

# PRESS RELEASE

## Coffee Grounds for Growth a winner at ACE awards

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**Sodexo's Caroline Meledo was awarded the ACE Sustains People award for developing the company's Coffee Grounds for Growth initiative into a successful social enterprise which demonstrates effective support for sustainable business in the areas of food waste management; recycling and community benefit.**

The ACE Sustains awards were launched this year to mark the significant focus that the food service sector now places on sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

Caroline is Sodexo's corporate citizenship and engagement advisor and has successfully taken an idea which originated from the company's Green Spark initiative where its employees were invited to submit green ideas (new and/or existing) which could help improve Sodexo's environmental performance, to an initiative which is now a core part of Sodexo's hot beverage offer with social benefits too.

**The judges for the award said:** "We were so impressed with how Caroline developed the winning Green Spark concept into a successful social enterprise, embracing waste management, recycling and community benefits in partnership with the team at HMP Peterborough. An excellent example of how something simple can be extended across the business – a great testament to a company's commitment to sustainability."

Coffee Grounds for Growth sees the recovery of used coffee grounds which are then packaged in the original coffee bean bags and sealed with a sticky label which gives information on how to use the coffee grounds as a natural fertiliser and pest deterrent for plants and vegetables.

With the potential to divert more than 200 tonnes of used coffee grounds annually from going to waste across all Sodexo sites, save clients £28,000 in waste disposal annually and avoid 100 tonnes of CO2 equivalent emissions, Caroline spotted the opportunity to develop this idea further on a larger scale and also wanted to look at ways in which it could become a social enterprise.

Caroline consulted with more than 100 internal stakeholders from volunteer employees through to subject matter experts to make the initiative suitable for all Sodexo sites. Through the consultations, an opportunity arose to look at the carpentry workshop at HMP Peterborough, a prison managed by Sodexo Justice Services, to craft the wooden boxes used to display the bags of coffee grounds in offices and restaurants.

The male prisoners making the boxes do so now as part of a six-week training programme which leads to a National Certificate in Further Education in carpentry approved by Peterborough Regional College. Prisoners are paid for their work and can start 12-week training programme to receive a diploma in carpentry on completion. To date 10 prisoners have completed the course.

In order to consolidate this workstream into a sustainable business, a community interest company (Inside Working), a type of social enterprise whereby all profits cover the costs of raw material and surplus profit is donated to victim support charities. After a little more than one month of trading, Inside Working, now a listed supplier to Sodexo, has generated surplus in excess of 15% of sales and is now listed as a supplier to Sodexo and is in the process of producing a catalogue of goods that it can manufacture and sell to the rest of the business and external clients with equal quality to industrial suppliers and at a competitive price.

**Thomas Jelley, corporate citizenship manager at Sodexo:** "What started off as an environmental engagement initiative has delivered much more than expected. The 'Coffee Grounds for Growth' initiative tackles waste recovery, contributes to our STOP Hunger initiative and to local community development. It has been thrilling to see how Caroline has brought together colleagues from across the business to turn a seemingly simple idea into a great product and multiple outcomes."

To date 242 of the Coffee Grounds for Growth toolkits are now in place at 203 of Sodexo sites in the UK.

**Ends**