News story: Civil news: new matter start increases and quality requirements

We're reviewing the wording of contract schedules for work under the 2018 Standard Civil Contract to clarify our quality requirements for new matter start increases.

Why are you doing this now?

We're consulting with your representative bodies on the wording in the 2018 Standard Civil Contract concerning new matter starts. This is because we want to make sure there is a clear understanding on the new matter start (NMS) thresholds that trigger higher 'lot' quality requirements. We have been discussing this with the Civil Contracts Consultative Group (CCCG).

Why do the quality requirements change?

These criteria were put place for different 'lots' in the 2018 civil contract procurement process. In some categories of law, providers had to meet additional requirements if bidding in higher lots.

Which categories of law are affected?

Family, housing, immigration and asylum, and mental health.

How do the thresholds work?

Providers must meet the higher requirements when their NMS allocation reaches an amount which would have required them to bid in a higher lot during the procurement process. The 'lot' boundaries are set out in the various Information for Applicants (IFA) published documents on GOV.UK — see below.

Can you provide an example?

A mental health provider successfully bidding in 'lot 2' will have been awarded 300 NMS. This provider will not be required to meet the higher quality requirements until their NMS allocation reaches 500. This was the number of NMS they would have received had they successfully bid in 'lot 3' in the procurement process.

How will this be shown in contract schedules?

We plan to amend footnote 8 of the contract schedule to clarify the position set out above. We are in talks about the final wording with consultative bodies, including the Bar Council, Law Society, Legal Aid Practitioners Group

and the Advice Services Alliance.

Further information

[Information for Applicants](#)

You can contact your contract manager if you have any questions about this issue