

Chartwells creates community-centric North Eats brand to win Primary School catering contract in County Durham

4 years ago



Chartwells, part of Compass UK & Ireland and the leading education sector caterer in the UK, has successfully won the contract to deliver catering services across 160 primary schools in County Durham.

The substantive nine-year agreement, which was awarded following a rigorous and competitive tender process, will see the creation of a new community-facing North Eats brand that will fuel learning with nutritious and delicious food within primary settings.

The North Eats brand will be embedded within the local community, providing a living wage for employees working across the account, while also driving education and engagement with pupils, parents, and the wider community through a programme of educational sessions and skills workshops.

Delivering a consistently high quality of food on the plate was a fundamental driver behind Chartwells' successful bid. When pupils return in September, they will enjoy a delicious, seasonal, and healthy menu, overseen by Chartwells' award-winning nutrition and culinary teams; providing wholesome nourishment to support learning, while also celebrating regional dishes through regular theme days.

Sustainability was a key element of the successful tender process, using ingredients pupils love, to reduce waste and build a more sustainable world for our future generations.

Throughout the calendar year, Chartwells will also oversee supplier showcases, including the County Durham Lanchester Dairy, sharing insights, information and skills with pupils, parents, and the local community.

The new model supports the National Food Strategy, a government-commissioned independent review into the food system, through the provision of engaging educational programmes around all aspects of the food system, delivered to children, parents, and the wider community.

In addition, Chartwells' award-winning Beyond The Kitchen programme, will also be rolled out to all schools in the contract and their extended communities, delivering targeted workshops focused around five core themes: Nutrition and Health, Cooking and Food, Mental Wellbeing, Sports and Exercise, and Sustainability.

In an exciting first for Chartwells, some of the workshops will be delivered from a converted double decker bus, complete with classroom and kitchen. The portable space allows a dedicated team to deliver multiple activities throughout different parts of the day, across several different schools and social initiatives, ensuring minimal impact on school resources and maximising opportunities for community engagement.

A regular calendar of bespoke workshops will also be delivered to members of the community so they can learn about and develop cookery skills that will support improved cooking habits both at home and in the workplace. These sessions will also feature online materials available to parents and members of the community.

Jim Murray, Durham County Council's head of education and skills, said: "We know how important it is that our school children are provided with healthy and nutritious meals every day of the school term, helping them to stay focused throughout lessons.

"It is also encouraging that pupils, parents and members of the community will be learning more about all aspects of the food system through this new partnership."

Charles Brown, Managing Director, Chartwells, said: "This progressive partnership marks a fundamental step change in how caterers and local authorities can work collaboratively to drive positive social outcomes for local communities, while tackling inequality and driving the Levelling Up agenda.

"We believe that the key to fuelling young minds comes from understanding both what they need and what they enjoy, which is why we develop nutritious and delicious food that pupils love, alongside helping to ensure a healthy body and mind. But this is just one part of the puzzle.

"We also take our role to educate and inform pupils and parents, as well as the local community, around all aspects of the food system incredibly seriously. This new partnership not only sees pupils benefit from our award-winning educational programme, but through the innovative portable classroom we can reach even more minds, while also providing help and support for the wider community."