



SDP “Dovetails” Success with Social Enterprise

A Supported Business credits engagement with SDP for helping to win two public sector contracts in the Spring of 2019.

Dovetail Enterprises (1993) Ltd.

Dovetail is a Supported Business that manufactures certified internal fire doors as well as furniture and beds for the contract market. This social enterprise is located in Dundee and has 52 employees.



Prior to engaging with the Supplier Development Programme, Dovetail Enterprises (1993) Ltd. proactively attended training events organised by local authorities, which helped staff develop knowledge and experience. However, at that point, Dovetail’s experience of public sector tendering was ad hoc and unsuccessful. In 2016, Dovetail fully embraced the entire range of free Supplier Development Programme training courses and began attending SDP-organised events, such as annual Meet the Buyer events, the Glasgow City Region City Deal supplier event in June 2016 and the City of Edinburgh Council’s Meet the “Real” Buyer Event in May 2019.

For Dovetail, the Supplier Development Programme training was valuable because it raised awareness of the importance of correct and detailed submissions, including full specification, and highlighted the pitfalls to avoid, as well as the differences between different threshold opportunities and types of contracts. Jill Rettie, Sales Office Supervisor, said: “I have always found the SDP’s trainers to be very helpful and interactive creating an open environment for learning that leaves you looking forward to the next course.” In early 2018, three members of Dovetail staff participated in a myriad of SDP face-to-face training across Tayside, such as “Introduction to Working with the Public Sector” in Fife, “Introduction to Tendering” in Angus, “Using PCS and other portals” in Fife, and “Improving Your Bid Score” in Dundee. Over the last three years, Dovetail staff also participated in webinars on “Talking Tenders” to understand specific procurement processes with Stirling Council, West Dunbartonshire Council, Fife Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council), and South Lanarkshire Council.

Ann Jamieson, Business Development Manager, said the longevity of engagement with SDP has paid off: “Just in the last few weeks, we have been awarded two significant contracts. One is with Herriot Watt University for the supply of 440 mattresses, and the other is for the supply of furniture to the Scottish Government Social Security offices. These are both significant contracts which help us fulfil our aim of providing employment for those disadvantaged in the workplace.”

She continued: “I would always recommend attendance at workshops and training provided by the Supplier Development Programme. Along with useful information, helpful guidance and things not to do you, you also get the opportunity to meet representatives from other companies. It’s best to attend with an open mind, accept this is the route to market and ask lots of questions. Also, don’t be afraid to attend again to refresh what you have been told.”