

## Sodexo supports Marine Conservation Society through volunteering and £17k donation

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**Sodexo has partnered with the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) by donating £17k and providing volunteering initiatives to combat climate change and preserve British beaches.**

In 2022, almost 70 Sodexo colleagues volunteered, delivering over 250 hours to help the MCS's Beach Clean initiative. This utilised the organisation's employee volunteering policy, which gives each contracted Sodexo employee three days per year to get out and volunteer their time to activities that have a significant positive social impact on the local communities Sodexo operate in.

The volunteer's efforts resulted in over 48kg of waste removed from West Kirby, Edinburgh, and Brighton beaches during the cleans. This included 3,061 individual litter items, being picked up and recorded.

To support the initiative further, Sodexo has donated £17k to the charity, with the funds being generated by the bag levy from the two previous financial years. As of 21 May 2021, Sodexo has charged a minimum of 10p for single-use paper bags or bags for life to encourage people to reuse bags and drive behaviour change.

The donations from the levy will be used to support the Marine Conservation Society's seagrass and wider ocean restoration protection work and fund Sodexo volunteering spaces at beach cleans.

The charity's seagrass work, which includes supporting the largest seagrass recovery effort in England to protect vital seabed habitats along British coasts, received a donation of over £7k.

Seagrass is an extraordinary tool in the fight against climate change, but its disappearing from UK shores. During the past century up to 92% of the seagrass in the UK has disappeared.

The funds from Sodexo will go towards MCS' work on the LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES project, which aims to restore and protect up to 80,000 square metres of seagrass across the south of England. MCS supports key on the project such as community engagement and education on the advantages of effective protection for biodiversity and the environment.

Sodexo is committed to **achieving net zero** in its UK and Ireland operations by 2045. To achieve this, Sodexo will decarbonise the business by 90%, across all three carbon scopes (its direct and indirect emissions).

Plastic is one of the most persistent pollutants on earth and at every step in its lifecycle, even long after it has been discarded, plastic creates greenhouse gas emissions that are contributing significantly to climate change. Alarmingly, at least 8 million tonnes of discarded plastic enter oceans each year, and plastic pollution at sea is on course to double by 2030.

Claire Atkins Morris, Corporate Responsibility Director, Sodexo UK & Ireland said: "As a business, we're committed to achieving net zero by 2045, and plastic reduction is a major part of that plan. Since 2017, we've reduced over 190 million pieces of plastic from our own operations, but much work still needs to be done. That's why we are delighted to continue working with the Marine Conservation Society, as we always look for new ways to protect the environment. We see seagrass as a fantastic alternative to planting trees for carbon offsets, and we welcome further research and funding for this vital cause.

"We also want to thank Sodexo colleagues who volunteered their time to keep British beaches clean and clear waste items that could have harmed marine life."

Anne Weinhold, Corporate Partnerships Team Lead at the Marine Conservation Society said: "It's fantastic to have the support of Sodexo. We're incredibly grateful for the hours the Sodexo team volunteered, and this donation will help support our work.

"Seagrass has a vital role to play in combatting the climate crisis by locking up huge amounts of carbon, while stabilising the seabed and helping to protect coastlines from erosion. Our ocean recovery projects support the health of our blue planet through protecting and recovering underwater habitats."