



*Media release*

*December 11 2018*

### **Senior Cabinet Official threatens HES with “Death by a thousand cuts”**

On September 12th September 2018 in room 4/20 of 1 Horse Guards, a meeting was held between officials from Healthcare Environmental Services (HES) including Managing Director, Garry Pettigrew and the Cabinet Office.

At the meeting, HES was told that it was not processing the NHS waste quickly enough and the UK Government were going to step in and store the waste in illegal, unlicensed sites with HES paying for this at a cost of £1.4M.

Mr Pettigrew explained that the reason for the backlog was due to the lack of high-temperature incineration capacity within the UK, a point he had made on several occasions to the Environment Agency since January 2018.

He also explained that the HES Normanton site was over its permitted storage licence and asked that HES be given dispensation to clear the backlog, safely and securely at a cost that HES would pay of £400K. He was refused this and was told that if he did not agree to pay the £1.4M and go along with the government’s plan, HES would suffer “death by a thousand cuts.”

HES managing director Garry Pettigrew said: “I can’t believe that a personality clash between a government official and myself has led to the government victimising us and potentially putting 350 people out of work. Over the last nine weeks, we have detailed [the real story behind the scandal](#), which lies at the centre of government, with officials determined to keep us quiet and destroy us.

“We have been vilified for highlighting a UK incineration shortage, and the Environment Agency and the NHSI have supported the government in the cover-up. If there was capacity, why are hospitals in Yorkshire still stockpiling waste?

“The cabinet office directly contacted our landlords at several sites in England and told them to inspect them with the aim of finding fault so they could terminate our agreements. I have an email from a lawyer of one of the proprietors who is worried that they will be persecuted if they do not follow the government’s wishes. They are determined to close us down and they are using the might of the government to crush a UK company.”

HES was informed on Thursday 6 December that their remaining 35 Trust contracts with NHS England were terminated. This was after the UK government intervened to implement its contingency plan that will hand control to Mitie, a company with close links to the Conservative Party.

On the 4th of December 2018, HES was informed that its contracts with NHS Scotland would terminate and awarded to private Spanish company Tradebe; a company that currently only operates in the South of England. This now means that all of Scotland's waste will be transported hundreds of miles to England, as Tradebe do not have any facilities in Scotland.

Mr Pettigrew said, "If I was English I wouldn't be too happy about Scotland dumping its medical waste in my backyard. We have the facilities here in Scotland to deal with the waste but instead, we are going to transport it hundreds of miles by road, causing additional pollution and increased risk of spillage.

"For the life of me, I can't understand why the Scottish Government haven't intervened and supported us. There are 350 jobs at risk and despite trying to meet and talk with politicians in both the UK and Scottish Governments; we've been told they're too busy with Brexit."

"Hundreds of tonnes of clinical waste, including body parts, is still sitting in car parks in Yorkshire's hospitals, more than two months after the Minister for Health said it would be cleared. This is what will happen next in Scotland and at the busiest time of the year for the NHS."

Contracts held by HES with 17 Yorkshire and Humber health trusts were terminated in October in a dispute over a build-up of medical waste and given, without a tender process to Mitie. HES is now pursuing legal action against the trusts and seeking damages of up to £15m.

Mr Pettigrew said, "As explained in a [previous press release](#), the cost to NHS England and ultimately the taxpayer is now going to be three times the amount we were charging for the same waste collection service. If they extend the contract with Mitie it will cost £30M+ more than HES charged."

HES has set out its position on the medical waste backlog on its website –

<https://www.healthcareenv.com/the-truth>

Ends

Notes to editors:

- [The cost to the NHS in Yorkshire and Humber has trebled since the contracts were taken from HES](#)
- HES was established 22 years ago and employs almost 400 staff at seven UK depots. Its headquarters are in Shotts, Lanarkshire.

- It has invested £13m in the Shotts site to build a new [waste to energy](#) Pyrolysis facility that it is among the most advanced in the UK.
- HES is the only waste management company in the UK to invest in incineration capabilities in the last 30 years

**Garry Pettigrew is available for media interviews. To arrange this, please contact:**

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