



Drilling & Pumping Supplies Ltd

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Dear Sir / Madam

I am the Managing Director of a pump supply and installation company in Northern Ireland. We are based in Newtownards and employ 22 people and we are involved in public tendering to both the private and public sectors. The public sector tenders would be in the main to N.I. Water Service and District Councils with some private tenders to the main contractors involved in Water Service activities.

I have listed a number of points below which have affected our company for consideration:

- (1) Water Service tender C241 – completion date 1st March 2008. This tender was for the supply of waste water pumps and spares and was a very involved procedure to complete and now some 9 months later we still await the outcome.
 - (a) Part of the above was to have a design indemnity insurance policy in place to accompany the tender return which we had never required before but decided to fulfil the requirements at a cost of £3329.50 per annum which I feel is totally unjustified given the delay in the procedure, and now with only 3 months to run on the policy.
- (2) Water Service tender C311 – completion date 10th March 2008. Framework for the supply of water pumps and associated equipment. We entered into a partnership with our main supplier KSB Pumps to participate in this tender. This was once again a very involved procedure. We received notification in September 2008 (that the procedure had been delayed due to a review of the results and it has been decided not to progress with it). That was all! No further information or explanation has been received.
As an employer trying to keep our work force and premises moving forward, this type of activity by a public body is not very helpful.
- (3) Over a number of years we have had the opportunity to tender to main contractors involved in Water Service contracts. While we have been successful in some areas we have been unsuccessful in many others. This seems to be due to a perceived preference of our competition's equipment, regardless of the fact that our equipment was more economically advantageous to the client Water Service and in fact this became so prevalent that I contacted my MP Mrs Iris Robinson with my concerns and she was good enough to fight my case with Water Service and consequently with the assistance of Senior Water Service personnel we were able to turn a few decisions in our favour, but we still face the same prejudice to our equipment.
- (4) In conclusion – While my experience with Water Service has been difficult it seems that when contracts etc. are awarded there is no further information available to the unsuccessful parties i.e. price comparison, reason for failure, etc. There would appear to be no transparency to the tendering system in N. Ireland which leaves a small business like ours with no procedure to seek any post tender information.