



## Wellington College and Eagle House School

Wellington College is a leading co-educational day and boarding independent school sited in 400 acres of grounds in Berkshire. The College has approximately 1,100 pupils and 150 staff. It partners with its two international schools in China, and is also linked to Wellington Academy in Wiltshire and Eagle House Preparatory School, also in Berkshire. Eagle House has approximately 380 pupils and is part of the Wellington Group.

**With a complex contract in place with a major contractor to deliver catering and domestic services, the College wanted Litmus to update the contract and specifications to ensure best value was delivered. Not only was this achieved, but Litmus helped secure significant capital funding from the contractor to invest in the re-development of the catering facilities at the College.**

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## Background

Catering and domestic services is delivered by a major contractor across the College, including delivery of commercial events and LETS throughout the year. The contract is complex, particularly with regards to the financial reporting of performance. Given that most pupils board full-time, catering plays a central role in the students' enjoyment. The College wanted an independent consultant to update the contract and specifications, as well as monitor the operational and financial performance.

## Brief

Litmus was briefed to:

- ▶ Update the contract and specification documents to meet the needs of the College;
- ▶ Support the preparation of annual budgets;
- ▶ Scrutinise invoices submitted by the contractor, including verification that the back-up data supports the sums charged;
- ▶ Conduct operational reviews of service delivery, encompassing quality and compliance audits against the specification;
- ▶ Conduct annual Consumer Insight surveys, delivered through focus groups and online surveys to capture opinions about catering services and identify what matters most to the community; and
- ▶ Provide general advice on the strategic development of the contract.

## Approach

**Joe Parfitt, the Litmus Partnership, said:** “Our overall aim was to work together with the College to ensure there were management systems in place to give them absolute confidence that they were being correctly charged for the services, receiving the best value and that student and staff enjoyment was maximised.

“In consultation with the College we created new service specifications, together with a Key Performance Indicator system, to objectively monitor the aspects of the service that mattered most to the College. The contract also included clear strategic objectives against which achievements over the five years of the agreement would be evaluated.

“Monthly scrutiny of invoices and termly operational reviews commenced, with comprehensive reporting of findings to the College management team. Mid-way through year one, we engaged directly with students and staff through individual interviews and focus groups to identify their priorities for the catering service, which led to the first Consumer Insight Survey, producing more than 800 responses and a rich source of data which the contractor was able to use to improve services.”

## Outcomes

Litmus helped secure significant capital funding from the contractor to invest in the re-development of the catering facilities at the College; which led to Litmus subsequently being engaged to design the new catering scheme.

As the contract developed and performance improved, Litmus reduced the frequency of operational auditing but enhanced the financial verification process by creating an online dashboard tool. This provided the College and contractor with insight into the true costs, documenting issues arising and equally the resolutions.

Litmus was also engaged to design the refurbished Eagle House catering facility.

*▶▶As the contract was in place for the coming five years this was a case of finding working methods, that were sustainable to follow and also delivered the objectives the College were after. Effectively, we restructured the ways in which the contract was set-up and monitored to draw out the best value and service possible.◀◀*

*Tim Cookson, the Litmus Partnership*



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