

Northumbria University appoints Sodexo for another decade

2 years ago



Northumbria University in Newcastle has chosen to retain [Sodexo](#) for its soft and hard FM services and residential living management contract for a further ten years in a new contract with the addition of a new food offer for the University's largest Trinity Square student accommodation.

Sodexo has been managing student accommodation services at Northumbria University since 2014. Initially covering just Trinity Square, a contemporary accommodation block housing up to 1,000 students in double en-suites or shared flats for groups of three-five students. Over the course of the contract the University has added all its four City residences, housing nearly 2,500 students every year.

[Sodexo](#) is focused on ensuring the student living experience is second-to-none and is committed to ensuring its presence has a positive social impact for the residents, the University, and the local community in which it operates. Services managed by Sodexo in the University's student accommodation include reception, helpdesk, security, mechanical and electrical maintenance, and cleaning.

Sodexo employs 58 people at Northumbria University and uses digital platforms for students to report maintenance issues, recently mobilising a mobile-enabled maintenance system to ensure timely servicing of request within the residences to reduce unexpected breakdowns and inconveniences, minimise costs and extend equipment life.

The new contract will see Sodexo introduce a brand-new catering offer at Trinity Square student accommodation serving hot drinks and a grab and go food solution such as paninis and pastries. The team will transform the currently under-utilised space at the accommodation to further enhance the student experience creating a fantastic live learning experience that creates a true home from home atmosphere.

Sodexo's commitment to social impact underpins the strategic business ambitions at Northumbria University and is engrained into every floor cleaned, every maintenance job resolved, and every conversation had with students.

Sodexo has built strong relationships with the local community and works with local charities and social enterprises such as Northern Rights and the DFN project, which are focused on helping the long term unemployed and people with learning difficulties get in to work.

The Sodexo team at Northumbria has:

- hosted two 10-week work placements for young people with autism
- welcomed a student intern as part of Sodexo's involvement in the 10k black interns programme, who has subsequently found employment with the team
- spoken at events about career opportunities within the FM industry
- introduced a T-level placement
- supported the University with its fund to provide financial initiatives to open up higher education to academically talented students regardless of their social or economic circumstances
- continued to support the University's NULdeas fund for students to support their start-up ambitions

Supporting students from applicant to alumni is a crucial part of Sodexo's focus at the University, the team provides vital support to residents at a time which can be quite difficult as they adjust to life away from home where they need to balance studying with financial independence, making new friends and settling into a new setting and city. To provide further support in this area Sodexo has committed to train five mental health first responders across the contract.

In 2022 Sodexo introduced Residency Advisors, students who live within the residences join the Sodexo team on a part-time basis to work with the accommodation team to manage any issues that arise quickly and efficiently and offer proactive peer to peer support. Through this programme Sodexo provides employment opportunities for 15 students which helps the long-term employability of the students as a valuable addition to their CVs.

Sian Thompson, national operations director, Universities & PFIs, Sodexo UK & Ireland, Sodexo said: "We are proud of our long-standing partnership with Northumbria University. There is a strong cultural fit between our organisations, and we are committed to continually delivering a leading facilities management service alongside the award-winning residency living model, with aligned goals and strategic objectives. This next contractual period brings with it some exciting service developments and we expect to achieve great things by continuing to work in a strategic and trusted partnership."

Erin Peart, executive director of campus services, Northumbria University said: "Sodexo continues to be one of the University's valuable partners – not only because of the services it delivers and the commitment it has to enhancing the student experience, but in helping us to deliver social impact. We look forward to continuing this partnership with students at the heart of our shared ambitions."

Sodexo's team at Northumbria University has received numerous awards including the 2023 IWFM award for Excellence in Customer Experience, Contract Manager Tom Martin received the 2022 title of Young Leader of the Year at the PFM Partnership awards and the contract was highly commended in the 2022 Student Accommodation awards for Collaboration. The team was also shortlisted at the 2024 Property



Week awards for excellence in social impact.