

## Sodexo recognised for innovation at Social Mobility Awards

3 years ago



[Sodexo](#)'s volunteering programme with TutorMate was awarded silver in the innovation category of the sixth annual UK Social Mobility Awards. 21 Sodexo employees participated in an online tutoring programme as part of Sodexo's charitable foundation, Stop Hunger.

Sodexo's progressive volunteering policy enables its employees three paid volunteering days each year.

In October 2021 a new opportunity was opened for employees to sign up to provide valuable reading support to school children aged between 5 and 7 years in the Middlesbrough area. The volunteers spent 30 mins or more each week with their allocated pupil via an online platform allowing the child to practice their reading.

In the first year Sodexo's 21 employees volunteered 85 hours helping pupils progress their reading skills.

For young people to escape poverty and food insecurity, reading is a basic and essential skill. Research shows that the attainment gap is largest for children and young people eligible for free school meals (Education Endowment Foundation). By improving literacy skills for children, the project gives children the foundation for a broader education, which can help improve the life chances and financial independence of individuals.

Tutormate is the flagship educational programme from Innovation for Learning UK which supports children in disadvantaged areas across the UK.

Sodexo volunteer, Samantha Scott said: "Not only is being a volunteer enjoyable, convenient and fun, it's also amazing to watch the student's reading abilities grow and flourish in such a short space of time.

Knowing and seeing the difference that just half an hour a week can make to somebody's literacy levels

and consequently their future is such a rewarding experience.”

The UK Social Mobility Awards were set up to recognise organisations that are prioritising social mobility, for example through recruitment processes and progression programmes, outreach within the local community, or by developing innovative ways to create change. The 2022 awards received the highest number of entries since they were launched in 2017. This year’s judges included a panel of esteemed leaders chaired by Sir Kenneth Olisa OBE.

Tunde Banjoko OBE, Founder of The UK Social Mobility Awards, added: “The UK Social Mobility Awards is a vehicle to raise awareness of social mobility and showcases the individuals and organisations who are dedicated to its advancement. The number and quality of entries we received for this year’s awards is an indication of the increasing significance of social mobility to UK business. I would like to congratulate all the inspiring organisations and individuals who took home a trophy this year. All the UK Social Mobility Awards finalists are making a tangible difference to social mobility in this country and this recognition is extremely well-deserved.”

Claire Atkins Morris, CR Director for Sodexo UK & Ireland said: “At Sodexo we believe everyone should have the same opportunity to get on in life, no matter who you are, where you are from or where you are living. Our volunteers looked forward to the 30 minutes every week and were able to see the improvement in not only their reading ability, but in their confidence and discovering that reading can be fun.”

Stop Hunger is continuing to deepen and extend its partnership with Innovation for Learning with more employees signed up to support children in Glasgow.

Stop Hunger’s mission in the UK and Ireland is to tackle the root causes of food insecurity by supporting vulnerable individuals in our local communities find sustainable ways to get out of poverty.