



LACA | 2025

THE MAIN EVENT



Tuesday 8th and Wednesday 9th July 2025 - Hilton Birmingham Metropole

DELEGATE PROGRAMME

LACA Main Event – a learning and development event incorporating the LACA School Food Show which brings together school catering staff at all levels to network and discuss issues facing the school meals service.

www.lacamainevent.co.uk



Main Event Delegate Programme 2025

The programme and features at the Main Event will address the disparities in school meals funding across the nations and explore strategies to ensure that all children and young people receive the very best school food to support their growth and learning. It has never been more important to establish common ground and a collective voice on the importance of school food and the growing pressures operators are facing to provide this vital service.

Main Event Delegate Programme

The programme below outlines the closed sessions which are only accessible for delegates.

Tuesday 8 July 2025

9.30

LACA Forum delegate registration opens - hotel and hall 2 foyers
LACA School Food Show - exhibition opens, hall 1 and hall 2

9.45-11.15

LACA School Chef of the Year Final - Heat 1, Hall 2 Foyer

10.30

Workshop Sessions, Arden Suite

10.30

Workshop 1: Allergen School update and case studies

Jan Parnell and Olivia Oakley, NARF

The NARF Allergen School Programme was launched in 2024. This session will look at its work to date with some examples of schools that are developing programmes using the resources that have been made available.

11.00

Workshop 2: Ultra Processed Foods or Home Grown Veg?

Stephen Forster, Past LACA Chair

An interactive workshop event examining the use of Ultra Processed Foods in our diets and across the school communities we serve. This is not about demonising UPFs (or their manufacturers) it's about sharing a greater understanding of how we have come to rely upon food products that have come to shape our industry, our bodies and our lives. Delegates were asked to keep a Food Diary for a week prior to attending, detailing all that they consume with a red star against anything they consider UPF. Following the Workshop we will progress discussion to examine the percentage of UPFs we are using in our sector and consider how this sits with the recent DEFRA announcement about using British produce in the schools we serve.

11.30

Workshop 3: LACA Ask the Experts

Louise Kerton, LACA Board member, Wales

Brad Pearce, LACA National Vice Chair Elect

Bryan Lygate, LACA Board member, East Midlands

The annual Q&A where LACA experts will answer questions and concerns posed members and Main Event visitors.

11.30-13.30

LACA Grab 'N' Go Final, Hall 2 Foyer

12.00-14.30

Lunch & exhibition viewing Halls 1 & 2
Including LACA Live in Hall 1

12.15

LACA Live, Hall 1:

Partner demo - Quorn: Allergen free innovation: featuring allergen free sauces & sustainable choices

Kate Snow and Zoe Gill

Kate is passionate about school food and has worked in the industry for many years, developing inspiring yet simple dishes tailored for schools. Her goal is to support busy school caterers by providing nutritious, quick and easy meals that pupils will enjoy. Understanding the challenges allergens present in schools, this demo will focus on three NEW, allergen free sauces, alongside NEW vegan and gluten free Quorn Pieces and Savoury Bites.

We're also pleased to welcome guest presenter, Zoe Gill from Brakes, who will showcase a delicious carbon reduced beef dish featuring the new Savoury Bites.

13.15

LACA Live, Hall 1:

Partner demo - Brakes: Savvy with store cupboard ingredients

Zoe Gill and Cathy Amos

With over 20 years of experience as a development chef and a lifelong passion for food, Zoe brings a wealth of expertise to school catering. Dedicated to supporting school caterers working with tight budgets and diverse dietary needs, she focuses on practical, creative solutions that reduce waste and simplify menus. Her demo will showcase how to make the most of everyday store cupboard ingredients and create recipes with minimal allergens, ensuring nutritious, inclusive meals that every child can enjoy.

14.15-15.45

LACA School Chef of the Year Final - Heat 2, Hall 2 Foyer

14.00

LACA Main Event sessions begin - Kings Suite

Michael Hales, Forum Chair

Introduction to Main Event 2025 including the Year in Focus

14.15

Chair's welcome

Judith Gregory, LACA National Chair, including update on breakfast trials and new LACA Ambassadors **Nadim & Tanya Ednan-Laperouse OBE**

14.40

Political and policy update

Sharon Hodgson MP

15.00

Four Nations - State of the Nation

Judith Gregory, LACA National Chair

Brad Pearce, LACA National Vice Chair Elect

Nicky Joiner, Chair, ASSIST FM

Colm Bradley, Education Authority (Northern Ireland)

The challenge of providing an exceptional school food service across the UK is ever present, however, that challenge can vary from nation to nation and even sometimes within a nation. The Four Nations panel will highlight what differs across the UK but also what individual nations are doing to improve the service and deal with the difficulties they encounter.

15.50

Managing Scope 1 & 2 emissions and saving schools £millions

Dr Sam Mudie

Improved monitoring, working practice and equipment can save schools millions of £'s every year but it will also reduce energy consumption and carbon production to make the service more sustainable. Dr Sam Mudie will explain how and what school caterers need to do to achieve these results.

16.20

Keynote session - Why calories don't count

Professor Giles Yeo

Giles is a Professor at the University of Cambridge and has appeared on many TV programmes related to food and the importance of diet. His book 'Why Calories Don't Count' explains what really matters is how your body digests and absorbs your food not how many calories it contains. He will explore this further in the context of school food, but also look at genetics and UPFs and their impact on obesity and a healthy diet.

17.10

Forum day one closes

19.30

LACA informal icebreaker evening, Kings Suite

Wednesday 9 July 2025

8.30

LACA Forum delegate registration opens - hotel and hall 2 foyers

LACA School Food Show - exhibition opens, hall 1 and hall 2

9.45 - 11.15

LACA School Chef of the Year Final - Heat 3, Hall 2 Foyer

9.30

Forum day two opens - Kings Suite

Michael Hales, Forum Chair

Welcome and LACA Year in Focus 2025

9.45

National Governance Association (NGA) - monitoring a whole-school approach to food

Ella Colley

Ella will explain how the NGA helps governors and trustees to learn about:

- The governing board's role in monitoring school food provision
- The impact of school food on pupils' learning, health and wellbeing
- Building a positive and inclusive school food culture
- Ensuring compliance with the school food standards

10.15

How the UK school food service fares in a good food revolution and in a global school food context

Professor Don Bundy and Dr Sara Long

They will share their thoughts, research and experiences of school food in a UK and global context. Drawing out the challenges the UK faces and what we can learn from the services that are delivered locally and around the world.

11.00

ParentPay Research 2025 & the LACA Survey Updates

Kerrie Bell, ParentPay and Michael Hales, LACA National Vice Chair

The annual survey of parental views on the school food service is now a vital benchmarking process for LACA. Parentpay will share the results and Michael will give an update on the LACA Cost of Living research.

11.25

Mental health - spotting the signs and supporting your colleagues

Charlie Hodson

Depression and work pressures drove Charlie to attempt suicide. Now an HA Patron Charlie will talk about his journey and how to spot the signs in your colleagues who are suffering and need support.

12.00

Lunch and exhibition viewing including LACA Live in Hall 1

12.00

LACA Live - Hall 1:

LACA Grab 'N' Go Winner

sponsored by SchoolGrid

Now in its third year, the winner of the 2025 Grab & Go competition will be announced on Tuesday 8th July and will demonstrate their winning dish on the LACA Live theatre on Wednesday 9th July.

12.45

LACA Live - Hall 1

Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall

Hugh will talk about his career, inspirations and views on school food whilst doing a 'schools twist' on one of his recipes from the River Cottage.

13.15-14.45

LACA School Chef of the Year Final - Heat 4, Hall 2 Foyer

13.45

LACA Live - Hall 1: - Whole Food Warrior

Eva Humphries

Venison is a sustainable and exceptionally nourishing meat protein that as a nation we should be eating more of. Join nutritionist Eva Humphries for a cookery demonstration focused on using venison in an affordable, tasty and nourishing manner.

14.30

Main Event resumes resume - Kings Suite

The value and challenges of local sourcing panel session

Myles Bremner

Bethan Cowell - NFU

Cathy Amos - Love British Food

Katie Palmer, Foodsense Wales

The government wants the public sector to buy 50% of all its food from UK/ local sources. The funding challenge makes this an increasingly difficult ask of operators when the focus has to be to get nutritious food on the plate. The panel will discuss the benefits, challenges and options of sourcing in the UK.

15.20

Resilience and coping with Change

Victoria Humphries

Part of the first all female team to walk to the North Pole, Victoria will use her experiences in the Arctic and in business to highlight strategies to manage change and be resilient in the face of adversity.

15.50

Keynote session - Future food trends

Dr Morgaine Gaye

As a Food Futurologist, Morgaine is passionate about what she does because food affects us all - what we eat and what we buy. Food is a complex topic which uses all indicators as a lens through which to see what's to come. It involves society, behaviour, geo-politics, culture, belief, history, trends, fads, art, marketing, sensorial perceptions, biology and, in fact, almost everything!

16.35

Finishing Touches 2025

Presentation of Finishing Touches Best in Show winner

These presentations will be followed by Chair's handover and conference close.

16.45

Forum day two closes

19.00

Drinks Reception, Pavillion Suite

19.30

LACA Awards for Excellence Dinner, Kings Suite

