

Sodexo Supports Major Youth Employment Drive with Pledge to Recruit 100 Foundation-level Apprentices

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To mark Youth Employment Week 2026 [Sodexo UK & Ireland](#) has announced its pledge to recruit 100 foundation-level apprentices to help, primarily 16–21-year-olds kick start their careers in catering and hospitality services as part of the government’s Youth Guarantee scheme created to ensure every young person is either earning or learning.

Sodexo is one of the first organisations in its sector to pledge its support to the scheme committing to creating paid, supported entry-level opportunities for young people to gain real workplace experience while completing structured training in employability, workplace behaviours, customer service, food safety, hospitality and role-specific technical skills

The eight-month programme will see suitable existing vacancies converted into supported early careers opportunities, providing apprentices with a first step onto the employment ladder and a route into further roles, apprenticeships, Sodexo academies or the wider industry. The foundation apprenticeship will be funded through the apprenticeship levy and delivered through a combination of work-based learning, coaching and learning activities supported by a training provider.

Pete Siddle, director of talent and learning, Sodexo UK & Ireland said: “Too many young people struggle to access that crucial first step into work because pathways into employment can feel unclear, inconsistent or out of reach. Through this pledge, we want to give more young people the support, experience and confidence to take that step, whether they go on to build their career with Sodexo or elsewhere in the catering and hospitality sector. Our aim is for every learner to finish with stronger workplace readiness,

recognised skills and a clearer understanding of where their next career step could take them.”

The pledge forms part of Sodexo’s wider early careers and [social mobility strategy](#), focused on helping young people better understand the world of work and access structured development pathways.

Sodexo will work with partners including HIT Training, Youth Employment UK, Unifrog, Springboard and Movement to Work to connect young people with opportunities, support delivery and better understand the barriers they face when entering employment.

Through its partnership with Unifrog, the online careers platform used by schools across the UK, Sodexo is already helping young people explore future career opportunities through virtual work experience, career insight sessions and employer engagement activities. On 29 June, Sodexo became the first host organisation for Unifrog’s 2026 Virtual Work Experience Week, providing more than 2,5000 students with an introduction to the company and the varied career pathways it can offer.

Initiatives such as this help provide students greater exposure to the world of work and helping them build the confidence, skills and understanding needed to take their next steps into employment.

Laura-Jane Rawlings MBE, Chief Executive Officer, Youth Employment UK said: “We are delighted to see the commitment Sodexo has to supporting young people through Foundation Apprenticeships. We know far too many young people are struggling to find that first opportunity to grow their confidence, knowledge, and skills. Foundation Apprenticeships are a great pathway for so many, and with a quality youth employer like Sodexo, we know that experience will make a huge difference to the lives and future paths of many. We are grateful that Sodexo is such a committed member and supporter of our work, and we look forward to helping them unlock even more opportunities for young people.”

By working with these organisations, Sodexo is helping to remove barriers to employment and create clearer routes into work and long-term career progression for more young people. These partnerships are a key part of its wider commitment to improving social mobility and opening up opportunities for future talent.

Minister for Skills Jacqui Smith said: “Sodexo’s commitment to recruiting 100 foundation apprentices is exactly the kind of bold action we need from British businesses and I hope others will follow their lead.

“Foundation apprenticeships work by giving young people the skills and confidence to take that vital first step into a rewarding career, while giving employers the talent they need to grow.

“That’s why we’re backing businesses to do more, with hiring incentives worth up to £8,000 to help create 50,000 new youth apprenticeship opportunities. This is part of our £2.5 billion youth employment package to support young people and employers alike.”

Sodexo UK & Ireland is one of the top 100 apprenticeship employers in the country, ranking 43rd in the Department for Work and Pensions’ 2026 list which was announced on 2 July. The list is developed in partnership with *Higherin* and celebrates outstanding apprenticeship employers across England who are providing high-quality opportunities, helping future apprentices, parents, and careers advisers identify leading programmes across multiple industries.