

Sodexo leads industry in 2024 Social Mobility Employer Index

1 year ago



[Sodexo UK & Ireland](#) has been named in the top 75 of the 2024 [Social Mobility Employer Index](#), released today by the Social Mobility Foundation. Sodexo is the first in its industry to be included in the Index which assesses and ranks UK employers on their actions to break down barriers to employment opportunities and improve socioeconomic diversity in the workplace.

Launched in 2017 the Index has become the authority on employer-led social mobility. The 2024 Index is in its eighth year and saw 150 organisations enter, accounting for the employment of just under one million people.

With a 30,000-plus strong workforce in the UK and Ireland people are at the heart of Sodexo's business. It is committed to promoting equitable opportunities, valuing diversity and creating inclusive workplaces where individuals feel they belong to a company where they can act with purpose and thrive in their own way.

Mark Goodyer, HR Director, Sodexo UK & Ireland said: "This is the first year we have featured in the top 75 and we will use this valuable ranking to continue to lead our industry on social mobility, making demonstrable and continued progress on areas such as recruitment, pay, progression and advocacy."

"We truly believe that as an employer of over 30,000 people in the UK and Ireland we have the power to be a driver of social mobility – a force for good. Socio-economic diversity is essential to the success of any organisation. We know that a diverse workforce positively impacts on the services we deliver to our clients, and ensures our teams include individuals representing the communities in which we operate.

Sodexo has been long-time advocates of the opportunities that employment-based education can offer and

has committed to consider all vacancies and job roles as apprenticeships wherever possible. It believes the focus shouldn't just be on the volume offered but also on the contribution and positive impact in social mobility terms. Strategies should involve reaching into the most marginalised of geographies, groups and communities to offer the opportunities where they are most needed.

Sodexo's early careers approach has led to the organisation welcoming individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds and age groups who all offer different skills. One example is Sodexo's long-time support of DFN Project SEARCH, a transition-to-work programme for students with learning disabilities and autism spectrum conditions, providing meaningful on-the-job experience and the opportunity to learn key skills. Last year more than 100 young people completed an internship through DFN at Sodexo.

Other initiatives include:

- Starting Fresh – a programme created to raise awareness of the potential talent organisations can find from prison leavers. With over 30 years' experience managing prisons Sodexo is using this to help and encourage employers to tap into this untapped pool to recruit qualified individuals and provide them with much-needed employment opportunities to help break the cycle of re-offending. In the first year of the programme Sodexo's prison employment leads placed 700 prison leavers into sustainable employment with a variety of organisations, including Sodexo.
- Choose Hospitality Pledge – working with its client and supply partner Nestlé Professional, Sodexo is helping attract young people to the hospitality industry through a series of career workshops held at Sodexo Live! venue partners. Over the summer 2024 academic term around 250 secondary school pupils attended workshops at venues from Hampden Park in Glasgow to Brighton & Hove Albion FC's American Express Stadium in East Sussex.
- 10,000 black interns programme – Sodexo has long been committed to promoting equitable opportunities. In early 2023 it joined the 10,000 black interns programme aimed at championing underrepresented talent. In the first year out of the 24 interns six have stayed with Sodexo. This year 40 interns are taking part in the six-week programme with Sodexo.
- The Switch project: through a partnership with the Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation and the charity the Switch, in 2023 90 primary school pupils aged between 9-10 took part in a Business Enterprise Employability programme helping build financial literacy and confidence from an early age, key skills that will help equip young people to mitigate food insecurity.

78 volunteers from Sodexo supported the programme providing 143 hours of skills-based volunteering. The project also received a grant from the Stop Hunger Foundation as part of its mission to combat food insecurity. The partnership was recognised at the 2024 Social Mobility Awards receiving a silver award in the community project of the year category.

Sodexo's purpose has always been to contribute positively to communities in which it operates. Since 2015 Sodexo has published an ethical manifesto with commitments made alongside its social impact strategy to deliver real change.

In June 2024 Sodexo published its [Social Impact Report](#) highlighting its progress and outcomes delivered against the commitments laid out in its 2021 Social Impact Pledge.

In 2025, to mark the tenth year since it first pledged commitments to positively impact its people, the planet, its partners and local communities, Sodexo UK and Ireland will publish a brand new social impact pledge outlining commitments to deliver tangible meaningful change.