

Scottish Parliament barista recognised as Unsung Hero at national industry awards

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Kirsty Rafferty from Edinburgh, a barista at the Scottish Parliament, has won the Unsung Hero award at the 2025 Public Sector Catering Awards which were held on 24 April at the London Hilton Metropole.

Kirsty works for [Sodexo UK & Ireland](#), a leading provider of food and facilities management services, which has been providing catering and hospitality services at the Scottish Parliament since 1999. Kirsty joined Sodexo in 2004 as barista in the Garden Level Coffee bar at the Scottish Parliament, a position she still holds today. Kirsty is a popular member of the team with regular customers referring to the café as 'Kirsty's coffee bar'. The café serves around 230 customers a day, Kirsty and her team ensure every customer is warmly greeted and understand the importance of ensuring all customers have the chance to relax and enjoy their break away from the daily pressures of their jobs.

On winning the award Kirsty said: *"I am delighted to win this award. It was a humbling experience to be up against peers from the foodservice industry from across the UK and to hear my name announced as the winner. Thank you to everyone who has supported me over the years."* Over the last twenty years Kirsty has received praise for her hard work and dedication receiving 11 motions from MSPs in recognition of her work, the latest in December 2024 recognising her 20 years' service and commending her for her personal approach, outstanding customer service and attention to detail.

Paul Anstey, CEO, [Government](#), Sodexo UK & Ireland said: *"We are immensely proud of Kirsty, she is a valued member of our team at the Scottish Parliament. Every day she lives our values of team spirit, service spirit and spirit of progress. Kirsty's ability to remember her regular customers drink preference, to devise creative seasonal promotions and show case local suppliers is second-to-none. We are incredibly lucky to have Kirsty as part of team. Congratulations Kirsty this is an amazing achievement and well-deserved."*

The Scottish Parliament is Sodexo's highest-profile contract in Scotland, and Kirsty is a key member of a 35-strong Sodexo team delivering catering services across six catering outlets for the 800 people based there plus up to 800 visitors every day. The team also caters for up to 500 hospitality events each year, ranging from small internal meetings to functions for hundreds of guests.