



# TUCO

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## Excellence in catering procurement

### Denbighshire County Council

Since using TUCO, Denbighshire Council has saved an average of 8% on school meals, keeping costs low and supplier standards high. Catering staff have had their time freed up, knowing that TUCO are looking after the tender process and making sure rigorous safety procedures are in place.

**While most local authorities charge around £2 for a primary school meal, Denbighshire Council has kept their price at £1.90 for the past five years.**

Catering manager Ian Kemp explains how: "We can only keep prices down through regular promotions and purchasing initiatives."

"This comes from providing the service to an increased uptake and keeping prices as sharp as possible through TUCO."

TUCO is the catering consortium that Denbighshire Council have been using to procure their school meals for the past four years. It's also used by another 27 local authorities, 4 NHS Trusts and 340 universities and colleges to purchase £100m worth of catering goods every year.

The result is significant buying power, a range

of 17 EU compliant catering frameworks and 182 different suppliers for councils to choose from.

"Local authorities are always under pressure", comments Ian Kemp. "Because Denbighshire is a small authority our buying power is limited so we benefit from working with the universities, colleges and other local authorities in the UK that TUCO work with."

Ian Kemp also believes that Denbighshire Council benefits from the procurement expertise that TUCO offers.

Denbighshire Catering and Cleaning Services operates with two managers – Ian Kemp and Hayley Jones – along with one area supervisor and, in term time only, two assistant area supervisors.

"We're a small management team and we're

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– Ian Kemp,  
Denbighshire Council

not professional procurement officers.

We just haven't got time to compile tenders and evaluate so TUCO are invaluable here.

We can go to them knowing they employ the specialists."

Indeed, TUCO's team of ten includes four category managers who look after every step of the tender process for members. Ian Kemp has regular meetings with Jane Eve, the TUCO category manager who manages Denbighshire's procurement activity. Other member councils in North Wales sometimes attend these meetings too, finding out about new frameworks and procurement developments. Quite often a supplier will talk about their latest initiatives. For Ian, this is a good way of keeping in touch with suppliers and other councils.

Ian and the catering team also work closely with TUCO to build contract specifications, ensuring that frameworks provide exactly what councils want. He also liaises with Jane Eve and other local authorities to pick the right supplier; sampling products, evaluating tenders and scoring submissions.

"It's a hands on process. These are not off-the-shelf contracts. They are bespoke for local authority catering services."



### What's on the menu?

Denbighshire Council's school meals catering service spent a total of £1,355,135 through TUCO from April 2013 to March 2014.

Frameworks Used	Total Spent	% Saving	Savings Total
Frozen	£375,138	12.24%	£45,916
Grocery	£511,955	7.00%	£35,836
Fruit & Vegetables	£98,648	10.00%	£9,864
Soft Drinks	£43,546	21.23%	£9,244
Milk & Bread	£174,726	3.70%	£6,464
Meat & Poultry	£65,412	6.68%	£4,369
Light Equipment	£22,556	5.50%	£1,240
Innovative Catering Concepts	£63,154	1.77%	£1,117
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>£1,355,135</b>		<b>£114,050</b>



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– Ian Kemp,  
Denbighshire Council



Due to such rigorous supplier selection, Denbighshire has secured some highly competitive rates. "Before we worked with TUCO there was a period when we were doing our own contracts and tenders but we were floundering around. Since working with TUCO we've generated significant savings".

The council's biggest saving this year has been on frozen food. A sizeable £45,916 or 12% has been saved. The same goes for groceries, where costs have been reduced by 7% or £35,836 through TUCO. In total, an average of 8% has been saved across 8 different frameworks.

These figures are calculated by benchmarking against the prices of other purchasing organisations through the Catering Price Index or by comparing prices from winning tenders against the average of all other tenders TUCO received.

For Ian Kemp it's a way of demonstrating best value. "These figures give us a strong argument to present to councillors when they question why, for example, we're using a supplier from outside the authority. Generally we use local suppliers but occasionally

another provider can offer a higher level of value for money and we use these figures to show we're getting the best value for local school children."

When councillors were again demanding answers during the horse meat scandal, the catering team turned to TUCO. Ian explains: "It was useful to have TUCO as an independent body that we could pass concerns on to. They would investigate and then give us a statement for councillors."

TUCO has stringent food safety standards in place, making it easy to demonstrate the provenance of ingredients. Before a supplier is appointed they are assessed by food safety auditors STS (Support Training Services) on the procedures they have in place for the manufacture, dispatch and supply of ingredients. Only those suppliers that reach a certain high standard are able to join the framework.

For Ian Kemp, this close management of the procurement process by TUCO is key. "TUCO enable us to concentrate on our business knowing that in the background we are using professional procurement officers to continue supply at best value."

#### SCHOOL MEALS IN DENBIGHSHIRE – WHO'S BEING SERVED?

- ▶ **64** primary schools
- ▶ **7** secondary schools
- ▶ Total of **7,600** meals served in an hour across the county

*(All schools but one are supplied by Denbighshire Council's in-house catering service)*



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.org** or visit **www.tuco.org/buy**

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