

EXCELLENCE IN CATERING PROCUREMENT

CONWY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Austerity, strict nutrition regulations and problems reaching rural schools are everyday pressures for Conwy's education catering department. Find out how the council is working with TUCO to overcome each challenge through smart procurement, networking and due diligence.



A simple thing like changing your sage and onion stuffing supplier can present big challenges for a school meals service. Dafydd Aled Williams, education catering manager at Conwy County Borough Council knows this type of supply chain headache all too well.

"We have to be on our toes when it comes to product switching", he explains. "One type of stuffing might not contain nuts, but the new product might have traces. If we swap cheddar cheese,

baking margarine or any other product we need to ensure that new products comply with everything we have to comply with."

This is where TUCO can and does help. As the leading professional membership body for in-house caterers, TUCO procures food and beverages for 46 local authorities and 443 universities and colleges across the UK. Supply chain due diligence is a key service that members receive when they buy through TUCO frameworks.

Head of contracts, Jane Eve is always on hand to quickly respond to questions about the compliance of new food producers or brands. Her six-strong procurement team are well versed in the ever-changing, highly stringent food safety and health and safety regulations that local authorities have to observe, particularly because TUCO works with so many other council school meal services.

This dedicated support is something that Dafydd Aled Williams also appreciates when it comes to broader

WHAT'S ON THE MENU?

Conwy Council's school meals and catering service spends more than £913,000 a year through TUCO. Here's the breakdown of latest spend and savings:

Framework	ANNUAL SPEND (AUG 16 - JUL 17)	SAVING %	SAVING AMOUNT	PROCESS SAVING
CATERING LIGHT & HEAVY EQUIPMENT	£5,217.85	0.85%	£10.64 £34.09	£0.00
DISPOSABLES & KITCHEN CHEMICALS	£5,057.85	15.65% 7.48%	£30.71 £395.53	£0.00
FRESH/FROZEN MEAT & POULTRY	£53,757.57	19.62%	£60.92 £13,060.79	£0.00
FROZEN & CHILLED FOODS	£255,296.53	29.57%	£101,396.37 £5,789.75	£0.00
FRUIT & VEGETABLES	£134,449.35	5.14%	£520.10 £6,765.05	£0.00
GROCERY PROVISIONS & CHILLED FOODS	£240,326.57	11.46% 7.16% 11.46%	£1,627.36 £203.99 £1.93	£6,000.00
HOT BEVERAGES	£3,816.78	0.04%	£1.53	£0.00
INNOVATIVE FOOD CONCEPTS	£5,220.95	3.00%	£161.47	£0.00
MILK, DAIRY, MORNING GOODS & BREAD SUPPLY	£210,327.55	5.14%	£391.16 £1,744.66	£6,000.00
TOTAL	£913,471.00		£132,196.07	£12,000.00



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- Dafydd Aled Williams,
Conwy Council

SCHOOL MEALS IN CONWY - WHO'S BEING SERVED?

58 primary schools

1 secondary school

1 special needs school

4,000 meals a day

www.conwy.gov.uk

@ConwyCBC

food issues. "We use TUCO as a sounding board around the wider market place. If I had an issue with a supplier, I'd phone Jane first and say, 'this has happened, is it a trend or just a one-off?' I always get a sensible response back." For Dafydd, this dialogue is an opportunity to get things into perspective. "By the nature of what we do, we often act off the cuff and it's helpful to have a conversation with the TUCO team before we take action."

He continues to explain: "The supplier and contract management via TUCO has been useful. They helped me develop a strong case when I wanted to use a different meat supplier and move away from frozen food." Dafydd values the fact that he can be completely open with both TUCO and his suppliers. "They've helped me try to resolve issues - I can always raise any problems - that's been helpful."

Another platform for discussion is the quarterly meeting with all four North Wales local authorities, led by TUCO's head of contracts, Jane Eve. This is a networking and experience-sharing group and one that Dafydd Aled Williams and his peers find very useful. TUCO often invites a supplier or producer to present and the council officers discuss trends, monitor performance, share good practice and resolve difficulties together.

Dealing with the impact of austerity is a topic that often comes up and, like other local authorities, Conwy's school meals service has been affected. "We're forever having to prove that we are providing the best value to the people who pay for school meals, to the council and to rate payers," Dafydd comments.

TUCO has supported the council's school meals service to make this case,

cutting costs by £144,196 over the past year. Part of this reduction is a process saving, made when Conwy Council used two of TUCO's framework agreements with a spend over the EU threshold. If Dafydd and his team had conducted these two EU journal tenders themselves, the cost - estimated by using the HEFCE Efficiency Measurement Model (EMM) - would have been approximately £12,000.

In terms of cashable savings, Conwy's biggest reduction was a huge £107,000 on their frozen and chilled food bill - equivalent to 29.57%. Savings on fresh/frozen meat and poultry were also considerable - 19.62%, which works out as £13,121.

These discounts were achieved following a lot of hard work developing each contract so they really deliver for councils. As head of contracts, Jane Eve explains, TUCO's procurement team makes sure the local authorities themselves are at the heart of the tender process. "Dafydd and some of his North Wales counterparts are on our tender working parties. They have input into the specification and supplier assessment process, making sure the contracts work for them, right from the start."

One way that Conwy needs the contracts to work is around equality of supply for all schools. Nearly 20 percent of the Welsh population lives in areas that are broadly classified as rural and these regions often experience shortfalls in provision. Dafydd is under pressure to make sure rural schools get the same service from catering suppliers as urban schools do. It's TUCO's wide supply chain network, support for local SME producers and understanding of the regulations facing local authorities that helps him meet these pressures head on.

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About TUCO

TUCO is the leading professional membership body for in-house caterers operating in the higher and further education sector. Also among its members are more than 40 local authorities throughout the UK who benefit from savings and support for their catering operations.

It provides a platform where members can **Share and celebrate achievements; **Learn** via a range of courses, professional advice, training and study tours; **Grow** their business through the latest market research, trends and analysis; and **Buy** via TUCO's EU compliant catering frameworks and wide range of suppliers - maximising value through the combined £140m+ annual spend of TUCO members.**

If you would like to find out how TUCO can support your council's catering department, call us: 0161 713 3420, email us: info@tuco.ac.uk or visit www.tuco.ac.uk/buy

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The University Caterers Organisation