

Going the extra mile Wakefield District Housing

With 31,000 properties across Wakefield and the surrounding towns, Wakefield District Housing is the second largest housing association in the country.

'We chose Sodexo because of their commitment to working as a partnership,' explains **Steve Rawson, Executive Director of Operations, Wakefield District Housing**. 'They were also very attractively priced and we knew they had an ethos of quality.'

'The key is that both our organisations have a spirit of doing what's necessary to get the right result for our tenants,' says Steve. 'Their commitment is to the customer and to making sure a quality service is delivered.'

A COMMITMENT TO QUALITY
'Sodexo manages Wakefield's grounds maintenance, which, amongst other things, equates to cutting 1.5million square metres of grass every fortnight. 'We know that good grounds maintenance is a big contributor to tenant experience,' says Steve. 'People feel it keenly if grass is uncut and flowerbeds unkempt. We had a bumpy few weeks at the start, but once Sodexo settled in, the team focussed on improving the service and brought their expertise to bear on the quality of our open spaces.'

'Sodexo have been extremely flexible. For example, the appalling weather in 2012 had a huge impact on our grounds. But we couldn't have asked for more in terms of the extra resources that were brought in. It showed an organisation really committed to a partnership with us, not just fulfilling a contractual obligation. They are consummate professionals in how the service has been delivered.'

SUPPORTING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

To manage the contract, Sodexo employs 31 staff - eight of whom are apprentices studying NVQ Level 2 Work Based Diploma in Horticulture.

'It's our third year of apprenticeships,' explains Nigel Payne, Operations Director, Sodexo. 'We're really proud of helping to give young people the skills and trades to get local jobs. All our staff are from the local region, and are trained to NVQ Level 2. The British Association of Landscape Industries awarded us Employer of the Year in 2012. Part of that recognition was a result of the apprenticeship scheme that started at Wakefield, and has now spread across the rest of the company.'

'We want to support the local community. We've sponsored the Love Where You Live Awards, and done other projects such as tidy up days. 'The client has recognised that we've brought a professional approach and continuity to the quality of horticultural services across Wakefield's housing stock. This has led to

discussions about additional services and opportunities. We're looking forward to seeing how our partnership develops into the future.'

SODEXO SERVICES:
Arboricultural works
Grass cutting
Hedge maintenance
Shrub bed maintenance
Litter picking
Weed control

