

Culinary firm pays its workers the Living Wage

YOU Can Cook has shown they can also look after their staff as well as the healthy diets of their clients by being accredited as a Living Wage Employer by the Scottish Living Wage Foundation.

The Peebles-based company is the first social enterprise to be certified in the Scottish Borders and the first cookery training provider in food and health to be accredited in Scotland.

The firm has been paying its staff a higher rate than that of the Living Wage since its inception in 2007.

Director Bosco Santimano said: "Having worked in the catering and hospitality industry, I was shocked to see the level of pay in this sector and always knew that if I had my own company one day, I would not repeat that mistake of increasing my profits at the expense of my staff."

The culinary group is based in School Brae and organises cookery classes, demonstrations and workshops on nutrition all over Scotland.

The firm aims to encourage communities to make informed choices about their food and health. Participants are encouraged to engage in social and educational activities through learning basic techniques and skills in cooking food.

Mr Santimano said: "It has been a slow process for us to be where we are now. We set up the company months before the economic crash of 2008 and I am astonished to a certain extent that we are still here along with my staff, board, volunteers and not to forget our clients."