

Sodexo Receives UK's First-ever Gold-tier Fair Chance Charter Accreditation

2 hours ago



Sodexo UK & Ireland has become the UK's first organisation to achieve gold-tier Fair Chance Charter accreditation from the Fair Chance Business Alliance (FCBA), recognising its long-standing commitment to inclusive recruitment and creating fair access to employment for people with criminal records.

Sodexo is a founding member of the Fair Chance Business Alliance and continues to play an active role in supporting the development of the Fair Chance Charter and the wider movement to normalise the recruitment and progression of people with criminal records.

The accreditation was awarded during the first-ever Fair Chance Week, held from 27th April to 1st May, designed to encourage and unite employers to adopt fair hiring practices for people with criminal records and tap into a pool of talent to address workforce shortages. Sodexo was recognised with gold tier accreditation, as fair chance principles are embedded across the organisation's strategy, governance, recruitment and culture, including:

- Fair and proportionate recruitment practices, such as Ban the Box, along with criminal record disclosure handled only where relevant, at the appropriate stage, and assessed on an individual, risk-based basis.
- Structured support for candidates and managers, ensuring lawful compliance, safeguarding, and transparent decision-making throughout the recruitment and onboarding process.
- Active pathways into employment, including prison-based employability activity, partnerships and its [Starting Fresh programme](#), supporting prison leavers into roles across Sodexo and its partner organisations.
- Building advocacy for prison leavers and driving change across industry, including employer engagement through Starting Fresh roundtables and collaboration with the Purpose Coalition.

Paul Anstey, CEO Government & Energy, Sodexo UK & Ireland said: *"As an organisation, we are uniquely positioned, combining our role as a prison operator with that of a large-scale employer. We're proud to be the first organisation in the UK to achieve gold-tier accreditation of the Fair Chance Charter. This recognition reflects our commitment in ensuring that fair chance principles are embedded across our entire business. We hope it sets a benchmark for employers across industry on what inclusive, responsible recruitment can look like in practice."*

To continue leadership and build momentum with other employers, Sodexo is also a Platinum sponsor of the Fair Chance Business Alliance's Unite 1K ambition, which aims to mobilise 1,000 employers to embrace fair chance hiring by 2030, and extend this across supply chains, partnerships and local communities, helping to expand impact beyond individual organisations.

Rachel Evans, HR Director, Government & Energy, Sodexo UK & Ireland added: *"Achieving gold accreditation is a testament to our belief that talent doesn't have a past, and people have potential. By supporting those with criminal convictions and prison leavers into sustainable employment, we've seen first-hand the benefits of building stronger teams, improving employee retention, and fostering a truly inclusive culture at Sodexo. This recognition, together with our Platinum sponsorship of Unite 1k, inspires us to keep leading by example to drive industry change and break down barriers to create new opportunities for all".*

The Fair Chance Business Alliance is an employer-led, not-for-profit organisation focused on improving access to employment for people with criminal records. Independent of government, it brings employers together through the Fair Chance Charter, a set of standards and resources that support fair and inclusive hiring.

Neil Wood, Founding Director and COO, Fair Chance Alliance said: *"As the first organisation to reach gold-tier accreditation of the Fair Chance Charter, Sodexo demonstrates what it means to embed fair chance hiring at scale. This kind of leadership is critical to boosting the recruitment and progression of people with criminal records and accelerating progress across the wider UK labour market."*

For more than 30 years, Sodexo has partnered with public sector organisations to operate prisons on behalf of His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service. Across six UK prisons, supporting around 7,000 prisoners, Sodexo works with prison leavers to provide skills, training and pathways, including its Starting Fresh programme, into meaningful employment, supporting successful reintegration into communities and helping to reduce the risk of reoffending.