

ESS Extends Partnership with Olio to Donate Cooked Food

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ESS, part of [Compass Group UK & Ireland](#), has extended its partnership with community sharing app Olio to redistribute good-to-eat surplus food to members of the local community.

The company has been donating pre-packed products, fruit and vegetables to Olio since summer 2023, and has recently introduced cooked food collections. The move to include full meals is further enhancing its positive impact, supporting a reduction in food waste and helping local people in need.

Following a successful trial at a large Defence site in the south east, cooked food is now being contributed by 56 Defence sites across the country, with plans to extend the initiative into the company's Government sector in the new year.

The ESS teams on site capture surplus cooked food immediately after the lunch and dinner services and package it into single and family sized containers with allergen labels attached. The meals are stored in compliance with food safety standards and collected by Olio volunteers later the same day.

The Olio app enables businesses and individuals to upload the details of food and non-food items that they no longer want so they can be reallocated to people who do want them, giving the goods a second life. The app has 8 million users globally and 130,000 Food Waste Hero volunteers collecting unsold food from participating businesses.

ESS' partnership with Olio has already delivered significant benefits to local communities. To date, there have been 29,683 kg or 87,170 items of edible food saved, amounting to 62,288 meals and 3,522 households fed.

Compass Group UK & Ireland has committed to achieving Climate Net Zero by 2030 and reducing food waste is a key part of the company's Climate Promise.

Saasha Celestial-One, COO and co-founder of Olio, commented: "It's fantastic that ESS is expanding its food donation efforts by sharing cooked food with the local community via Olio. This means that even more families will get access to delicious, nutritious cooked meals – which is particularly impactful at this time of year, when so many are struggling with the cost of Christmas. We hope this move by ESS will influence and inspire other caterers to follow suit and donate more food types, knowing that it's 100% safe to do so through Olio."

Matt Windridge, Head of Retail – Compass One, commented: "It was brilliant to see the enthusiasm and engagement of our team at the trial site for our cooked food collections. Our meals proved popular with Olio users, with our listings being collected in just over 30 minutes on average. I'm really excited that we've rolled out the initiative across the country and about the positive impact this will have in our communities."

Bob Gray, Managing Director – ESS Defence, Marine & Aerospace, added: "We're very proud to partner with Olio and support the brilliant work the organisation does to reduce food waste and help those in need. The introduction of cooked food collections across our estate is a great step forward to further enhance our impact and supports the ethos of our Climate and Social promises to deliver measurable benefits to our environment and communities by 2030."