

# A transformative partnership with East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust

A seamless transition, rooted in partnership and purpose

In December 2024, Sodexo formed a transformative partnership with East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust (ESNEFT) to deliver soft facilities management services across 20 sites, including Colchester and Ipswich hospitals and 18 community facilities.

Following a Trust Board decision to move to a single external provider, Sodexo was appointed to deliver a consistent service covering patient dining, cleaning, portering, security and more.

Mobilisation and stakeholder engagement began immediately, with phased roll-out across sites from April to July 2025. The transition was seamless, ensuring service continuity while welcoming over 1,000 colleagues, half of whom transferred from the NHS and half from the incumbent provider.

Recognising the critical role Sodexo now plays in delivering safe, effective clinical care and outstanding patient experience, Nick Hulme, ESNEFT's CEO, commented:

*"I'm really pleased with the way it's going. We've seen significant improvement, for example with Portering times, we've had good feedback from staff and patients about the catering offer that's available, and we've had good audits around cleaning. But what I've really been impressed with is that word partnership. We're working with you, you're working with us all with that real focus around improving the lives of the people that we serve, improving the lives of our community, making our staff happier, and that is the key to really good partnership working."*

Nick Hulme, CEO, ESNEFT

## Client Profile

### Trust

East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust

### Hospital type

2x acute hospitals + 18 community sites

### Beds

1300+

### Service delivered

Major emergency departments, hospital and community services.



## Highlights

- NHS and incumbent provider transitioned to single Sodexo contract
- 20 sites, including 18 community facilities
- Over 1,000 colleagues transferred
- Over 30 different subject matter experts worked on the mobilisation plan
- 70+ staff group events held
- New service innovations introduced including:
  - A new digital retail solution, Kitchen Works.
  - Live patient experience platform, Experiencia.
  - Digital waste reduction solution, WasteWatch.
  - Online patient Welcome Guide.





## Meeting the challenge with expertise and empathy

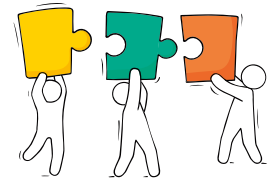
When it came to mobilising a contract of this scale, it demanded a people-first mindset. Our ESNEFT Business Director and Mobilisation Lead led more than 30 subject matter experts, including estates, HR, finance, IT, communications and others, to prioritise patient experience.

Robust governance was embedded from day one, with jointly developed mobilisation tools, risk registers and readiness plans. Rigorous reporting ensured alignment was maintained.

Crucially, executive team support played a vital role through peer-to-peer leadership meetings, site visits and regular briefings that fostered momentum and trust. This deep engagement helped lay the foundations for long-term success.



## Supporting people through change



**Transitioning over 1,000 colleagues under TUPE required broad stakeholder engagement managed with empathy and transparency.**

Recognising that some staff had concerns about being transferred to a new employer, the mobilisation team adopted a “One Team” ethos, which shaped our entire approach. We worked collaboratively with ESNEFT colleagues with the goal of creating a unified culture, underpinned by shared KPIs, aligned behaviours, and regular recognition touchpoints.

We combined structured communication with personal engagement, bespoke welcome letters, over 70 group events, and dedicated one-to-one conversations to help ease concerns and build trust. Bespoke uniforms were created for the team and all communications utilised this to create a sense of identity and belonging.

Our co-created, values-led culture – bolstered by the invaluable support of our suppliers Apetito and Vileda in delivering targeted training – helped maintain morale and resilience through high-pressure deadlines, leading to smooth service go-lives across all sites.





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HEALTH & CARE

## Delivering with care and precision

Health, safety and wellbeing were central throughout mobilisation. From site audits to tailored training, such as disease-informed nutrition modules for catering staff, every detail was designed for quality and compliance. Menus were co-developed with clinical leads to meet DIGEST and Hospital Food Standards. Catering teams took part in food tastings to build their confidence and engage with patients, staff and visitors.

Our new Kitchen Works retail offer has launched at Colchester and Ipswich, bringing pre-ordering, click-and-collect, and street food pop-ups to enhance convenience and choice. Feedback was gathered directly from staff and patients via stands and surveys to inform the end solution.

Structured, transparent reporting kept stakeholders informed and enabled agile decision-making. Key updates on performance, risks and workforce integration ensured accountability and clarity throughout the process. Important messages were shared via Trust email, print, and digital platforms – reinforcing shared goals and raising awareness among the wider hospital community.



## Innovation and social impact from day one



A digital platform with intuitive dashboards and analytics provides clinical and non-clinical teams with real-time insights into patient concerns and expectations about non-clinical services – captured from bedside conversations by newly recruited Patient Ambassadors.

A digital information guide has been launched for patients, empowering them with information on menus, who's who in the team, hospital and ward routines, FAQs and ways to feedback.

A dedicated Social Value Manager is leading our joint efforts on sustainability, wellbeing, and local impact. Together with ESNEFT, we've launched a Sustainability & Wellbeing calendar and on-site counselling for frontline staff.

Our environmental commitments are equally ambitious. Sodexo has achieved Level 4 on the NHS Evergreen Sustainable Supplier Assessment – thanks to initiatives like WasteWatch and our 2025 goal of 100% recyclable or compostable packaging.

We're also proud to introduce Combat2Coffee – a social enterprise supporting veterans and ex-offenders through barista training at both hospitals.

## Looking ahead

**This contract signals a new era of collaboration.**

Through strong governance, data-driven reporting, and a culture of care, we are committed to delivering safe, efficient, patient-focused services that support ESNEFT's ambitions for years to come.



## To find out more

To discover more about our transformative partnership with East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust, contact **Patrick Hunter**.

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