

Employee Network of the Year

Winner

Mental Health Champions, Fidelity International

This category looks to identify a workplace that has established a successful peer network of champions and advocates: a team of workers who commit to supporting colleagues in addition to their day job

Fidelity International offers investment solutions and retirement expertise to institutions, individuals and their advisers around the world. Prior to the formation of their Mental Health Champions (MHC) group, the company didn't talk much about mental health. Despite having great psychological support benefits, the uptake was low and employees weren't aware of the support available to them, until sometimes it got to a point where intervention was not just needed but essential.

In 2016, Fidelity's D&I network celebrated world Mental Health Day by hosting a talk with boxing legend Frank Bruno about wellbeing issues. A call went out for volunteers to take part in a mental health focus group to understand what the current company policy might be, and what people thought could be done better.

Valuable and concerning insights were gleaned: respondents reported they did not feel comfortable to openly talk about mental health, and many weren't aware of the help that was available if they did speak out. This feedback was used to create Fidelity's first mental health action plan,



which focus group participants volunteered to work together to implement.

Despite having no budget and having to use individual contacts within the business to lobby senior leaders and fund initiatives, Mental Health Champions was formed. The team consists of volunteers from all areas and levels of the business. They all have experience of mental health issues, on a personal basis or through family and friends. Some are trained counsellors, some are just passionate about making Fidelity a great place to work.

Highly Commended

→ HPC Mental Health Buddies Network
EDF (Hinkley Point C)

Shortlisted

- Bank of England Mental Health Network
Bank of England
- Bloomberg Abilities Community & MHFA
Bloomberg LP
- dh Thrive
dunnhumby
- PepsiCo Healthy Living Champion Network
PepsiCo

Judges' comments

Achievements

The Mental Health Champions at Fidelity have introduced a series of wellbeing initiatives company-wide, from joke competitions and Easter egg hunts, to desk drops of chocolate bars and fortune cookies, book giveaways, photo competitions and yoga classes. Expanding from the UK to Ireland, India and beyond, this passionate group of employees has introduced expert-led webinars with celebrity speakers, green ribbon and green cupcake days, and shared personal stories of mental health. The team work tirelessly to build an inclusive workplace culture, where employees feel comfortable talking about mental health without fear, and in the knowledge that they will be supported if they do.

They have received recognition for their achievements from the company's CEO and a variety of the most senior leaders in the organisation, and their efforts mean they are often cited as an example of best mental wellbeing practice.

At the end of 2018, the team entered the Mind Workplace Wellbeing Index for the first time and achieved a Silver Award. Proud moments include an employee in India who read MHC's Suicide Prevention Day blog and took action to safeguard his own health. Another example from closer to home involved an MHC team member having a conversation with a colleague that turned into a chat about personal mental health needs. In both cases it is likely that lives have been saved. ■

There is real passion in this entry, and passion achieves lots, including the ability to find alternative ways of raising funds where there is no initial budget. This initiative shows the desire to improve employee engagement, which is important if this is to continue to impact positively.

Such good progress has been made from where you began, and would be even better if you could encourage people who don't have experience of mental health issues to join the team.

This made me smile to read. I love the mention of laughter and of saving lives and of so much effort going into all those little things people will remember. Not having a budget initially is hard but you've partnered with others to enable you to achieve.