

## Education

Plymouth City Council

# Co-operative education catering service - CATERed

On the 1st April 2015 staff from the Council's award-winning Education Catering Service became employed by CATERed Ltd. A co-operative trading company, all surpluses are reinvested to be used for the ongoing development of the company, management of the estate and services to children and young people.

CATERed is unique - for the first-time schools have agreed to share their budgets and resources with each other in an open, transparent and co-operative way for the benefit of children and young people.

Imagine – 67 Head teachers and governing bodies all voting for the same thing at the same time?

CATERed was created to ensure that all children and young people in schools across the City could access great tasting, high quality food regardless of their background or school they attend.

51% is Council-owned and 49% is school-owned comprising 63 infants, junior or primary schools and 4 special schools - including both maintained schools and academies.

Reducing the strain on the budgets of the council and ensuring that the pupils of Plymouth's schools have an amazing high-quality meal served by a workforce committed to producing only the very best customer experience.

The Board, which makes decisions on behalf of all school's shareholders, consists of 8 Head teachers, 2 council officers and one MD. The venture has only been made possible because of the cooperative approach throughout its members.

The company's main office remains within council buildings, providing the link across different departments. By buying back key back-office services from the council it returns revenue to the council with these costs now calculated on a commercial basis.



CATERed has been able to look to other places for revenue. As a limited company it has now re-entered the world of event catering and corporate buffets. An area previously lost to “cuts” and a directive to focus on core “school dinners”.

Member schools access very high quality catering at a fraction of what they were being charged by other companies and they are effectively recycling their own cash flow. The council also benefits from a highly professional team of caterers who they know and trust.

The company operates using schools’ budgets which they commit in an entirely altruistic, shared and co-operative manner to support each other for the greater good.

The budgets are: -

- Traditional benefit-based FSM
- UIFSM
- Equipment maintenance, repair and replacement
- Income from paid for meals

The work to create the company took over two years of planning and has come about through the work of the School Food Steering Group comprising Head teachers, Governors, School Business Managers and Council officers.

Schools were clear: they wanted a service that had the child at the centre of everything it did and to make food fun.

In an echo of the School Food Plan, the principles around which the company Articles have also been written are: -

- 1) Children need to be involved in shaping the offer
- 2) Building on strengths
- 3) Collaboration and cooperative model values
- 4) Vision for a longer term sustainable City-wide offer

Through the Board, decisions are made about how to spend the “pooled” funds from schools to ensure that great tasting food, made from scratch every day using fresh, local, seasonal and organic ingredients in safe and clean environments is prepared cooked and served in each school’s own production kitchens.



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**For further information contact:**

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