



Services 4 Schools

Services 4 Schools (S4S) offer a range of high quality professional business support solutions specifically structured around the education sector, enabling schools and academies to operate with excellence and efficiency.

Their team of experts are available to assist school leaders and business managers with specialist advice and support regarding HR matters, IT solutions, academy conversation, Governor support and Best Value – Finance and Business Management.

Although based in Wolverhampton they cover a wide area.

Background

As S4S was being commissioned by Schools and Academy Trusts to look at best value principles and possible cost savings, it became apparent that, in many cases, savings could be made regarding the catering service provision.

Although the S4S team have considerable knowledge regarding procurement processes they do not have the systems in place to carry out fully comprehensive tender management projects.

S4S contacted Litmus in 2016 to see what synergies, if any, paralleled their work ethic with the view of appointing Litmus to manage any future benchmarking/tender opportunities. It quickly became apparent that both companies have similar work related objectives based on client relationships and open and honest dialogue.

In January 2017 S4S appointed Litmus to manage the tender process for catering services for a cluster of seven schools located within the Midlands.

Brief

Although each school had its own set of objectives S4S set out seven key objectives to focus on during the tender process:

- ▶ Ensure all children enjoy a healthy, well balanced meal at lunch times and that meals fully comply with school meal nutritional standards;
- ▶ Base the service provision on Best Value principles;
- ▶ Maximise the use of fresh food produce and minimise the use of convenience food products;
- ▶ Meet the cultural needs of all pupils and staff;
- ▶ Provide a more appetising range of food for the children to choose from;
- ▶ Offer a high quality, cost-effective and flexible catering service which meets all the children's needs and reinforces a consistent message of Health Lifestyles; and
- ▶ Fully understand and implement Safeguarding principles whilst carrying out the service provision.

Approach

Mike Neales, the Litmus Partnership, said: “Our key focus on any project is based on a partnership approach. This, we believe, has been why our working relationship with S4S has flourished into what it is today.

“We drew up timelines for the tender management process and then agreed specific scopes of work for each project. Then detailed tender specifications for each school were drawn up, which were all in line with the OJEU process. A tender analysis was then presented by us to S4S and the schools, before a shortlist was agreed.”

▶▶ The entire procurement process was well communicated, smooth and efficient. Litmus and S4S were very supportive throughout the process and clearly knowledgeable about procurement which meant that the pressure was taken off the trust and ensured compliance with applicable regulations. We would certainly recommended the service as very good value for money.◀◀

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