

GlaxoSmithKline plc (GSK)

Over a 12-year period, the support services relationship between Sodexo and GSK, one of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies has been highly successful. It began with GSK outsourcing a range of services at five manufacturing sites and was later extended to cover seven major R&D locations. Most recently, four consumer healthcare sites have been added.



Sodexo services for GSK*

- Laboratory equipment maintenance
- Applied technology management
- Asset management
- General/windows/specialist cleaning
- Glasswash/autoclave
- Reception
- Mailroom
- Engineering helpdesk
- Conferencing/AV support
- Porterage
- Inter-site transport
- Fitness centre
- Laundry
- Landscaping
- Waste management
- Pest control
- Stores
- Goods in/out
- Catering
- Vending
- Security
- Administrative support
- Retail (GSK) shop
- Sports & Social Club

* Range of services varies by location

More than 900 Sodexo staff are engaged in providing support services for GSK in highly disciplined, controlled environments that are constantly under the regulatory spotlight. Most of the staff transferred to Sodexo under TUPE regulations.

Regulatory compliance with the rigorous industry standards set by MHRA and the US food and Drug Administration (FDA) lies at the heart of many of the services provided by Sodexo. In addition, Sodexo must comply with GSK's own stringent standards of environmental, health, safety and quality management, particularly at the R&D and manufacturing sites.

In providing support services such as instrument maintenance engineering, laboratory cleaning and glasswash/autoclave, the Sodexo teams are working in controlled processing areas covered by current Good Manufacturing Practice (cGMP). This demands attention to detail, accuracy in documentation and records management, total transparency and traceability. Training includes the special demands and work methods associated with cGMP areas. Working to tight specifications and deadlines, and getting things right first time, are all essential.

The Sodexo teams of on-site engineers responsible for laboratory equipment maintenance provide a 'first fix' service for much of the equipment in use at the R&D sites. Sodexo also arranges and manages planned maintenance and breakdown contracts with the manufacturers of NMR and other complex systems. Significant cost- and time-savings have been made by reducing the number of unscheduled call-outs to equipment manufacturers.

From the Stevenage R&D centre, an eight-strong Sodexo team manages a busy helpdesk which handles the full range of engineering service requests from all the R&D facilities, then schedules the necessary work. These requests vary from simply replacing a light bulb to organising the repair of an electron microscope or the refitting of a laboratory.



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Laboratory equipment ranks as GSK's highest value capital assets and Sodexo has the responsibility for asset management across all the R&D sites. Managed by a central team at Stevenage, every item of laboratory equipment is being barcoded. This will simplify the annual task of confirming the location of each asset for financial audit purposes. Tracking will also enable GSK to optimise the use of laboratory equipment throughout R&D.

There are comprehensive Service Level Agreements for all services and a dedicated Sodexo quality and safety manager ensures that the system of total quality management reflects best practice across all areas of the business. In particular, he works with the local management teams and staff to embed robust processes, instil a proactive attitude to risk and quality management, and underline the contract-wide commitment to continuous improvement.

Risk assessments and safe systems of work are critical for all the support services, some of which involve potentially hazardous situations, such as the handling of chemicals, gases, solvents and waste. Local managers undergo intensive health and safety training to IOSH level as part of the continuous drive to eliminate risk and accidents. Safety representatives at each site handle first line risk assessments, work methods and safe systems of work for every service. These are reviewed constantly in the workplace so that best practice in risk management can be shared across the contract.

All the sites are consistently monitored and audited, both by GSK's own compliance auditors and consultants from Safeguard, Sodexo's independent health and safety consultancy. Systems are in place to ensure that any compliance issues are addressed swiftly.

For GSK, outsourcing such a wide range of support services has brought clear commercial and operational advantages. Costs are better controlled. Entrusting multiple support services to a single partner has reduced complexity. The integration of services, multi-skilling and flexible working have all contributed to raising the quality of operational performance.

Clear lines of communication and reporting have proved critical to the successful relationship between GSK and Sodexo. They run vertically, both top-down and bottom-up between Sodexo's contract director and management at each of the 16 sites. Crucially, there is regular communication at the highest level between GSK and Sodexo, as well as between Sodexo managers and GSK managers locally. On a day-to-day basis, GSK has a single point of contact for all operations at each site and with Sodexo's GSK contract director for issues affecting the entire contract.

GSK's seven R&D centres at Harlow, Stevenage, Greenford, Ware, Frythe, Beckenham and Tonbridge employ more than 10,000 people. A further 2,700 are employed in manufacturing at Montrose, Crawley, Ulverston, Barnard Castle and Worthing: with 1,600 GSK staff based within Consumer Healthcare at Maidenhead, Weybridge, Slough and Coleford. Sodexo operations on behalf of GSK have a combined turnover of £18.5m.

