

Catering - SWOT Analysis

In September 2006 the new school Meals Standards were introduced. The Leeds School Meals Strategy Team recognised that the delivery of these standards could potentially be a challenge to schools who are managing the service themselves. To ensure all schools were fit for purpose, briefing sessions were offered to these schools to ensure they are in a position to meet the challenge and responsibilities.

To help schools understand their role the workshops focused on conducting a SWOT analysis. The following captures the key issues raised and agreed by all attendees and gives a clear indication of the 'highs' and 'lows' of delivering a schools meals service in house.

Strengths
Staff development: team building, participation with pupils, empowerment of staff, freedom to implement training. Control of developing staff capacity, empowering staff, influence attitudes and confidence, ensure they are integrated across the whole school and respond to implementing effective whole school food policies. Freedom to develop creativity in menus and staff skills.
Procurement: local management and control of suppliers, freedom to negotiate price and design menus. Develop local procurement clientele, guarantee ingredients for menu preparation; menu design / portion and price control and quality assurance; manage / prevent food wastage
Maintenance: Quick response to breakdown / emergencies
Communication: Improved communication between school and catering staff, no time wasted
Investment: Control of expenditure, profit re-invested into school catering,
Network: with neighbouring DIY schools – create clusters to access staff / equipment etc develop risk management strategies.
Weaknesses
Financial Control: Risk if miscalculated business plan, equipment, (new equipment, breakdowns, replacements) increased costs (food, staff, utility bills)
Technical issues: Initial lack of expertise in food specifications, Loss of expertise of menus development, Training of legal requirements for a food preparation area, safety/hygiene etc
Communication: Keeping up to date with new food standards, takes more time/commitment from a staff member; risk if leadership within the school management changes, loss of continuity.
Opportunities
Freedom to develop service, implement change.
Diversity: freedom to plan, negotiate choice, prices and quality with suppliers, to source local produce and address food miles (local garden market) more opportunities to link and inform curriculum.
Extended Services: freedom to promote extended services provision, after school clubs, OAP's, Sports Groups, Outside Catering, engaging

with the public. Time to plan and increase staff hours & salaries

Participation: implementing effective policies: e.g. water, packed lunch, tuck shops, breakfast clubs, in close partnership and fully engaged consultation.

Marketing: freedom to diversify and promote usage of kitchen and access to kitchen facilities

Threats

Finance: Cost of training- Fire, HACCP, food Hygiene, Safety, First Aid

Staff: Absence, loss of staff and commitment.

Environmental Health: Food Poisoning

Capacity: Increased numbers wanting school meals, impacts on dining room capacity .

Monitoring: Ofsted, monitoring criteria?