

# Best Employee Network/ Resource Group

**Winner**

**Deutsche Bank**



This category looks to identify networks that can demonstrate how they have been instrumental in supporting colleagues with their mental wellbeing in the workplace

Deutsche Bank's Neurodiversity Network was formed in January 2022 following the success of its first Neurodiversity Celebration Month in October 2021. The Neurodiversity Network was established to capitalise on the engagement the campaign had achieved, and maintain momentum.

The Neurodiversity Network is driven by a working group of six members. It's chaired by Hannah Longman, an Audit Remediation Programme Manager at the bank. Hannah sees her own neurodivergence as part of what makes her good at her job. Members of the working group represent a range of neurotypes (autism, ADHD, dyspraxia, as well as neurotypical), and include neurodivergent individuals and parents of neurodivergent children.

The wider Neurodiversity Network has around 600 members. There are two main goals of the network: to provide peer support to neurodivergent colleagues, and information and resources to the wider Deutsche Bank population. The network provides a safe space for neurodivergent colleagues. Many neurodivergent people feel "different" and isolated – until they meet other neurodivergent people.

A recent BBC documentary stated that autistic women without intellectual disability are eight times more likely than the general population to commit suicide. Additude.com says individuals with



Hannah Longman works as an Audit Remediation Programme Manager in Deutsche Bank's Technology Infrastructure team in London. She identifies as neurodivergent and says: "Neurodiversity is an integral part of who I am, so it's part of the reason I'm good at my job."

ADHD are more likely to have an anxiety disorder, with rates approaching 50%. The Neurodiversity Network aims to improve the mental health of neurodivergent colleagues by driving neuro-inclusion across the organisation, and also by signposting to resources and/or to HR where required.

The Neurodiversity Network runs an annual internal Neurodiversity Celebration Month, including internal panel discussions, sharing personal experiences, external speakers, in-person meet-ups and blog posts from colleagues. This is global, with →

contributors coming from the UK, US, Germany, India and the Philippines. As part of this 2022 campaign the team worked with HR to update Deutsche Bank's "Promotion Demystified" materials to make them more accessible to neurodivergent colleagues.

The Neurodiversity Network also provides resources to line managers and peers, plus a blog, via a dedicated hub on the company intranet. It also gives one-to-one peer support to neurodivergent colleagues, parents of neurodivergent children, and colleagues of neurodivergent staff, where requested. A fortnightly virtual lunch club, provides peer support to neurodivergent colleagues, but is open to anyone who wants to know more about neurodiversity.

In partnership with the Employee Resource Group dbFamily, the team founded the Neurodiversity Family Network – a regular virtual meeting for parents of neurodivergent children to provide peer support and a listening ear.

## Achievements

The network's greatest achievement is fostering a sense of belonging among its neurodivergent community. This is demonstrated by the number of colleagues who join the fortnightly lunch club (33 individuals on the Outlook invite, 67 people signed up via the intranet event page).

The 2021 neurodiversity campaign received 15,000 intranet page views and 800 meeting sign-ups (with replays available subsequently via the intranet). A LinkedIn post by Management Board sponsor Bernd Leukert received 5,700 views in October 2021. From October 2021 to February 2023 the network's mailing list has increased from zero to 600. A dedicated mailing list for neurodivergent colleagues and allies who are willing to contribute to blogs, panel discussions and the like currently sits at 48.

Events run by the Neurodiversity Network have included speakers including Carly Jones MBE and author Kenneth Mikkelsen, among others. The Neurodiversity Family Network currently has 21 regular attendees.

The impact of talking about neurodiversity is truly changing colleagues' lives, especially when considering the link between neurodiversity and mental health. ■



✦ I was very taken with the application, especially the statistics around autism, ADHD and anxiety

✦ Emotional... I wish I had this support everywhere I worked from now on. Exceptional standard setting for all big businesses

✦ It is very pleasing to see Deutsche Bank addressing this subject as early as 2021 when many organisations in 2023 are only just becoming aware of the issues

✦ A great opportunity for those who might not be neurodiverse but possibly have a child or sibling who is to learn more about what to be aware of

## Highly Commended

→ Starbucks



## Shortlisted

→ Accenture UK

→ Kyowa Kirin

→ Pacific Life Re

→ Swiss Re

→ That Lot

