

SODEXO BOOSTS STANDARDS




QUALITY OF LIFE SERVICES

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Tunbridge Wells Borough Council benefits from Sodexo's partnership approach, as it harnesses the passion of a close-knit community to deliver value, better standards and reduced costs.



THE CHALLENGE

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council is in the same boat as any other public sector organisation. Not only is there an expectation to raise standards, but there's an expectation to do so against a back drop of huge spending cuts. However, with 470 acres of open space, woodland, play and sports facilities to maintain, the council could not afford to scrimp. That's why it signed a ten-year partnership with Sodexo.

THE SOLUTION

The contract with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council sees Sodexo manage grass cutting, park maintenance, shrub bed and hedge maintenance, weed control, sports pitch marking, litter picking and cemetery maintenance; and that's not to mention ensuring one of the most famous county cricket grounds in the country is well kept throughout the year.

While the scope of work is large, Sodexo needed to think laterally to ensure it delivered better standards than the previous supplier and much better value. To achieve this, Sodexo turned to its values and principles; the ethos that sets it apart from its competitors.

Sodexo globally has developed a sustainability strategy to 2020 called the Better Tomorrow Plan, which highlights its commitments around key pillars of corporate responsibility, including the environment, diversity and inclusion, the local communities in which it operates and as an employer of choice. The commitment to the Better Tomorrow Plan has helped shape the way Sodexo operates the contract at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

For example, Sodexo uses bio-diesel to power its tractor in Tunbridge Wells. It also uses coffee grounds as an alternative fertiliser on the bedding in parks.

But it is the way Sodexo has engaged with the local community that has really made the difference at Tunbridge Wells. For example, at Dunorlan Park, a group of up to 16 volunteers join the Sodexo team every Monday and Wednesday to help out with general maintenance. Every Friday, a group of autistic children from a local school join the team to also lend a hand. It is a great experience for the children and forms part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Tunbridge Wells has a very closeknit community, many of whom enjoy their local parks. Sodexo works in partnership with various "Friends of..." groups to make sure those high standards are not only met, but exceeded.

It's not just the local community who are learning a thing or two from Sodexo's grounds maintenance experts though. The company has also employed a number of apprentices from the local area and invested in their training and development. There are currently four apprentices completing their level 2 work-based diploma in horticulture, giving them a solid grounding on which to build their career.

In addition to involving the community and supporting the council's environmental credentials, Sodexo has placed a huge emphasis on providing value through effective management of the contract.

THE BENEFITS

Since taking on the contract at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Sodexo has helped to retain green flag awards at three of the council's parks; achieve gold in the South and South East in Bloom Awards in the large town category; and earn the accolade of best in Kent at the South and South East in Bloom Awards.

While this clearly shows that standards have improved, it is Sodexo's engagement with the local community that has really paid dividends. The local community cherish their public parks and Sodexo has not only understood that, but harnessed that passion to deliver a service that truly adds value.

And that value has impacted the bottom line for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council too by delivering substantial savings over the life of the contract – saving money, adding value and improving standards.

"This is truly a strategic partnership, Sodexo have delivered significant improvements in quality whilst managing financial efficiencies. Their approach and professionalism has added value to the contract and very importantly to all who enjoy visiting the parks." Gary Stevenson, Head of Environment and Street Scene, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and the progress being made with service delivery."