

Foodbuy's 'Pitch Social' initiative identifies new socially conscious SME partners

1 year ago



The second Pitch Social – Powered by Foodbuy event has taken place – designed to deliver social value and diversify Foodbuy's supplier base. The event gives social enterprises, minority-owned suppliers and other small to medium size enterprises a platform to access a multibillion-pound supply chain within the foodservice industry.

The initiative drives Foodbuy's commitment to incubate and support small suppliers, who are giving back to communities and tackling wider social and environmental issues. To date, it has spent over £8.9 million with social enterprises, surpassing its initial goal of £5 million.

Following the success of the previous Pitch Social event at the KIA Oval in London in 2022, this year's event expanded its reach to the north of England. Held in March, at the Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds, the Pitch Social event was attended by over 100 people and featured 18 social enterprises, B-Corps, minority-owned businesses and other organisations with strong social and environmental values.

Partners were invited to pitch their business to a panel consisting of Foodbuy colleagues and clients, highlighting their exceptional work in their respective fields, with the opportunity to become listed as Foodbuy suppliers upon successful selection. Alternatively, they were offered the opportunity to undergo a 3-6-month mentorship programme with Foodbuy stakeholders.

Since the inaugural event in 2022, Foodbuy has onboarded six suppliers with strong social and environmental values. These include The Uncommon, an English winemaker known for pioneering sustainable formats in award-winning sparkling wine production; Page & Bloom, offering handcrafted paper flowers made from recycled paper; The Glasshouse, which provides horticultural training and employment

for female ex-offenders; One Water, supporting sustainable clean water and sanitation services in impoverished regions; and Tap Social, a craft brewery that employs prisoners and prison leavers.

Harinder Singh, Foodbuy's Head of Sustainability and Compliance said: "Our recent Pitch Social event was a success and provided the opportunity to engage with numerous suppliers, gaining insight into their social missions. We believe in celebrating diversity within our supplier base and meeting the increasing demand from clients for innovative, regional solutions that support their sustainability targets. We are excited about the potential to make a meaningful difference through our Pitch Social events and developing ongoing partnerships."

Ben Williams, General Manager at the Uncommon, one of Pitch Social suppliers from the 2022 event who successfully became a listed supplier: "Since the Pitch Social event we have agreed a commercial framework with Foodbuy and have begun to roll out to Compass sites. Given our shared sustainability values, and the fact that we're a business that's local to so many Compass venues, we're looking forward to this partnership gathering pace. Along with the Compass venues that we now have access to, we have also begun discussion with other Foodbuy clients and really feel that this is the tip of the iceberg. Pitch Social is a very worthwhile event which has kickstarted our journey with Foodbuy and Compass."

Suni Sekhon, Founder, DEFY Brands, one of the suppliers pitching on the day, commented: "It was our first time exhibiting at the event, and we were blown away by the genuine appetite to invest in impact businesses. The investment Foodbuy made in supporting our application to pitch through onboarding and getting us exhibitor-ready was great. The day was insightful, with many speakers across the business and a room full of innovative exhibitors. We had buyers approaching us openly, telling us about their challenges and asking how we could help them – it was refreshing to have such frank conversations."