Housing and Debt Contract. Services are provided under open market conditions and clients are free to choose from those Providers holding a Housing and Debt Contract.

Payment

- 4.11 Payments under Housing and Debt Contracts will be at the rates set out in Legal Aid Legislation.

Supplementary Matter Starts

- 4.12 Applicants should familiarise themselves with the Housing and Debt Contract provisions regarding the award of Supplementary Matter Starts and re-allocating Matter Starts at clauses 1.21 - 1.24 of the Specification.

Miscellaneous

- 4.13 Applicants awarded a Housing and Debt Contract to undertake Housing and Debt Contract Work will receive an additional allocation of 5 Miscellaneous Matter Starts included on each Schedule. Where an Applicant already holds a Schedule for an Office and has been awarded an additional Schedule to undertake Housing and Debt Contract Work, it will not receive an additional allocation of Miscellaneous Matter Starts, as these will already have been allocated to that Office.
- 4.14 Detail on the work classified as ‘Miscellaneous’ for the purposes of the Housing and Debt Contract is included in the Category Definitions which forms part of the Housing and Debt Contract.

SECTION 5: MINIMUM HOUSING AND DEBT CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Any organisation who meets the below minimum five contract requirements may tender for a Housing and Debt Contract. **All** Applicants tendering to deliver Housing and Debt Contract Work must be able to provide evidence with their Tender as to how they meet the following **five** requirements:

Minimum requirements – Generic requirements

No	Requirement	How will I evidence the requirement?	When do I need to evidence requirement?										
1	The Applicant holds a relevant Quality Standard throughout the Contract Period.	<p>Applicants must be able to evidence when they submit their Tender that they hold either the LAA's Specialist Quality Mark ("SQM") following audit by the LAA's SQM Audit Provider or the Law Society's Lexcel Practice Management standard ("Lexcel") which is valid at the Contract Start Date.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>Applicant Type</i></th> <th><i>Requirement</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Applicants who intend to hold the SQM</td> <td>- Pass desktop audit by 23.59 on 31 May 2023 - Fully pass the Pre-QM audit within six months of the Contract Start Date</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Applicants who intend to hold Lexcel</td> <td>- Achieve Lexcel accreditation by 23.59 on 31 May 2023</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Applicants who already hold Lexcel</td> <td>- Must hold a valid accreditation that will be in force until at least the Contract Start Date</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Applicants who already hold an SQM audited by the LAA's SQM Audit Provider</td> <td>- Must hold a valid accreditation that will be in force until at least the Contract Start Date</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Further information about the SQM and how to register with the LAA's current SQM Audit Provider can be found at http://www.recognisingexcellence.co.uk/sqm/.</p> <p>Further information on Lexcel can be found on The Law Society's website: http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/productsandservices/lexcel.page</p>	<i>Applicant Type</i>	<i>Requirement</i>	Applicants who intend to hold the SQM	- Pass desktop audit by 23.59 on 31 May 2023 - Fully pass the Pre-QM audit within six months of the Contract Start Date	Applicants who intend to hold Lexcel	- Achieve Lexcel accreditation by 23.59 on 31 May 2023	Applicants who already hold Lexcel	- Must hold a valid accreditation that will be in force until at least the Contract Start Date	Applicants who already hold an SQM audited by the LAA's SQM Audit Provider	- Must hold a valid accreditation that will be in force until at least the Contract Start Date	<p>As part of the Housing and Debt ITT Response, or by 23.59 on 31 May 2023.</p> <p>Applicants are advised to apply for their chosen Quality Standard as early as possible. It is the sole responsibility of the Applicant to contact the Quality Standard auditing organisation and arrange any necessary audits. The LAA assumes no responsibility for monitoring Applicants' progress towards achieving a Quality Standard.</p> <p>Applicants are solely responsible for paying all necessary fees to the Quality Standard auditing organisation.</p> <p>Where an Applicant already holds the SQM following audit by the LAA's SQM Audit Provider or is in the process of being audited by them, it need not reapply for the SQM, unless it must do so to continue to hold the SQM.</p>
<i>Applicant Type</i>	<i>Requirement</i>												
Applicants who intend to hold the SQM	- Pass desktop audit by 23.59 on 31 May 2023 - Fully pass the Pre-QM audit within six months of the Contract Start Date												
Applicants who intend to hold Lexcel	- Achieve Lexcel accreditation by 23.59 on 31 May 2023												
Applicants who already hold Lexcel	- Must hold a valid accreditation that will be in force until at least the Contract Start Date												
Applicants who already hold an SQM audited by the LAA's SQM Audit Provider	- Must hold a valid accreditation that will be in force until at least the Contract Start Date												
2	The Applicant has appropriate authorisation from a Relevant Professional Body where required under the Legal Services Act 2007 ¹	<p>Applicants will be required to provide confirmation of the Applicant's SRA or BSB number or CILEx Regulation ID</p> <p>Where, transitional provisions apply to an Applicant under Legal Services Act 2007, they must confirm this in their Housing and Debt ITT Response.</p>	As part of the Housing and Debt ITT Response, or by 23.59 on 31 May 2023.										

Housing and Debt Category-specific requirements

¹ The required services include "reserved legal activities" which can only be carried on by authorised persons, exempt persons, or certain non-commercial organisations which are subject to transitional provisions, as defined within the Legal Services Act 2007. Applicants for a Housing and Debt Contract must, therefore, ensure that they have all necessary licences and authorisations from a Relevant Professional Body to conduct Contract Work

No	Requirement	How will I evidence the requirement?	When do I need to evidence requirement?
3	Each Applicant must employ at least one Full Time Equivalent (“FTE”) Supervisor who (1) meets the Supervisor Standard in the relevant Category ² and (2) works at the Office(s) from which it has submitted an Individual Bid.	<p>The Applicant must provide, at least one fully compliant Housing & Debt Supervisor Declaration Form, which demonstrates the required case and case involvement from the required period, immediately preceding the date the form is submitted. Applicants should ensure they submit the appropriate number of Supervisor Declaration Forms for the number of Individual Bids they are making.</p> <p>The Supervisor Declaration Form is available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standard-civil-contract-2018</p> <p>For the purposes of obtaining a Contract, use of external (i.e. non-employed) Supervisors is not permitted</p>	As part of the Housing and Debt ITT Response, or by 23.59 on 31 May 2023.
4	<p>Applicants must deliver services from a Permanent Presence within the Procurement Area(s) bid for.</p> <p>Applicants should check that they tender in the correct Procurement Area for their Office(s). To do this, an Applicant must enter the postcode for their Office (or intended Office) into the ‘Find your local council’ tool on the Gov.uk website: https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council. Annex A lists the relevant Procurement Areas for the Housing and Debt Categories and the local authorities included in each.</p>	<p>Applicants should provide the address(es) of the Permanent Presence where they intend to deliver Housing and Debt Contract Work, where known at the time of tender, together with the relevant LAA account number where the Applicant is a current LAA contract holder at that Office.</p> <p>If an Applicant does not yet know the address of the Office from which they intend to deliver Contract Work they should enter ‘TBC’ in response to the relevant questions in the ITT.</p>	<p>Applicants are required to confirm they will meet the relevant Office requirements as part of their Tender.</p> <p>All Applicants must be able to evidence by 23.59 on 31 May 2023 that they meet the Office requirements. An Applicant’s Office location must be in the Procurement Area for which it Tenders. The LAA will validate address details provided as part of verification.</p>
5	Applicants must employ at least one Part Time Equivalent (“PTE”) Authorised Litigator with experience of delivering Housing and Debt cases, who will be available to each of its Offices to deliver Licensed Work.	Applicants will be required to provide the full name and roll number of the Authorised litigator.	As part of the Housing and Debt ITT Response, or by 23.59 on 31 May 2023.

² Supervisor Standards are set out at sections 2.10 – 2.25 of the General Specification and the Legal Competence Standards set out in detail in the relevant Category Specification.

SECTION 6: COMPLETION OF A HOUSING AND DEBT ITT RESPONSE

- 6.1 The Housing and Debt ITT can be found in in the eTendering system in Project 154 at ITT 870 – Housing and Debt ITT.
- 6.2 The Housing and Debt ITT (which is replicated at Annex B of this IFA) contains a series of questions covering the following areas:
- Individual Housing and Debt Bid details (Section A)
 - Verification (Section B)
 - Warranties and Declarations (Section C)
- 6.3 Applicants must respond to each question by selecting the correct drop-down option or by providing a typed answer in the free text box provided. Each free text box is limited to 2000 characters (including spaces).
- 6.4 Where a question requires a response from a drop-down menu, Applicants may either select an option from the drop-down list or, if they know the answer option they wish to select, use the quick search functionality by typing in the ‘response’ box in the e-Tendering system.
- 6.5 Applicants responding to the Housing and Debt ITT and who wish to tender from more Offices than is catered for in the eTendering system will be required to submit further details of its Offices in the Additional Office Information Form. This form can be found in the ‘buyer attachments’ section of the Housing and Debt ITT and must be submitted as part of the Housing and Debt ITT Response.
- 6.6 A declaration in the form set out at Section C of the Housing and Debt must be provided by an individual who has sufficient authority to bind the Applicant.

Submission of verification information

- 6.7 Applicants will be able to submit verification information as part of their Housing and Debt ITT Response, or to provide that information by the verification deadline of 23.59 on 31 May 2023.
- 6.8 Please note that because attachments must be completed outside of the e-Tendering system and uploaded into the Housing and Debt ITT Response, it is not possible for the e-Tendering system to prevent incorrect or incomplete information being submitted and it is the Applicant’s responsibility to ensure fully completed and accurate information is attached.
- 6.9 Applicants should check the contents of any attachments on the eTendering system (found in the “Actions” menu) prior to the submission of the Housing and Debt ITT Response. Applicants should go to the section in the Housing and Debt ITT against which the attachments are uploaded and select “Download”. This will open the versions of the attachments uploaded as part of the Response.

Submission of documentation to support contract administration

Applicants bidding to open new Offices as part of this procurement process

- 6.10 Where Applicants intend to open a new Office to deliver Housing and Debt Contract Work, in addition to confirming the Office address and postcode, they will be required to complete and return an AC1 form and supporting documents so the new Office can be allocated a LAA account number and set up on the LAA systems.
- 6.11 The AC1 form is available at: www.gov.uk/guidance/update-your-details-with-laa
- 6.12 An AC1 and supporting documents can be submitted as part of the Housing and Debt ITT Response or by 23.59 on 31 May 2023. Please note that the AC1 form and supporting documents must be merged into a single document and the single document uploaded into the eTendering system.

Applicants with limited liability

- 6.13 Applicants with limited liability (unless a registered charity) must supply the LAA with a properly completed personal guarantee and indemnity. This will be requested as part of verification (either at Stage 2 or Stage 4, as applicable).
- 6.14 The personal guarantee and indemnity must be signed by the ultimate owners of the Applicant and/or such persons as the LAA might reasonably regard as being controllers and/or senior managers of the Applicant and/or where the Applicant is a limited company, from any company which is its holding company.
- 6.15 A copy of the indemnity form is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-guarantee-and-indemnity>
- 6.16 A personal guarantee and indemnity can be submitted as part of the Housing and Debt ITT Response or by 23.59 on 31 May 2023.
- 6.17 Where an Applicant fails to provide a completed AC1 form and associated documentation or a compliant indemnity on or by 23.59 on 31 May 2023, the LAA may withdraw its offer of Housing and Debt Contract Work to the relevant Office(s). This may impact on the LAA's decision to award HLPAS Contract Work.

Submitting a Housing and Debt ITT Response

- 6.18 Before submitting its Housing and Debt ITT Response, an Applicant must check that it has answered all questions correctly. If the Response is incomplete it may be assessed as unsuccessful.

SECTION 7: HOUSING AND DEBT ITT RESPONSE ASSESSMENT

7.1 Applicants must ensure they submit an SQ Response and HLPAS ITT Response. If no SQ Response or HLPAS ITT Response has been submitted, this will result in an incomplete Tender and the LAA will reject the Applicant's Housing and Debt ITT Response in its entirety.

7.2 Housing and Debt ITT Responses will then be assessed in the following stages:

Stage 1 – Housing and Debt requirements assessment

Stage 2 – Verification (1)

Stage 3 – Contract award

Stage 4 – Verification (2) (if applicable)

Stage 1 – Housing and Debt requirements assessment

7.3 The LAA will conduct an assessment of:

- (a) any address and postcode details provided as part of an Individual Housing and Debt Bid; and
- (b) the declarations and warranties provided as part of the Housing and Debt ITT Response.

7.4 The LAA will review any address and postcode details to check that the address and postcode provided fall within the Procurement Area stated in the corresponding Individual Housing and Debt Bid. This will be done by entering the postcode into the 'Find your local council' tool on the Gov.uk website: <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council> and then checking that the local authority returned is in the relevant Procurement Area as set out in Annex A.

7.5 Where an Applicant's Individual Housing and Debt Bid includes an Office which the LAA identifies is not in the Procurement Area stated in their Individual Housing and Debt Bid, the LAA will not reject the Individual Housing and Debt Bid outright.

7.6 The LAA will inform the Applicant at the point of notification that their Office location provided is not in the Procurement Area stated in their Housing and Debt ITT Response and offer the Applicant the opportunity to verify from which Procurement Area it wishes to establish its Office (either the Procurement Area selected in its Housing and Debt ITT Response or the Procurement Area in which the Office address provided as part of verification falls).

7.7 Applicants should note, however, that this may impact on the assessment of their HLPAS ITT Response, and in particular, any score achieved in respect of the Proximity Award Criterion.

7.8 For this HLPAS-specific criterion (Proximity Award Criterion), the LAA will identify whether their Office falls within the corresponding or neighbouring Housing and Debt

Area to the HLPAS area being tendered for and will be awarded a score, based on their Office location. Where the Housing and Debt Procurement Area no longer matches the option selected in response to the Proximity Award Criterion, the Applicant's response will be re-scored to 0. Please see paragraphs 7.15 – 7.16 of the [HLPAS IFA](#) for more information.

- 7.9 Where an Applicant is unable to evidence by the verification deadline of 23.59 on 31 May 2023 that they have an Office which is in the Procurement Area tendered for as part of the Individual Housing and Debt Bid, or, where they have provided an address in a different Procurement Area, confirmed the Procurement Area in which they wish to be based in, the LAA may reject the relevant Individual Housing and Debt Bid.
- 7.10 Any such rejection of an Individual Housing and Debt Bid may also result in the rejection of the Applicant's Individual HLPAS Bid.

Declarations and warranties assessment

- 7.11 The LAA will assess the declarations given in an Applicant's Housing and Debt ITT Response to ensure the Applicant has provided the necessary declarations and warranties on a pass/fail basis.
- 7.12 Where the Applicant fails to provide the necessary declarations and warranties, the whole Housing and Debt ITT Response may fail.
- 7.13 Applicants who are assessed as having provided the necessary declarations and warranties will be eligible for the award of a Housing and Debt Contract, and their Tender will be assessed as successful subject to verification (Stage 2 and 4, as applicable).

Stage 2 – Verification (1)

- 7.14 All successful Applicants will be required to verify their Individual Housing and Debt Bids and all Contract awards will be conditional on Individual Housing and Debt Bids being satisfactorily verified by the LAA.
- 7.15 Verification requirements are set out in the tables at paragraph 5.1 and, where applicable, paragraphs 6.10 – 6.17.
- 7.16 Applicants will have two opportunities to submit compliant verification information in respect of their Individual Housing and Debt Bids:
- (a) with their Housing and Debt ITT Response; and
 - (b) by 23.59 on 31 May 2023.
- 7.17 The LAA will assess any verification information submitted in an Applicant's Housing and Debt ITT Response (Section B).

- 7.18 Where, on assessment, the verification information submitted with an Applicant's Housing and Debt ITT Response is non-compliant, this will be communicated as part of the outcome notification letter and Applicants will have a further opportunity to provide compliant information by 23.59 on 31 May 2023.
- 7.19 Where Applicants choose not to submit compliant verification information with their Housing and Debt ITT Response, they will have a single opportunity to provide compliant information by 23.59 on 31 May 2023.
- 7.20 The LAA will not enter into a contract with an Applicant until the verification process is concluded.
- 7.21 Where the Applicant is unable to provide compliant verification information by 23.59 on 31 May 2023, an Applicant's Individual Housing and Debt Bid will be rejected. This may also result in any Individual HLPAS Bid being rejected.
- 7.22 For the avoidance of doubt, if it becomes necessary for the LAA to withdraw the award to an Individual Housing and Debt Bid as a consequence of their failure to satisfactorily verify their Housing and Debt ITT Response, the LAA shall have no responsibility whatsoever to the Applicant (or any related party) for any cost, expense or any other liability they have incurred or may incur in the course of submitting their Tender.

Stage 3 – Contract award

- 7.23 All Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the assessment of their Housing and Debt ITT Response through the eTendering system. Notifications to Applicants whose Housing and Debt ITT Response has been assessed as unsuccessful will include details as to why.

Stage 4 – Verification (2) (as applicable)

- 7.24 Where an Applicant has provided non-compliant verification information as part of its Housing and Debt ITT response, or chose not to provide some or all of the required verification information with its Response, it must provide this by 23.59 on 31 May 2023 and this will be set out in their notification letter.
- 7.25 Applicants relying on this additional stage of verification must read paragraphs 7.15 – 7.23 of this IFA for further details.

Applicants successful in their award of a 2018 Housing and Debt Contract

- 7.26 Applicants will be notified when they have provided compliant verification information.
- 7.28 Only those Applicants that receive this notification will have their HLPAS ITT Response assessed.

Applicants unsuccessful in their award of a 2018 Housing and Debt Contract

- 7.29 Applicants will be notified if they have not provided compliant verification information.
- 7.30 Applicants who have not provided compliant verification information by 23.59 on 31 May 2023 will have their Housing and Debt Contract Work award withdrawn.
- 7.31 Applicants who have not provided compliant verification information by 23.59 on 31 May 2023 will have their HLPAS ITT Response rejected.

Issuing Contract documentation

- 7.32 Contract documentation will only be issued to Applicants who have successfully verified their Housing and Debt ITT Response by 23.59 on 31 May 2023.
- 7.33 Where an Applicant submits a Housing and Debt ITT Response, is notified that it has been successful and is subsequently notified that it has submitted compliant verification information but is not successful in being awarded HLPAS Contract Work under this procurement process, the Applicant will still be awarded a Housing and Debt Contract in accordance with the process set out in the IFA.

*Applicants who **do not** currently hold a 2018 Contract*

- 7.34 Where Applicants do not currently hold a 2018 Contract, Contract documentation will be issued and executed electronically via Adobe Sign. Once executed Applicants will be able to view their Contract documents, including the Schedule in the LAA's 'Contracted Work and Administration' ("**CWA**") system.
- 7.35 To view their Housing and Debt Contract in CWA an Applicant must have been set up on the LAA systems and issued with an LAA account number for each new Office.
- 7.36 Housing and Debt Contracts which have also have a HLPAS Schedule will need to be executed prior to 1 September 2023.
- 7.37 Please note that the Contract for Signature for successful Applicants who do not currently hold a 2018 Contract will be amended so that recital A refers to the date on which this IFA was published, and, at Clause 2.1, the Contract Start Date will be expressed as being 1 September 2023 and the Contract Period defined as the period from the Contract Start Date to 31 August 2024.

Applicants who currently hold a 2018 Contract

- 7.38 Applicants may be party to no more than one 2018 Contract. Therefore, if an Applicant who already holds a 2018 Contract successfully bids for Contract Work available through this procurement process the award of Contract Work will be made through their existing 2018 Contract, either through a new Schedule or through an amendment to an existing Schedule.

- 7.39 Under the 2018 Contract organisations have one or more Schedules (i.e. one Schedule for each Office). Each Schedule details the Contract Work (including Categories of Law and Matter Start allocations) authorised at the Office.
- 7.40 Where an Applicant has tendered through this procurement process from an Office for which they already have a Schedule, Housing and Debt Contract Work awarded through this procurement process will be added to their Contract through an amendment to that existing Schedule.
- 7.41 Where an Applicant has tendered through this procurement process from an Office for which they do not already have a Schedule, a new Schedule for that Office will be added to their 2018 Contract.

SECTION 8: GENERAL RULES OF THIS PROCUREMENT PROCESS

- 8.1 The rules of this procurement process are set out at Section 5 of the SQ IFA and can be found at [Housing Loss Prevention Advice Services \(HLPAS\) and Housing and Debt services from August 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/housing-loss-prevention-advice-services-hlpas-and-housing-and-debt-services-from-august-2023)
- 8.2 Applicants must read the rules of the procurement process in full.

ANNEX A: PROCUREMENT AREAS

This Annex provides details of Housing and Debt Procurement Areas.

Applicants should check that they tender in the correct Procurement Area for their Office(s). To do this, Applicants must enter the postcode for their Office (or intended Office) into the 'Find your local council' tool on the Gov.uk website: <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>. This Annex A lists the Housing and Debt Procurement Areas and the local authorities included in each.

LAA Regional Office	Housing and Debt Procurement Area	Local Authorities included in the Procurement Area
Birmingham	Shropshire	Shropshire Council Telford & Wrekin Council
Brighton	North Kent and Medway	Dartford Borough Council Gravesham Borough Council Medway Council Swale Borough Council
Bristol	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire County Council
	Wiltshire	Swindon Borough Council Wiltshire County Council
Leeds	City of Kingston upon Hull	Hull City Council
Liverpool	Liverpool	Liverpool City Council
	Wirral	Wirral Borough Council
Manchester	Cheshire	Cheshire East Council Cheshire West and Chester Council
	Wigan	Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
Nottingham	City of Leicester	Leicester City Council
Reading	Southampton	Southampton City Council

ANNEX B: HOUSING AND DEBT ITT

Section A - Individual Bid details

	Question	Response Type
Note	Applicants wishing to bid for a Housing and Debt Contract must submit a response to this Invitation to Tender. Applicants must ensure that they also complete and submit an SQ Response (ITT_ 869) and at least one of the HLPAS ITTs (ITT_872 - 883)	
Note	<p>Before submitting your Housing and Debt ITT Response, please carefully read the Procurement of the Housing Loss Prevention Advice Service in England and Wales from September 2023 Housing and Debt Contract Work Information for Applicants. This can be downloaded from the 'Buyer Attachments' section at the top of this page. This Information for Applicants (IFA) gives information about the Housing and Debt Contract Work stage of the procurement process, including how to complete a Housing and Debt ITT Response.</p> <p>When completing your Housing and Debt ITT Response you should save your work regularly.</p> <p>If you are logged onto the eTendering system but do not use it for 15 minutes, the eTendering system will notify you through a 'pop up'. So that you can see this and click the 'Refresh' link in this 'pop up', please ensure that 'pop ups' are NOT blocked on your browser so you are not disconnected from the eTendering system and do not lose any unsaved information.</p> <p>Do not use the 'Back' or 'Forward' buttons on your browser; you could potentially lose your work. Please use the links on the eTendering system to navigate.</p>	
A.1.i	Please confirm the Procurement Area in which you wish to deliver Housing & Debt Contract Work	Options list:
Note	Where the Applicant indicates that it is tendering to deliver Housing and Debt Contract Work from multiple Offices, it will then be required to enter the relevant details as applicable for a second Office. It will then be asked to indicate whether it wishes to deliver work from another Office and give the details, and so on for up to 5 Offices. Where an Applicant wishes to	

	tender to deliver Contract Work from more than 5 Offices, it will be required to submit further details of its Offices in the Additional Office Information Form. This form can be found in the ‘buyer attachments’ section of the Housing and Debt ITT and must be submitted as part of the Housing and Debt ITT Response	
A.1.ii	Is the Applicant intending to deliver Housing and Debt Contract Work from another Office?	Options list: Yes No
A.2.i	<p>Please enter the Office address (excluding postcode) from which you intend to deliver Housing and Contract Work in this Procurement Area.</p> <p>In accordance with paragraph 5.1 of the IFA, Applicants are not required to have operational offices at the point of submitting a Tender. If you do not yet know the address of the Office from which you intend to deliver Contract Work in this Procurement Area, please enter ‘TBC’. This information must be provided by 23.59 on 24 March 2023.</p>	Free text
A.2.ii	<p>Please enter the Office postcode for the Office from which you intend to deliver Housing and Debt Contract Work in this Procurement Area.</p> <p>In accordance with paragraph 5.1 of the IFA Applicants are not required to have operational offices at the point of submitting a Tender. If you do not yet know the postcode of the Office from which you intend to deliver Contract Work in this Procurement Area, please enter ‘TBC’ This information must be provided by 23.59 on 24 March 2023.</p>	Free text
A.2.iii	<p>If the Applicant currently delivers legal aid contract work from the Office from which it intends to deliver Housing and Debt Contract Work in this Procurement Area please enter the LAA Account Number for this Office.</p> <p>LAA Account Numbers are alphanumeric and are 6 characters long, e.g. 1A234B and can be found on the Applicant’s current LAA Contract Schedule documentation.</p>	Free text

	Where you do not currently have a LAA Account Number for this Office please enter 'N/A'.	
A.2.iv	Is the Applicant intending to deliver Housing and Debt Contract Work from more than 5 Offices?	Yes (Answer A.2.v) No
A.2.v	Please attach a completed Additional Office Information Form	Attachment

Section B – Verification information

Note	In accordance with paragraph 5.1 of the IFA, Applicants may submit compliant verification information with their Housing and Debt ITT Response or by no later than 23.59 on 24 March 2023. This consists of a compliant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRA number, BSB number or CILEx Regulation ID • Lexcel Certificate or SQM Certificate, valid at the Contract Start Date • Supervisor Declaration Form for each Supervisor named in an Applicant’s Individual Bids • Authorised Litigator name and roll number 	
	Question	Response Type
NOTE	Applicants are encouraged to provide compliant verification information with their Housing and Debt ITT Response but have a further opportunity to provide it following notification that the LAA intends to award a Housing a Debt Contract and by no later than 23.59 on 24 March 2023.	
B.1	Please provide the Applicant organisation’s SRA number, BSB number or CILEx Regulation ID. Where the Applicant is currently not authorised, please answer “TBC” Where the Applicant is able to deliver reserved legal services without authorisation, please answer “N/A”	Free text

B.2.i	Does the Applicant wish to provide verification of their Quality Standard with their Housing and Debt ITT?	Options list: Yes (please answer B.2.ii) No (please answer B.3.i)
B.2.ii	Please provide the Applicant’s Lexcel Certificate or SQM Certificate, valid at the Contract Start Date	Attachment
B.3.i	Does the Applicant wish to provide verification of their Supervisor with their Housing and Debt ITT?	Options list: Yes (please answer B.3.ii) No (please answer B.4.i)
B.3.ii	<p>The Applicant must employ at least one FTE Supervisor that meets the requirements of the Contract and the Supervisor Standard in the Housing and Debt Categories of Law.</p> <p>Please provide at least one compliant Supervisor Declaration Form for each Supervisor in the Housing & Debt Category of Law.</p> <p>As set out at paragraph 2.26 of the Specification, a Supervisor may supervise at a maximum of two Offices or across two Providers with one Office each. In accordance with paragraph 5.1 of the IFA, Applicants should ensure they submit the appropriate number of Supervisor Declaration Forms for the number of Individual Bids they are making.</p> <p>Where an Applicant wishes to submit more than one Supervisor Declaration Form for one or more of its Individual Bids, the completed Supervisor Declaration Forms must be merged into a single document and the single document uploaded as an attachment.</p>	Attachment

	The Supervisor Declaration Form template is available to download from: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standard-civil-contract-2018 .	
B.4.i	Does the Applicant wish to provide verification of their Authorised Litigator with their Housing and Debt ITT?	Options list: Yes (please answer B.4.ii) No (please answer B.5.i)
B.4.ii	The Applicant must employ at least one PTE Authorised Litigator with experience of carrying out cases within the Housing & Debt Categories of Law. Please provide the Authorised Litigator's name and roll number.	Free text
B.5i	Does the Applicant wish to provide an AC1 form and supporting documents with their Housing and Debt ITT?	Options list: Yes (please answer B.5.ii) No (please answer B.6.i) N/A – not applying for a new Office (please answer B.6.i)
B.5i	Please attach a completed AC1 form and supporting documents Please note that the AC1 form and supporting documents must be merged into a single document and the single document uploaded into the eTendering system.	Attachment
B.6.i	Does the Applicant wish to provide a personal guarantee and indemnity with their Housing and Debt ITT?	Options list:

		Yes (please answer B.6.ii) No (please go to section C) N/A – Applicant does not have limited liability (please go to section C)
B.6.ii	Please attach a completed personal guarantee and indemnity	Attachment

Section C: Warranties and Declaration

This section MUST BE COMPLETED by all Applicants wishing to bid for Housing and Debt Contract Work through this procurement process.

Declaration

By completing and submitting this Housing and Debt ITT Response, the Applicant confirms that it will meet the following requirements by the Contract Start Date and confirms it will evidence that it meets these requirements as part of this Housing and Debt ITT Response:

- be authorised by a Relevant Professional Body. For the avoidance of doubt this does not preclude non-solicitor entities from applying. Individuals applying to hold the 2018 Contract must have all necessary licenses and authorisations to conduct Contract Work; and
- hold a relevant Quality Standard; and
- employ at least one FTE Supervisor who meets the Supervisor Standard in the Housing and Debt Categories of Law; and
- meet the one FTE Supervisor:four FTE Caseworkers ratio at each Office from which it is tendering to deliver Housing and Debt Contract Work; and

- employ at least one PTE Authorised Litigator with experience of delivering Housing and Debt cases, who will be available to each of its Offices to deliver Licensed Work; and
- have an Office that is a Permanent Presence in the Procurement Area(s) in which it is tendering to deliver Housing and Debt Contract Work

By completing and submitting this Tender I give my undertaking that I am an individual authorised to make this submission on behalf of the Applicant and that the answers submitted in this Housing and Debt ITT Response are correct. I understand that the information will be used in the process to assess the Applicant’s suitability to be offered Housing and Debt Contract Work.

I understand that the LAA may conduct verification checks and may reject this Housing and Debt ITT Response if there is a failure to answer all relevant questions fully or the information provided is inaccurate in any material way. I understand the LAA will verify my Housing and Debt ITT Response and I will be required to evidence the information and warranties in the Response, including in this ITT Response.

	Question	Response Type
C.1	Name of the individual making declaration on behalf of the Applicant	Free text
C.2	Status within the Applicant organisation	Free text