



# TUCO

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## Excellence in catering procurement

### Conwy County Borough Council

Conwy Council's education catering team uses TUCO to **boost supplier standards and guarantee EU compliance**. But the cashable savings have also stacked up with whole basket prices proving highly competitive.

**"Suppliers treat us differently because we are part of TUCO"** explains Conwy Council's education catering manager **Dafydd Aled Williams**.

Responsible for over 4,000 school meals a day throughout Conwy County Borough, North Wales, Dafydd has never had a supplier that failed to deliver in the four years he's been working for the council.

He believes this is down to the contract management processes TUCO puts in place.

"Because an agreement is carefully drawn up and then closely monitored by TUCO, if a supplier fails to deliver we would go straight to

our TUCO category manager and they would sort it out. TUCO help our security of supply by putting EU compliant contracts in place for us and then checking delivery closely."

Conwy Council's education catering manager also feels that suppliers respect the buying power, purchasing expertise and process formality that TUCO brings. This experience comes from the fact that TUCO buys over £100m worth of goods and services for catering departments in 28 councils and 340 universities and colleges each year.

Such strong education credentials 'prick' the conscience of suppliers, believes Dafydd.

**"I think suppliers always offer their best prices through TUCO. Most of the suppliers we now work with are not in it for a quick buck but for the long haul"**

**– Dafydd Aled Williams,  
Conwy Council**

"Companies realise they are dealing with schools, children and young people and they are sensitive to our customers' needs. No supplier has come to me yet and said 'if you aren't happy with TUCO prices then we'll give you better ones'. I think suppliers always offer their best prices through TUCO. Most of the suppliers we now work with are not in it for a quick buck but for the long haul. TUCO brings out the best in them."

Like the many other local government catering departments who work with TUCO, Conwy Council's caterers meet their TUCO category manager every few months. This gives staff a chance to talk through agreements at every point, from the early PQQ stage onwards.

This pre-tender phase is particularly important when it comes to complying with European Union procurement regulations. Something Dafydd is all too aware of. "A key reason we use TUCO is the whole process of conducting EU Journal tenders. We need to comply with EU procurement regulations and TUCO helps us do that from the start, without worrying about it."

### What's on the menu?

Conwy Council's education catering department spent a total of £1,046,690 through TUCO in the year April 2013 to March 2014. Here's the breakdown:

Frameworks Used	Total Spent	% Saving	Savings Total
Frozen	£286,484	12.24%	£35,065
Grocery	£285,589	7.00%	£19,991
Fruit & Vegetables	£138,215	10.00%	£13,821
Milk & Bread	£210,487	3.70%	£7,788
Meat & Poultry	£72,638	6.68%	£4,852
Disposables & Chemicals	£22,913	16.66%	£3,817
Light Equipment	£9,069	5.50%	£498
Hot Beverage	£14,855	1.27%	£188
Confectionery	£1,015	10.20%	£103
Innovative Catering Concepts	£5,425	1.77%	£96
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>£1,046,690</b>		<b>£86,219</b>





**“The benefits of using TUCO aren’t just about freeing up our time when it comes to EU tendering and STS accreditation, it’s about getting good food at better prices”**

**– Dafydd Aled Williams,  
Conwy Council**



As all public sector purchasers know, the world of EU procurement is highly complex and constantly changing. Jane Eve, category manager for TUCO and a first point of contact for Conwy County Borough Council, explains how catering teams are supported with this sort of complexity.

“We’ve streamlined the whole procurement process to make it user friendly to help our members quickly find the products needed. Vital information including EU compliance, pre-established terms and conditions and relevant accreditation is provided all in one place within the framework.”

Accreditation is another area where councils find TUCO’s help invaluable.

In 2005 the UK’s second largest outbreak of E.coli affected 118 people in South Wales. Most cases were children in 44 schools. Thirty-one people were admitted to hospital and a five year old boy tragically died.

Four years later a report into the outbreak, led by Professor Hugh Pennington, criticised past procurement procedures, concluding that there needed to be a minimum standard to guard against a repeat incident.

### SCHOOL MEALS IN CONWY COUNTY BOROUGH – WHO’S BEING SERVED?

- ▶ **60** primary schools
- ▶ **1** secondary school
- ▶ Total of **4,000** meals per day



In response to this, TUCO ensures that each of its framework suppliers has third party accreditation from food safety auditors STS (Support Training Services). Providers must prove to STS that they have reached high standards around the manufacture, dispatch and supply of ingredients.

This gives school meal managers like Dafydd Aled Williams the confidence that everything is being done to ensure children in Conwy County Borough eat safely.

In addition to these safeguards, Conwy Council’s education catering manager is also confident he’s getting value for money from TUCO. “If you look at the whole ‘basket’ then it’s cheaper with TUCO. I’ve done a comparison recently and I can prove that the TUCO tender costs and prices are lower.”

“The benefits of using TUCO aren’t just about freeing up our time when it comes to EU tendering and STS accreditation, it’s also about the priority of getting good food at better prices.”

The mantra at Conwy Council’s education catering department is ‘tasty, safe, nutritious and value for money’. From what Dafydd Aled Williams says, it looks like TUCO is helping the council to achieve each of these values.

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

