



26 August 2021

## Invitation to submit an Expression of Interest (“EOI”) to deliver Housing Possession Court Duty Schemes and Housing and Debt Contract Work

The Legal Aid Agency (“LAA” or “we”) has identified an issue with access on a small number of Housing Possession Court Duty Schemes (“HPCDS”) and one Housing Procurement Area and is now considering options for securing coverage to ensure access for clients.

### HPCDS services

There are 4 HPCDS Schemes for which we are seeking expressions of interest to begin delivering services as quickly as possible :

- The **Stockport HPCDS** which is delivered at Stockport Magistrates’ and County Court which falls within the Stockport Housing and Debt procurement area;
- The **Chester and Crewe HPCDS** which is delivered at Chester Civil & Family Justice Centre and Crewe County Court and Family Court Hearing Centre which falls within the Cheshire Housing and Debt procurement area;
- The **Sunderland HPCDS** which is delivered at Sunderland County Court and Family Court which falls within the Sunderland Housing and Debt procurement area;
- The **Cambridge HPCDS** which is delivered at Cambridge Family Court and County Court which falls within the Cambridgeshire Housing and Debt procurement area.

We are also seeking expressions of interest for the **Hull HPCDS** to be delivered from 1 November 2021 at Kingston Upon Hull Combined Court Centre which falls within the Kingston Upon Hull Housing and Debt Procurement area.

The LAA is inviting expressions of interest from organisations currently holding a 2018 Standard Civil Contract (“Contract”) with schedule authorisation in the Housing and Debt Categories of Law that would be interested in delivering one or more of these HPCDS through an additional exclusive schedule under the 2013 Standard Civil Contract (as amended) to start as soon as possible, lasting until 30 September 2022, apart from Hull HPCDS which will start from 1 November 2021 until 30 September 2022. Preference will be given to organisations whose Housing and Debt schedule authorisation is for an office based in the procurement area that corresponds with the HPCDS they are applying to deliver.

Organisations must be existing 2018 Standard Civil Contract holders but do not need to be existing HPCDS providers to respond to this opportunity.

The LAA intends to award the exclusive schedule for these HPCDS to a single provider. In instances where more than one organisation meets the preference criteria for a HPCDS the LAA may offer an exclusive schedule to more than one provider on a shared rota basis.

### Housing services in Cheshire

In addition to offering an exclusive schedule to deliver the Chester and Crewe HPCDS we are also offering interested organisations the opportunity to deliver Housing and Debt contract work in the corresponding Cheshire Procurement Area. Organisations who wish to deliver services in this area can express an interest to deliver either:

- both Chester and Crewe HPCDS **and** Housing and Debt Services in the Cheshire Procurement Area; or

- Housing and Debt Services in the Cheshire Procurement Area **only**; or
- Chester and Crewe HPCDS **only**.

There is no limit to the number of organisations we may authorise to deliver Housing and Debt services in Cheshire. However, when awarding the exclusive schedule to deliver Chester and Crewe HPCDS we will give preference to an organisation who expresses an interest in delivering and meets the requirements to deliver both Chester and Crewe HPCDS and Housing and Debt Services in the Cheshire Procurement Area. Organisations who apply to deliver Housing and Debt services only must be existing 2018 Standard Civil Contract holders but do not need to be a current housing and debt provider.

## Matter Starts Available

The 12-month Matter Start allocation of the each HPCDS is set out below. This would be pro-rated for the length of the Exclusive Schedule awarded.

Courts covered by scheme	Housing & Debt procurement area	Matter Start allocation	10% buffer	Maximum permitted
Stockport	Stockport	232	23	255
Cambridge	Cambridgeshire	166	17	183
Chester, Crewe	Cheshire	250	25	275
Sunderland	Sunderland	92	9	101
Kingston Upon Hull	Kingston Upon Hull	272	27	299

There is no limit to the number of Matter Starts the LAA intends to award in the Cheshire Procurement Area. Organisations who are successful through this process will be awarded 100 Matter Starts in Housing and 10 Matter Starts in Debt on a pro rata basis until 31 August 2022, subject to completing verification.

## Requirements

### HPCDS

The 2018 Standard Civil Contract requirements and which must be met to hold a schedule to deliver HPCDS (and the meaning of the defined terms used in the tables below) can be found on the 2018 Standard Civil Contract page <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standard-civil-contract-2018> . The LAA is interested to hear from organisations that would like to deliver the services who are able to meet all of the requirements.

In addition to the requirement to hold a 2018 Standard Civil Contract with authorisation to carry out work in the Housing and Debt Categories of Law, you will also be required to:

- Deliver advice under the Scheme, as soon as possible but no later than from 1 October 2021, apart from Hull HPCDS where delivery is required from 1 November 2021. For the avoidance of doubt preference will be given to organisations who are able to commence work soonest;
- Employ a Supervisor who meets the Housing & Debt Supervisor Standard or has an agreed arrangement with the LAA under the Temporary COVID-19 Standards (<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment>

[data/file/994990/Annex\\_A\\_Temporary\\_COVID\\_Standards\\_incorporating\\_Mediation\\_4\\_June\\_21.pdf](#)) and who will oversee the running of the HPCDS.

Organisations must submit a Supervisor Declaration form or a Temporary Covid Standard Agreement ([Standard civil contract 2018 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#));

- Undertake to liaise with the relevant court to ensure that the service is in place and ready to commence from the agreed service commencement date
- Cover all sessions that the court lists and provide services to any client who requests to see an adviser
- Staff the scheme with experienced housing advisers who, in the course of their work, conduct a minimum of 12 hours of housing casework per week.

Organisations should review the current requirements and detail their proposal for delivering the HPCDS in the relevant sections of the form below.

Exclusive schedules will cover the period from the date from which organisations confirm that they are able to commence work until 30 September 2022. The exclusive schedule for Hull HPCDS will cover the period from 1 November 2021 until 30 September 2022.

We may contract with a single provider for each HPCDS and the provider must have capacity to deliver all work in the Scheme either on its own or through the use of Agents.

### Housing and Debt

We would like to hear from organisations who want to deliver Housing and Debt services in the Cheshire Procurement area and who are able to meet the requirements of the 2018 Standard Civil Contract in full ([Standard civil contract 2018 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)). The minimum requirements to hold a 2018 Standard Civil Contract with authorisation in Housing and Debt are that an organisation:

- holds a relevant Quality Standard (SQM or Lexcel);
- has at least one Office in England and Wales which meets the Permanent Presence requirements set out in the 2018 Standard Civil Contract Specification;
- employs at least one Full Time Equivalent (“FTE”) Supervisor who meets the Supervisor Standard as set out at paragraph 2.10 – 2.25 of the 2018 Standard Civil Contract General Specification and in the Civil Contract Category Specific Rules Housing and Debt (Section 10) (1 January 2021) or the Temporary Covid Standard;
- meets the one FTE Supervisor to four FTE Caseworker ratio at each Office from which it will deliver Housing and Debt Services;
- each Office in the Procurement Area from which the Applicant is tendering to deliver Housing and Debt Contract Work must be a Permanent Presence
- employs 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.

## **Next Steps**

If you wish to express an interest in delivering HPCDS services and/or Housing and Debt services in the Cheshire procurement area please complete and email the EOI form to [civil.contracts@justice.gov.uk](mailto:civil.contracts@justice.gov.uk) by **5pm Thursday 9 September 2021**.

Following the deadline, the next steps will depend on the level of interest to this EOI. Where a single acceptable proposal is submitted for a HPCDS the LAA will invite that organisation to deliver the service and award that organisation the HPCDS exclusive schedule for that Scheme.

In instances where more than one organisation meets the preference criteria for a HPCDS the LAA may offer an exclusive schedule to more than one organisation on a shared rota basis.

There is no limit to the number of organisations we may authorise to deliver Housing and Debt work in the Cheshire Procurement area. We will give authorisation to all organisations that meet the LAA's minimum requirements.

## Invitation for Expressions of Interest to deliver Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme Services and Housing and Debt Services: Expression of Interest Form

Please complete the following information to express interest in delivering one or more Scheme and/or Housing and Debt services in Cheshire.

### 1. Provider details

Name of organisation:

Contact name:

Head office address and postcode:

LAA Account Number:

Contact telephone number:

Contact email address:

### 2. Services

Please confirm the services in which you are expressing an interest (please tick all that apply):

**Cambridge HPCDS**

Where you have ticked this Scheme, please provide the office address and LAA Account Number from which you intend to deliver it:

Please enter the date from which you are able to commence delivering HPCDS services in the Cambridge Scheme:

Please confirm if you meet the requirement to employ a Housing & Debt Supervisor who meets the Supervisor Standard or the Temporary Covid Standard and will oversee the running of the HPCDS

Meet  If you have ticked 'meet' you must submit a Supervisor Declaration Form or a Temporary Covid Standard Agreement with your EOI

**Sunderland HPCDS**

Where you have ticked this Scheme, please provide the office address and LAA Account Number from which you intend to deliver it:

Please enter the date from which you are able to commence delivering HPCDS services in the Sunderland Scheme:

Please confirm if you meet the requirement to employ a Housing & Debt Supervisor who meets the Supervisor Standard or the Temporary Covid Standard and will oversee the running of the HPCDS

Meet  If you have ticked 'meet' you must submit a Supervisor Declaration Form or a Temporary Covid Standard Agreement with your EOI

**Stockport HPCDS**

Where you have ticked this Scheme, please provide the office address and LAA Account Number from which you intend to deliver it:

Please enter the date from which you are able to commence delivering HPCDS services in the Stockport Scheme:

Please confirm if you meet the requirement to employ a Housing & Debt Supervisor who meets the Supervisor Standard or the Temporary Covid Standard and will oversee the running of the HPCDS

Meet  If you have ticked 'meet' you must submit a Supervisor Declaration Form or a Temporary Covid Standard Agreement with your EOI

**Hull HPCDS**

Where you have ticked this Scheme, please provide the office address and LAA Account Number from which you intend to deliver it:

Are you able to deliver the Hull HPCDS from 1 November 2021:

Yes

No

Please confirm if you meet the requirement to employ a Housing & Debt Supervisor who meets the Supervisor Standard or the Temporary Covid Standard and will oversee the running of the HPCDS

Meet  If you have ticked 'meet' you must submit a Supervisor Declaration Form or a Temporary Covid Standard Agreement with your EO!

**Chester and Crewe HPCDS and Housing and Debt services in Cheshire  ; or**

**Chester and Crew HPCDS only  ; or**

**Housing and Debt services in the Cheshire Procurement Area only**

Where you have ticked to deliver Chester and Crewe HPCDS and/or Housing and Debt services in the Cheshire Procurement Area, please provide the office address and LAA Account Number from which you intend to deliver the service:

Please enter the date from which you are able to commence delivering services in the Chester and Crew Scheme and/or Housing and Debt Service in the Cheshire Procurement Area:

Please confirm if you meet the requirement to employ a Housing & Debt Supervisor who meets the Supervisor Standard or the Temporary Covid Standard and will oversee the running of the HPCDS

Meet  If you have ticked 'meet' you must submit a Supervisor Declaration Form or a Temporary Covid Standard Agreement with your EO!

**3. Agents (applies to HPCDS only)**

Do you intend to use Agents to deliver any of the Schemes for which you are expressing an interest?

Yes

No

On which Scheme(s) do you intend to use Agents?

Cambridge

Please provide the name(s) and office address(es) of the Agent(s) you intend to use:

Sunderland

Please provide the name(s) and office address(es) of the Agent(s) you intend to use:

Stockport

Please provide the name(s) and office address(es) of the Agent(s) you intend to use:

Hull

Please provide the name(s) and office address(es) of the Agent(s) you intend to use:

Chester and Crewe

Please provide the name(s) and office address(es) of the Agent(s) you intend to use:



**4. HPCDS Delivery Plan**

With reference to the HPCDS requirements detailed above please set out your plan for delivery of the services.

**5. Housing and Debt Delivery Plan**

If you are expressing an interest in delivering Housing and Debt Services in the Cheshire Procurement Area with reference to the Housing and Debt minimum requirements detailed above, please set out your plan for delivery of these services

## 6. Declaration

By completing and submitting this Expression of Interest you confirm that you are authorised to make this submission on behalf of the organisation and that the answers submitted in this Expression of Interest are correct.

In submitting this EOI you understand that the information will be used in the process to assess your organisation's suitability to be offered a HPCDS exclusive schedule for one or more of the Schemes being offered under this EOI and/or authorisation to deliver Housing and Debt Services in the Cheshire Procurement Area.

You understand that the LAA may conduct verification checks and may reject this EOI if there is a failure to answer all relevant questions fully or the information provided is inaccurate in any material way.

Name:

Position within organisation:

Date:

Please return this form to [civil.contracts@justice.gov.uk](mailto:civil.contracts@justice.gov.uk) by **5pm on Thursday 9 September 2021**