

 **ASSIST Facilities Management**

SCOTTISH LOCAL AUTHORITY



OF THE YEAR 2026

PARTICIPATION PACK

Kindly sponsored by:



Honouring Excellence in Standards and Service



NATIONAL CHAIR OF ASSIST FM'S LETTER

After 9 years of running a successful Scottish School Cook of The Year competition, in 2023 ASSIST FM decided to widen the scope of its premier individual catering award by opening the criteria and running the ASSIST Scottish Local Authority Cook of the Year competition.

ASSIST FM's Scottish Local Authority Cook of the Year continually challenges people who work within the Local Authority and School Meals Sector to devise new and exciting recipes that can be produced for large-scale catering (en masse) whilst allowing participants the opportunity to showcase their finesse and presentation skills to competition standard.

Each cook must submit a three-course meal which should be based around your everyday school menu and the winning starter, main course and dessert will be cooked and presented at our ASSIST FM National Conference and Gala Dinner in May where the overall winner will be announced.

The Scottish Cook of the Year Award seeks to identify the most skilled and innovative local authority cook in Scotland. Participants are tasked with creating a three-course meal (starter, main course, and dessert) that reflects the standards of their everyday school menus, emphasising sustainability, economical purchasing, and the use of quality Scottish ingredients.

We are very grateful to our sponsor, Brakes for their support of our organisation and for their continued sponsorship.
We want to support all nominees in their journey to the cook school - our head judge Donald McInnes would be happy to discuss any ideas you have ahead of your submission

Nicky Joiner
ASSIST FM National Chair



COMPETITION PROCEDURE

Stage 1

Complete the registration form (Form 1- below) to notify ASSIST FM via ASSIST@dewberryredpoint.co.uk of your intention to participate by Friday 12th December 2025.

Stage 2

Local authority internal heats (where necessary - this is if you have multiple entrants in your local authority area - for the ASSIST FM Competition only one member of staff can be nominated from each local authority).

Stage 3

Entrant details (Form 2) and recipes (Form 3) for all entries to ASSIST@dewberryredpoint.co.uk by close of business on Friday 30th January 2026. Forms available on the ASSIST website.

Stage 4

Paper judging will occur week commencing Monday 23rd February 2026 and finalists will be announced and contacted by the end of that week.

Stage 5

Scottish Local Authority Cook of the Year Final at Cook School Scotland on Thursday 26th March 2026. The top 3 dishes will be announced and will go forward to produce their dish at the Annual Conference Gala Dinner in May 2026. Each winning competitor must be available on the day to assist the Head Chef of the Crown Plaza to help prep the dishes and to oversee the workings of the hotel kitchen.

Stage 6

The overall winner of the Scottish Local Authority School Cook of the Year will be announced at the ASSIST FM Conference Gala Dinner on Thursday 14th May 2026.

*For Stages 4, 5 and 6, the judges will be appointed by ASSIST FM. For any queries or advice contact Donald McInnes.

The judges on the day of cooking will be basing the decisions on the following after:

1. Taste
2. Appearance
3. Reflection to Guidelines
4. Textures

COMPETITOR RULES

1. The competition is open to all catering staff within your local authority.
2. Contestants may work in more than one kitchen.
3. Prepare, cook and serve two plated portions of a starter, main course and dessert with the starter being a pre-plated starter and the dessert being a cold-served dessert. Vegan or Vegetarian options may be used.
4. Each dish should complement one another.
5. The menu should be for two people and based around Scottish Produce and our vast larder we have here in Scotland. Costings should be shown for the full menu with a food cost of no more than £10.50 for the full meal
6. Each course should be able to be adapted to increased volume for a dining experience and large corporate events.
7. Competitors can show their skill set and flare and are asked to produce a typed full menu of the plates being served with a description of ingredients, origin, and locality if using Scottish or local, and a full list of allergens.
8. The final will be held in Cook School Scotland and the winning starter, main course and dessert will be chosen by the judges and be represented at the ASSIST FM Conference in May 2026.
9. The winning chef/chefs will have the opportunity to cook alongside the chefs in the Crowne Plaza Glasgow and produce their dishes for the evening conference dinner.
10. The budget is set by the Crowne Plaza Glasgow.
11. All entry forms must be fully completed which must include detailed recipes with full methodology and accurate food costs for each stage of the competition.
12. Internal heats can take place within each Local Authority; finalists will be short listed to a maximum of 10 pairs.
13. Entrants must bring their own knives, light equipment or specialist items, and uniform or chef whites.
14. 4 hours will be allocated for the competition with 1 hour of prep time beforehand.
15. The starters, main and dessert will be presented on the hour with 15/20 minutes intervals between to allow judging and service to take place.
16. The judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into during the competition.
17. Judges may ask questions during the competition.



FORM 1

Celebrating public sector excellence,
innovation and transformation

SCOTTISH LOCAL AUTHORITY



OF THE YEAR 2026

Return this form to the Scottish Local Authority Cook of the Year
Competition organisers by 12th December 2025
Submit entries to: assistfm@dewberryredpoint.co.uk

Name of Local Authority:

Local Organiser's Name:

Local Organiser's Title:

Day Telephone Number:

Mobile Telephone Number:

Email address:

Address:

Post code:

