

Fife Schools PFI

As an equity partner in the Pinnacle Schools consortium, Sodexho Facilities Management took a major role in a 25-year PFI/PPP project to design, build, finance and operate three new schools for Fife Council in Scotland. Construction work began towards the end of 2001, with all three schools open and operating on schedule by August 2003. Sodexho is managing and delivering a comprehensive range of facilities services at the schools, from asset management and building maintenance to cleaning and security.



Fife Council's PFI was heralded as 'a new way forward for schools in Fife'. The ambitious scheme, with a capital value of £40 million, encompassed the construction of three new schools on existing playing fields and the re-provision of sports facilities. Expanding community use of the schools' facilities was also a key feature of the project, offering five-a-side football, keep fit, yoga, dance and aerobics as well as language, cookery and music classes. In the case of Queen Anne High School, a new drama suite was also of major importance.

The new Queen Anne High School, Dunfermline, is now one of the largest schools in Scotland, with 1800 pupils; Beath High School, Cowdenbeath is home to 1400 pupils; while 350 young children attend the new Anstruther Primary School.

A core Sodexho team of more than 70 staff provides support services throughout school hours and a daily community service up to 10pm every day. In the case of janitorial staff, they are on site in shifts at the schools for 16 hours each day.

Each school, with its associated sports facilities, has its own dedicated cleaning team and all are working towards recognition as centres of excellence by the British Institute of Cleaning Science.

The extensive retraining and multi-skilling of staff has been a key feature of the contract. As an example of increased efficiency, it has enabled Sodexho to combine security patrols with janitorial services, portering and minor works.

Sodexho is responsible for security at the three sites: a combination of manned patrols and technical support that includes cctv and swipe card systems. In addition, specialist services have been formulated by Fife Council and Sodexho for the Dunfermline school, which has been designated by police and other agencies as a disaster centre in the event of a major national or local emergency.



Sodexho services for Fife Schools

- Contract management
- Building and asset management
- Help desk
- Grounds maintenance
- Third party income generation
- Caretaking
- Portering
- Cleaning
- Security
- Janitorial



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A planned building maintenance programme is in place at each of the schools, designed for minimum disruption to the school's core activities and community usage. Authorised management at the schools and at Fife Council can use web-based, read-only access to check on progress with the latest schedules of work. A similar planned approach is used for grounds maintenance, with the local on-site teams supported by Sodexho's Land Technology division, a leader in its field.

Sodexho also manages an asset estate of more than 100,000 items of fixtures (such as boilers and radiators), furniture and equipment. Working with other members of the Pinnacle consortium, Sodexho has appointed strategic suppliers to provide specialist support for procurement and replacement.

A Sodexho Help Desk operates for 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, providing a central management facility for all non-scheduled repairs and maintenance of the building estate. Every request is logged and receives an automated acknowledgement, confirming the contractual service level, what actions have already been taken and the timescale for a permanent remedy. In addition, the caller can log on to the system to check online the latest status of the repair.

A total of 164 Service Level Agreements (SLAs) are in place across the support services contract, covering every important aspect of service delivery. The Sodexho management team regularly reviews performance against the SLAs with representatives of Fife Council, the schools' rectors and business managers, and community users.

After three years of operation, the feedback from users confirms that there has been a vast improvement in the depth and quality of service provision, compared to the time when services were provided in-house. Site ownership and accountability have been encouraged among all Sodexho managers and staff at the schools, leading to a close identity with the aims and aspirations of the schools themselves.

According to David Meek, Rector at Queen Anne High School:

“The quality of work done by Sodexho in maintaining the facilities at the school has far exceeded my expectation. It is an absolute delight to enjoy the fruits of their labour: we can come to school knowing it will be fully accessible; clean and even, when the need arises, snow free. It is clear that as a company they want to provide a first class service and that is certainly what we receive.”

