

## Sodexo Live! and Preston North End celebrate a successful year of partnership

12 months ago



Sodexo Live! is delighted to celebrate a significant milestone: one year of a successful partnership with Preston North End, during which revenue significantly increased from the previous year.

In August 2023, Sodexo Live! became the official catering partner at Preston North End's stadium, Deepdale, taking over the catering operations, including hospitality in the lounges and boxes, and on the concourses on matchdays.

A year into this long-term partnership, Deepdale has undergone a remarkable transformation under the guidance of Sodexo Live!

A major focus has been on enhancing the non-matchday experience at Deepdale. The launch of the North End Events brand, complete with dedicated web pages and social media channels, has positioned Deepdale as a premier venue for a wide range of events. This strategic move has resulted in over 200 event bookings, more than doubling the revenue in that area from the previous year.

Sodexo Live! has also helped to reimagine Deepdale's spaces to accommodate a diverse range of events. The inaugural Whites Wonderland festive event attracted over 3,000 visitors, fostering community spirit, and generating substantial revenue. This event showcased the Fan Zone, Gentry Bar, and outside space, providing an excellent opportunity for the retail team to boost sales outside matchdays.

To further strengthen the club's presence in the community, Sodexo Live! colleagues actively engaged with local businesses through partnerships, networking events, and hosting prestigious events like the Be Inspired Business Awards. The team has also tapped into the wedding market, hosting successful fayres and photoshoots that showcase the stadium's unique charm and versatility.

Another key focus for Sodexo Live! entering the partnership was understanding the needs of the club and fans. Before implementing changes, an initial fan forum identified areas where fans wanted improvements. Armed with this information, Sodexo Live! planned investments to address these requests, resulting in a new integrated till system, 180 new beer lines, and new cellar cooling systems allowing for the sale of more premium beers.

There was also a strategic shift with the food offering, with Sodexo Live! using local suppliers such as Clayton Park pies and creating bespoke Preston North End FC branded sweets, alongside new and varied food and drink options. New retail offerings include local fan favourites such as pie, mash, peas, and gravy, and rotating specials like brisket burgers and Korean BBQ chicken waffle cones. These on-trend options provide fans with more variety and enhance their experience on matchdays.

As an inclusive club, there is always a halal option to accommodate the needs of the local fan demographic. Sustainability initiatives include the use of compostable cups throughout the stadium and a collaboration with The Devil's Kitchen which introduced a low-carbon, plant-forward shiitake mushroom burger for [Green Football Weekend](#).

Over the next year, Sodexo Live! will continue to innovate and evolve and is currently redeveloping Deepdale's menus, sales packages, and marketing materials to ensure they exceed customer expectations and remain at the forefront of the events industry.

Claire Morris, CEO at Sodexo Live! UK and Ireland said: "Exceeding our client's expectations is always our goal, and we are thrilled with the success and progress we've achieved with Preston North End. With a deep understanding of our audience and a passion for creating unforgettable experiences, we are confident that Deepdale's future is brighter than ever."

Kevin Abbott, Finance Director at Preston North End, added: "On moving our catering operations to Sodexo Live! we saw an instant investment in the concourse facilities to improve the product offering and speed of service to our supporters on matchdays. The hospitality product offering was also overhauled, and the levels of service and presentation have been excellent. Non-matchday revenues have grown and we have been impressed with the quality, dedication, and work ethic of the local management team who have been assigned to us. The early signs are extremely positive, and we look forward to our future working relationship with optimism."