

PRESS RELEASE

Sodexo to create network for ex-military and reservist employees

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Sodexo, a leading global services company, has worked with the British military for over 30 years delivering services to support the entire Armed Forces community from serving personnel, their families, veterans, reservists and cadets.

Sodexo was an early signatory of the Armed Forces Covenant. Part of its commitment is the continual support in the employment of ex-armed forces personnel and their families as well as those employees which are members of the Reserves.

To build on this Sodexo has announced its intention to develop and launch an employee network specifically aimed employees with a military background, and/or are a reservist. The network will initially launch within Sodexo's Government & Agencies business which currently hold a number of key military contracts, but once established will extend to relevant employees from across its business.

Today marks the beginning of the celebrations in the lead up to Armed Forces Day (29 June), and Sodexo will be encouraging its employees to register their interest in joining the network.

The aim of the network will be to create a forum for employees to share their experiences as well as provide advice and support for new recruits so that Sodexo becomes known as an employer of choice for those leaving military life or are part of, or interested in joining, the Reserves.

As part of Sodexo's Public Service Pledge, a target has been set to employ 200 ex-service personnel, which Sodexo achieved with 203 employed. Sodexo is proud to support and provide employment opportunities at every level to those leaving the military.

Oliver Smith, centre manager, Defence, Sodexo UK & Ireland who was a Royal Navy chef serving on multiple ships says: *"After spending five years with the Royal Navy taking up a role in the FM industry has been an easy transition. The industry offers similar structured processes and a clear leadership vision much like the Armed Forces, and working on an MOD site feels like coming home after working in various restaurants on the high street before joining Sodexo."*

Oliver joined Sodexo in 2014 as front of house team leader at a large PFI MOD barracks, during his time in this role he undertook an interim role as manager of the barracks club before taking on the role of centre manager in February 2017 where Oliver oversees the day-to-day running of the PAYD restaurant, Costa Coffee outlet and Costcutter store.

Jamie Thomas, account manager, Government & Agencies, Sodexo UK & Ireland says: *"I am extremely proud of my military career which spanned 24 years including roles from chef to catering manager, environmental health, training analyst through to RCWO and ending as a DO and contract officer. I was a little apprehensive about leaving the military but found the transition extremely easy."*

The leadership and values I gained from my diverse military career allows me to work within a familiar and unfamiliar context and most important the ability to inspire people to be the best they can be. As ex-military never underestimate that the value you bring to the private sector. The foundation and total understanding of the importance of the team will make you stand out from the crowd as a true leader."

Jamie joined Sodexo just three years ago as general services manager in the company's corporate services business before taking on the account management role of a brand new prestigious public sector contract Sodexo was awarded at the beginning of 2018. Jamie oversees a 650-strong operational team including 24 managers. The team provides 54 services across an estate portfolio comprising over 240 buildings.

Wednesday 26 June is National Reserves day, which recognises the valuable support reservists provide to the regular Armed Forces. Colin Barber is a Reservist with the 167 Catering Support Regiment and Quality, Safety and Environment Manager, Integrator contract for Sodexo's Government & Agencies business

Colin Barber has worked for Sodexo for 11 years, beginning as a fire and safety officer at HMP Addiewell in Scotland before taking on the role of head of safety for the four prisons under Sodexo management at the time. Colin moved from the justice side of Sodexo's business into corporate services looking after the health and safety across 11 sites for a multinational beverage company before joining Sodexo's new integrator team.

Colin said: *"Without Sodexo's continued support for my army reservist role, I would've really struggled to justify having a fairly demanding civilian job whilst still achieving a busy work home life balance, so for that, I consider myself extremely fortunate and proud to be able to wear the uniform of the British Army and I'm extremely grateful to Sodexo for their support in allowing this to be realised."*

In 2017 Sodexo was awarded the Gold Employer Recognition Award by the Ministry of Defence in recognition of the company's commitment and efforts to support the entire Armed Force community through its strong policies which include:

- the positive recruitment of ex-military personnel
- the provision of employment opportunities for the spouses of service personnel posted into areas where Sodexo holds a contract
- a flexible approach to granting leave for employees which are members of the Reserves
- a partnership approach to supporting service charities such as SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity. Sodexo has been a partner to SSAFA for 14 years and provides valuable sponsorship, enables volunteering, fundraises as well as providing financial support for the charity's homelessness fund.

Paul Anstey, CEO, Government & Agencies, Sodexo UK & Ireland concludes; *"This is an important week and one our teams respect and work hard to support our clients in the defence sector and the entire Armed Forces community. This year we will be supporting the national event in Salisbury with a team from our Allenby Connaught contract supporting SSAFA's Big Brew Up providing refreshments to guests to the national event between Friday 28 and Sunday 30 June.*

"This week is the perfect time for us to kick start our network, we want to ensure we are doing all we can to attract ex-service personnel to our business and to support those we already employ. I am looking forward to seeing the network grow within Government & Agencies and the wider Sodexo business."

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