

For immediate release

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Sodexo announces industry first public commitment with national trade unions

Sodexo, a world leading provider of on-site service solutions, is pleased to announce it has become the first in the industry to sign a National Framework Agreement with three of the UK's leading trade unions – Unite, UNISON and GMB, on Thursday 30 June.

The agreement defines the nature of the strategic relationship between Sodexo and the three unions, and identifies guiding principles for managers, union representatives and other employees regarding the expectations they may have of each other.

The National Framework Agreement is also a public declaration from each organisation, outlining their commitment towards continued joint working and to raise awareness of the genuine, effective and positive relationship between unionised staff and Sodexo.

The foodservices and facilities management provider has been working closely with numerous trade unions for several years, not just in the UK, but also across the globe. Sodexo has approximately 380,000 employees at over 34,000 sites in 80 countries, and provides more than 43,000 jobs across 2,300 locations in the UK and respects its employees' right to unionise as they choose. Its employees are without doubt its greatest asset, and it supports and invests heavily in its people.

Aidan Connolly, chief executive officer for Sodexo UK and Ireland, said: "This agreement is a significant achievement that clearly demonstrates our commitment for joint working with trade unions. Our culture is based on respect and high moral and ethical standards. We respect unequivocally the right of every employee to unionise. As one of the world's largest employers – 21st largest employer worldwide and 7th largest employer in Europe, Sodexo places great importance on its relationships with its employees and on being a fair employer."

Len McCluskey, Unite's general secretary, said: "This agreement reflects our shared belief that Sodexo and its workforce are stronger working together. Union-organised workplaces bring companies progress, be it improved health and safety or lower staff turnover, so we are delighted that Sodexo want to work with us to harness these benefits.

"Most importantly of all, this agreement also says to Sodexo's workforce that they are valued and respected. We look forward now to bringing the benefits to the Sodexo workforce across these isles."

Dave Prentis, Unison's general secretary, said: "This agreement is a welcome demonstration of the commitment on both sides to positive, partnership working. Increasing numbers of workers providing public services are now employed by private companies. It's only right that they should have the protection of a trade union. We look forward to working with Sodexo for the benefit of these staff and the company."

Paul Kenny, GMB's general secretary, said: "This new agreement between GMB and Sodexo sets the benchmark for relations between the unions and private employers working in this part of the public sector. It shows how, with the right mind set, workers can be unionised to their own and their employer's mutual benefit.

"GMB looks forward to meeting Sodexo staff and talking to them about the benefits of membership."

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