



## Harris Federation

Harris Federation is a not-for-profit charitable organisation of primary and secondary academies in and around London. There are currently 44 open Harris academies educating 32,000 students, with 4,400 staff employed. The academies' sponsor is Phil Harris (Lord Harris of Peckham), former chairman and chief executive of Carpetright.

**Many of the pupils who attend Harris Federation schools are eligible for free school meals; this may often be the only meal they have in the day. It's important that the Federation has a quality, cost-effective and compliant catering operation in all the schools. The contract has been tendered three times before; this was the fourth tender with the latest contract awarded for a period of five years.**

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## Background

Litmus first met with Dr Daniel Moynihan, now CEO of Harris Federation, 13 years ago before the Federation had begun and ran a catering tender project for four of their schools as they were just becoming academies. Litmus has been providing catering monitoring for the Federation ever since.

## Brief

The seven objectives set for this tender were:

- ▶ Set the required Selection Questionnaire process in order to attract suitable catering contractors;
- ▶ Write and issue a robust catering specification document;
- ▶ Manage the catering tender process to achieve the desired objectives;
- ▶ Advise the stakeholders of the key elements of the tender submissions;
- ▶ Provide experience as to the deliverability of the bids;
- ▶ Negotiate final contract terms and Key Performance Indicators; and
- ▶ Provide ongoing contract monitoring support.

## Approach

**Mike Yarnold, the Litmus Partnership, said:** "Our heartland is in the education sector; it's the sector we started in. Combine this with our previous years working with the Harris Federation meant we were in a strong position when starting this tender where we had a deep understanding of their needs and requirements.

"Our key focuses when re-tendering were to ensure the food offer was consistent and compliant whilst also being attractive to students, that the catering environment was fit for purpose both front and back of house, that catering staff resources were applied correctly so as not to adversely affect the running of the school day and that there was greater communications between the catering contractor and pupils.

"We also built in an interactive element to the tender where a series of site visits were arranged to view a selection of the schools to illustrate the varying catering needs of pupils within different environments. A group meeting was also arranged with the CEO Sir Daniel Moynihan to conduct a high-level question and answers session with the MD's of the bidding catering contractors.

"Four companies submitted tender submissions. All four presented to the panel, with two finalists then shortlisted."

## Outcomes

The decision was taken to re-award the catering contract to the existing provider for a further five years. The Federation has a very robust catering contract and a series of key performance indicators that are now being tracked to ensure the required operational delivery objectives are maintained.

▶▶ *Following years of working with the Harris Federation, we were pleased to be able to work closely with them on this tender and ongoing provision of catering services into the schools.* ◀◀

*Mike Yarnold, the Litmus Partnership*



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