



STORIES FROM

The OCM has been working with Sodexo for many years and we saw the launch of the Coaching Professional Apprenticeship as a great joint opportunity to further Sodexo's goals and ambitions in creating a coaching culture. We have recently seen our first Sodexo candidates achieve their apprenticeships and wanted to share some of the learning from across our partnership.

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“The OCM's values are aligned with Sodexo so this makes the relationship very strong. We are both open to giving and receiving feedback and tweaking the process as we go to ensure that our delegates get the best learning opportunity.”

Shamim Stokes, Head of Learning and Development, Sodexo, 2021



THREE MONTHS AFTER THE FIRST SODEXO CANDIDATES STARTED THEIR APPRENTICESHIPS JOURNEY

Creating A Coaching Culture With Apprenticeships - A Sodexo Story

How do you unlock the best bits of your performance and attributes, and find the motivation within yourself to develop the areas that require improvement? HR and learning professionals, as well as business leaders, point towards the practice of coaching as an enabler to personal and organisational growth.

Coaching is respected as an accredited skill, and Sodexo UK & Ireland has been working since 2014 to implement a development service that teaches leaders to become coaches, and for colleagues to embark upon relationships that benefit both their careers, and the future of their business area.

Throughout the last seven years, we have worked towards embedding a coaching culture, which saw 53 senior colleagues achieving a professional qualification in the subject. With positive feedback from both individuals and business units, demand for coaching support soared, and so too did the need for more trained coaches.

At the beginning of 2020, together with external partners at The OCM Group, Sodexo has evolved its coaching qualification, converting it into a level five apprenticeship, taught at degree standard. This not only enabled new online learning for delegates, but also opened the qualification to a wider intake from across the business.

We spoke to Christine Williams, HR director for Service Operations, who is undertaking the new Professional Coach qualification.

Christine, what attracted you to the coaching apprenticeship?

“It was the flexibility to fit my learning around my work and personal commitments through remote learning in a subject which strengthens my HR career path.”

“For me personally, I’m developing higher level skills which are tailored to my field of work in HR, through a professional qualification. For Sodexo, this connects to our strategic people priority of creating a coaching culture for our teams.”

You’re three months in, what is your experience so far?

“The apprenticeship is providing me with excellent on the job learning, with lots of opportunities to practice new skills, act on my new knowledge and show different behaviours straight away in my day job”.

What would you say to someone thinking about taking on the same opportunity, or another apprenticeship?

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“Don’t ponder on it - go for it! You become part of a peer network of support and have plenty of supervision to keep you on track. The apprenticeship follows a clear pathway of activities so you’re continuously developing as you complete the modules.”

“I wished I’d done it sooner.”

Shamim Stokes, Head of Learning and Development, has led Sodexo’s approach to coaching since 2014, and has seen how the apprenticeship has benefited both the colleagues taking part, and those receiving coaching:

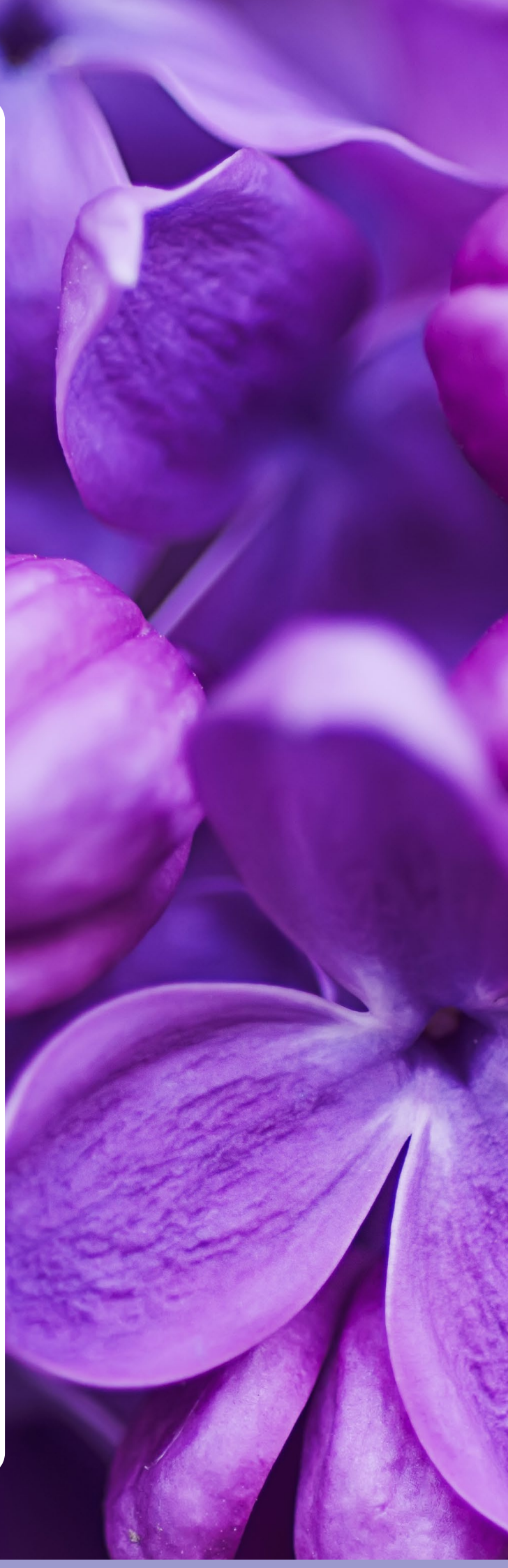
“In the last six years, over 300 people in our region have received coaching, with 85% feeling direct organisational benefits. The biggest difference in this new apprenticeship programme is the degree-level teaching; it is very comprehensive, but also includes more support for learners. While this new apprenticeship programme is a pilot, we’re seeing positive initial feedback and results. We are looking to launch our next cohort in April 2021. We will apply any lessons learned and will have one of our new apprentice coaches talking to the new cohort about their experience, with tips to get the best out of the learning.”

Background

The original coaching proposal back in 2014 was to develop an internal coaching resource working in partnership with the OCM, a credible Coaching organisation. The aim was to embed a ‘coaching culture’ within the organisation and to drive high performance to help in our achievement to Investors in People gold.

Since that time 4 cohorts of internal coaches have been trained to the Certificate Level 3 in Coaching. Each cohort was between 10 and 15 delegates. As a result of global moves, resignations and increased role demands we now have 33 trained coached out of the 53 originally trained.

To support talent, transition in roles, experienced professions we required a larger pool of coaches.



Converting to the coaching qualification

The Professional Coach Level 5 qualification was introduced in 2020 and we had already agreed with OCM that we would be the first Organisation to pilot the process and qualification with them. At Sodexo we had been investing around £20,000 each year into our Coaching programmes so with the Introduction of the new Coaching qualification it made sense for us to compare the 2 programmes and to utilise the Apprenticeship levy. The new programme is 14 months long in comparison to the previous one that was between 9 – 12 months. The biggest difference is the level being degree level it is very comprehensive and includes an additional 5 coachees being coached, an additional number of workshops and support from an internal Sodexo mentor as well as a Coach/Mentor/Supervisor from the OCM.

Benefits to Sodexo

The benefits to Sodexo are the introduction of a coaching culture, our teams feeling supported and valued. Coaches have said things like

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“My coach really did inspire me”, “my coach is amazing and made a significant impact around my leadership” and “internal coaching is a very good idea to motivate individuals like me”.

Working with our partner The OCM

The working relationship is very important particularly as this is a pilot. The OCM's values are aligned with Sodexo so this makes the relationship very strong. We are both open to giving and receiving feedback and tweaking the process as we go to ensure that our delegates get the best learning opportunity. We have a weekly call to check on progress and to ensure that everything is where it should be.

Everything with our first pilot cohort is going well and we are looking to launch our next cohort in April 2021. We will apply any lessons learned and will have one of our new Apprentice coaches talking to the new cohort about their experience and tips to get the best out of the learning.





FEBRUARY 2022: THE FIRST COHORT COMPLETE THEIR APPRENTICESHIPS JOURNEY - A SODEXO STORY

Niki Audsley, Communications Manager at Sodexo, talks about taking on the challenge of Level 5 Coaching Professional Apprenticeship with The OCM.

"I've always been someone who people gravitate towards to talk through issues or look for advice, so when the opportunity arose to take on a professional apprenticeship in coaching, I thought why not? Let's formalise what I'm doing already and learn how to do it properly!

Our cohort set out on the apprenticeship journey in October 2020, just six months into the Covid-19 pandemic. Unlike some others, the justice sector couldn't close and information kept changing frequently, requiring rapid comms so a radically increased workload.

It may sound crazy – and at times it really has felt like it – to take on such a big challenge in already difficult times, but the apprenticeship gave me something positive to focus on while the world was in turmoil.

When we began the course, I didn't know what to expect. What I didn't anticipate was how transformative the process would be, both for my clients and for me.

Coaching is all about people. Of course, there are lots of different techniques, approaches and models that you use to help your clients navigate through whatever it is they want to work on. But at the end of the day, the key to coaching is listening – not talking!

The process – both learning and practical coaching – really makes you self-reflect and consider what you are thinking about the client/situation/potential solutions and why you are thinking this way. Is this an unconscious bias? Are you trying to 'save' the client – from themselves or the situation? Are you truly seeing and hearing the individual, or are you allowing your personal experiences or opinions to cloud your view?

The biggest lesson I have taken from the apprenticeship is just how crucial it is to allow others the time, space and reassurance to simply talk. How often have you had something playing on your mind, so you go to talk to someone about it and reach the conclusion without the other person uttering a single word? The role of the coach is to help you see that you have the answer and to have the self-believe to trust yourself.



"I didn't realise at the start of this journey that I would be able to have such a positive, far-reaching impact on others simply by providing a safe space to talk. Coaching takes place over around six months, usually made up of monthly sessions of one hour in length. It's incredible to see the power that one hour of conversation has when you meet again the following month."

The apprenticeship has been a huge undertaking and, while I would thoroughly recommend it to anyone who likes to help others, it comes with the caveat that it takes dedication. Just like your clients, you get out what you put in. You can't coast through, it's a commitment – but that commitment is to you as well as those you are supporting.



GEMMA TALKS ABOUT HER APPRENTICESHIP JOURNEY - A SODEXO STORY

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“It does take dedication, it does take time out of your weekly commitments, but it's absolutely been one of the most fulfilling courses I've ever completed.”

Gemma Prowse, Senior HR Business Partner at Sodexo

Ed Parsloe chatted with Gemma Prowse, Senior HR Business Partner at Sodexo, on her Coaching Professional Apprenticeship Journey, if you'd like to watch Gemma talk about her journey please visit our website: www.theocm.co.uk/ocm-apprenticeships/insights



If you pay into the Levy and want to build an internal coaching pool, we'd be happy to talk to you about our experiences. As a specialist coaching provider we're best placed to support you in understanding how to successfully meet your organisational goals.

Contact Ed Parsloe to find out more Ed.Parsloe@theocm.co.uk