



July 2007

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to you seeking your help and support. As you may know Remploy is the country's largest supported employer of people with disabilities. Remploy produces high quality and high value products and services and it provides decently paid and satisfying employment opportunities for more than 6,000 employees in 84 sites across Britain. However, it is currently facing an uncertain future. Recently, it announced proposals to close 43 of its factories

Until 1994, Remploy had operated under the Priority Suppliers Scheme which allowed Remploy, and other supported employers, preferential treatment when bidding for government contracts. The, then, Conservative government abolished the Priority Suppliers Scheme on the basis that it contravened European competition law. Cut adrift from a steady stream of public sector orders for manufactured goods Remploy responded by seeking out new markets and products to secure a successful future while staying within the Government's funding grant at a time when manufacturing generally was migrating from Britain. Given the uphill task it faced Remploy has not been able to do this without a steady stream of public procurement contracts which would guarantee an ongoing supply of work.

The Remploy Trade Union Consortium (consisting of GMB, Unite and Community) is leading a campaign to persuade the Government to intervene and look at new proposals to secure Remploy's future. Central to any proposals for a successful 21st Century Remploy is the urgent need to use public procurement contracts to generate a secure and steady stream of business. That is why I am writing to you to ask for your help.

Since January 2006 new Public Procurement regulations have provided that all public bodies can lawfully reserve at least one contract for a supported factory or business such as Remploy, where more than 50% of the employees are disabled, without the responsibility of going through the best value tender process. Additionally, reserving contracts to supported employers will help public sector bodies meet their disability equality duty, which came into force in December 2006.

The Trade Union Consortium is writing to councilors, local government and NHS procurement officers, school governors and many others to seek support. I know, from many years personal experience, that Remploy workers are ready, willing and able to exploit their manufacturing capacity to produce the high quality goods and to provide the bespoke services needed to meet your procurement requirements.

Remploy provides products and services to world class standards of quality, reliability and service. It works with multinationals as well as national governments and local authorities. With its proven track record for innovation this means that Remploy is well positioned to become your Supplier of Choice.

Did you know that Remploy is :

- A leader in recycling of electrical appliances
- One of Britain's main manufacturers of performance textiles and uniforms
- A key provider of outsourced service solutions in front and back office services, manufacturing, production, security, catering and maintenance with a blue chip customer base
- The market leader in providing educational and office furniture for public buildings
- A Tier 1 supplier to the automotive industry with clients like Jaguar, Landrover and BMW
- A print and packaging design specialist with clients as diverse as the BodyShop and the Ministry of Defence

We believe that there has been deliberate confusion created between first: the issue of using public procurement with an agreed Treasury subsidy to maintain supported employment, and second; the need to get disabled workers generally in to the mainstream economy. We do not support the position that it has either one or the other. We believe it must be both.

We strongly support the transition of disabled workers into regular employment, and consider that the agency that should be tasked with delivering this objective should be local Job Centres, who have the expertise and local knowledge. Remploy are proposing that they should be the agency to deliver this function, we do not agree. In any event the two issues are completely separate and who does this job has no bearing on finding a steady stream of work for the supported workshops. This is where you can help.

I am asking you to support us in our campaign to secure the future for all Remploy's manufacturing sites and help us save those 6,000 jobs by identifying orders for your council/ school or hospital that Remploy could fulfil. So please contact me, at the earliest opportunity, and I will be happy to explain more about our campaign as well as providing you with further details of the range of products and services that our disabled members are proud to be associated with.

I welcome your support and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours,



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