



# Appreciation Awards 2025



Stories from our winners



**After a year defined by rising employment costs, evolving workforce expectations and increased scrutiny on people programmes across the UK, it's clear that HR have once again stepped up. They've navigated complexity, responded to rapid change and championed the growth of both their people and their organisations - often simultaneously and at speed. Against this backdrop, taking an evening to recognise the exceptional work happening across our community wasn't just welcome, it was essential.**

The Appreciation Awards brought together more than 200 people professionals for an unforgettable night of celebration, presented by beloved comedian and actor Paddy McGuinness. Hosted at the breathtaking Natural History Museum, the evening's award ceremony recognised the extraordinary leaders designing, delivering and driving high-impact employee experiences through the power of appreciation.

This year saw an incredible 216 applications across 10 categories - a testament to the strength, ambition and innovation within the Reward Gateway | Edenred client community. While the independent judging panel could only select a handful of winners, their stories represent just a fraction of the remarkable progress being made across organisations of every size and sector.

Before diving into the stories of our winners, I want to express my sincere thanks to everyone who joined us and contributed to an evening that was both inspiring and deeply meaningful. Your commitment as partners - and your belief in the strategic value of employee appreciation - continues to fuel our mission to make the world a better place to work and enrich connections for good.

Enjoy,

**Joe Walsh**  
**Managing Director, UK**  
Reward Gateway | Edenred



## Best Communications Strategy for Benefits Uptake

# How Mattel improved employee retention and became one of the country's Best Places to Work

**+2 boost**

to eNPS score in just six months

**Significant time savings**

across the People Team



### The strategy:

## Simplified benefits

Responded to employee feedback by consolidating benefits, reducing confusion and encouraging greater uptake.

## Gamified experience

Drove engagement by creating an interactive digital 'scavenger hunt' with instant rewards as prizes to encourage usage.

### The results:



**94%**

system usage



**45%**

increase in benefits visibility in one month



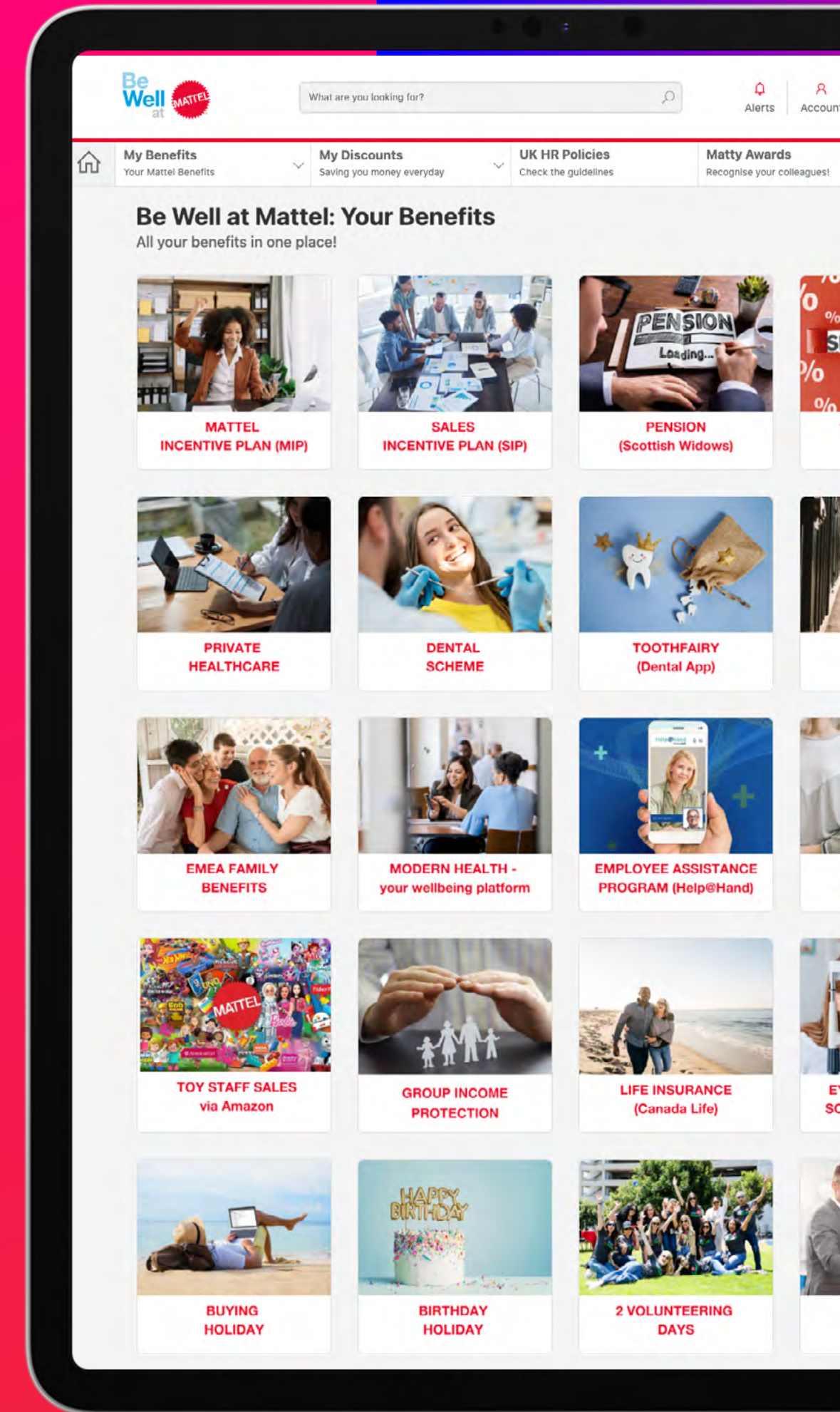
**50%**

increase in use of employee discounts in one month



**£4,400**

spent through discounts in one year



Read the full story

Partnering with Reward Gateway | Edenred, Mattel UK successfully increased benefits awareness and utilisation, leading to higher satisfaction and reduced employee turnover.

**Industry:**

Manufacturing

**Number of employees:**

179

**Solutions:**

-  Discounts
-  Communications
-  Wellbeing

**The organisation**

Mattel is a global toy and family entertainment company, owning some of the most iconic brands in the world and employing a diverse team of around 200 people in the UK.

**The challenge**

With Mattel UK's multigenerational workforce ranging from early-career creatives to seasoned professionals, employee feedback had highlighted confusion, overwhelm and a lack of clarity with its suite of benefits. Employees needed to use different platforms to access different benefits, which were provided by multiple third parties. Key information was fragmented across these platforms, resulting in low benefit uptake, poor return on investment

and low employee satisfaction. The feedback showed three main pain points – information being spread too thinly, a lack of centralised access, and low awareness.

**The goal**

Mattel UK needed to transform its benefit communications. The company set out to demystify its benefits offering, improve accessibility and encourage a more benefits-positive culture. It planned to do this by centralising all benefit information intuitively and engagingly, embedding information about benefits into onboarding processes and transforming ongoing benefit communication. With an ambitious goal of increasing year-on-year uptake by 30%, the stakes were certainly high.

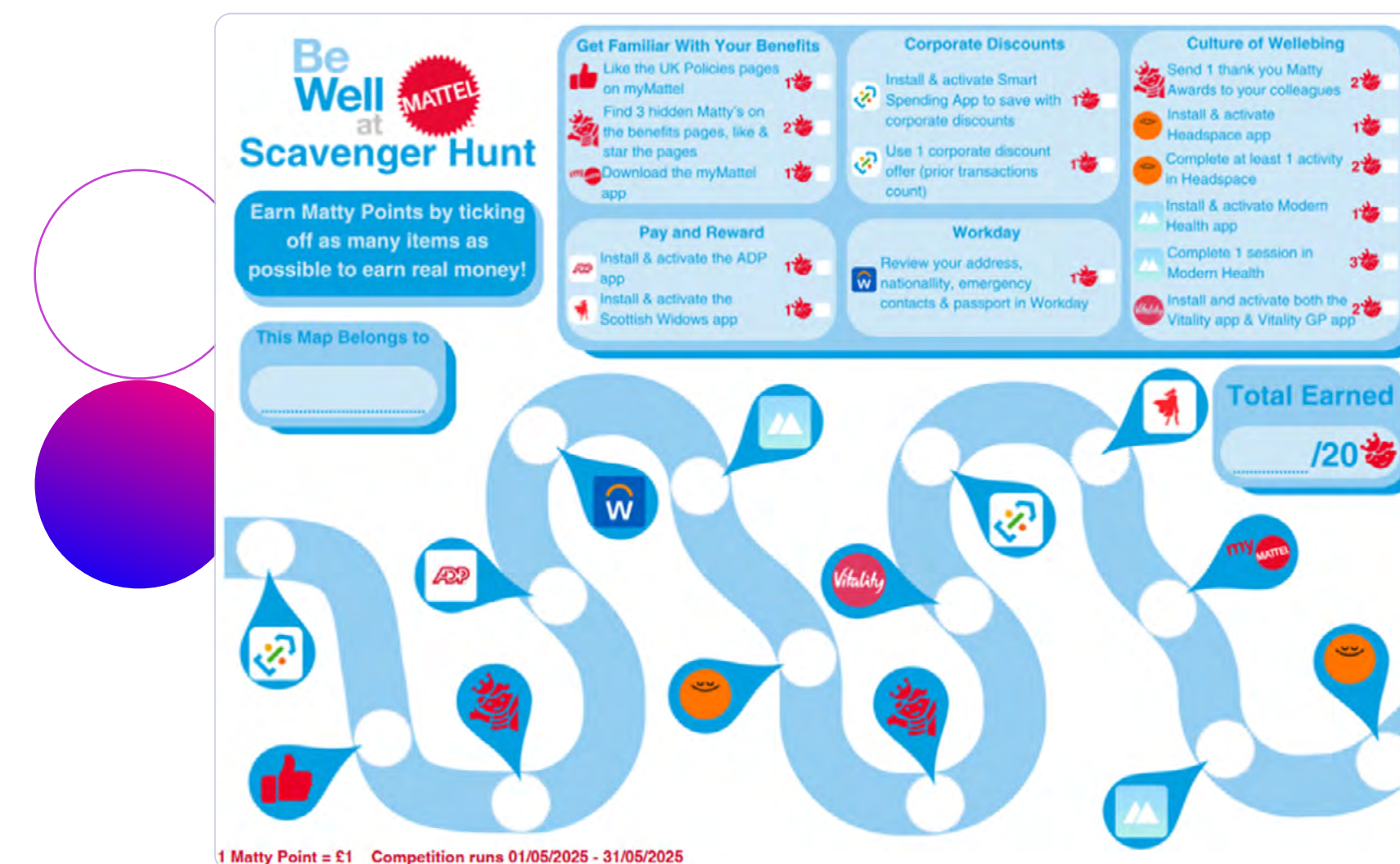
**How we helped**

Mattel UK partnered with Reward Gateway | Edenred to create a central one-stop shop to house all its benefits. A brand new employee engagement system, **Be Well at Mattel**, consolidated everything and streamlined access to the complete suite of benefits.

Making full use of the customisable homepage, Mattel UK designed a hub that was both visually appealing and easy to navigate. The team used gamification to drive engagement by creating an interactive digital 'scavenger hunt' with instant rewards as prizes to encourage employees to explore the new system.

**Be Well at Mattel** was promoted through an integrated communications plan that included company-wide app demonstrations, a poster and newsletter campaign, a summer townhall and an annual conference. Ambassadors shared real stories of how the benefits had supported them, humanising the offering and driving further utilisation.

Blending technology, gamification and storytelling, Mattel UK maximised the Reward Gateway | Edenred system to encourage consistent engagement and interaction. Using ongoing feedback and data-driven targeting, they made continuous tweaks to the campaign to ensure accessibility and inclusivity.



## What they achieved

### System engagement

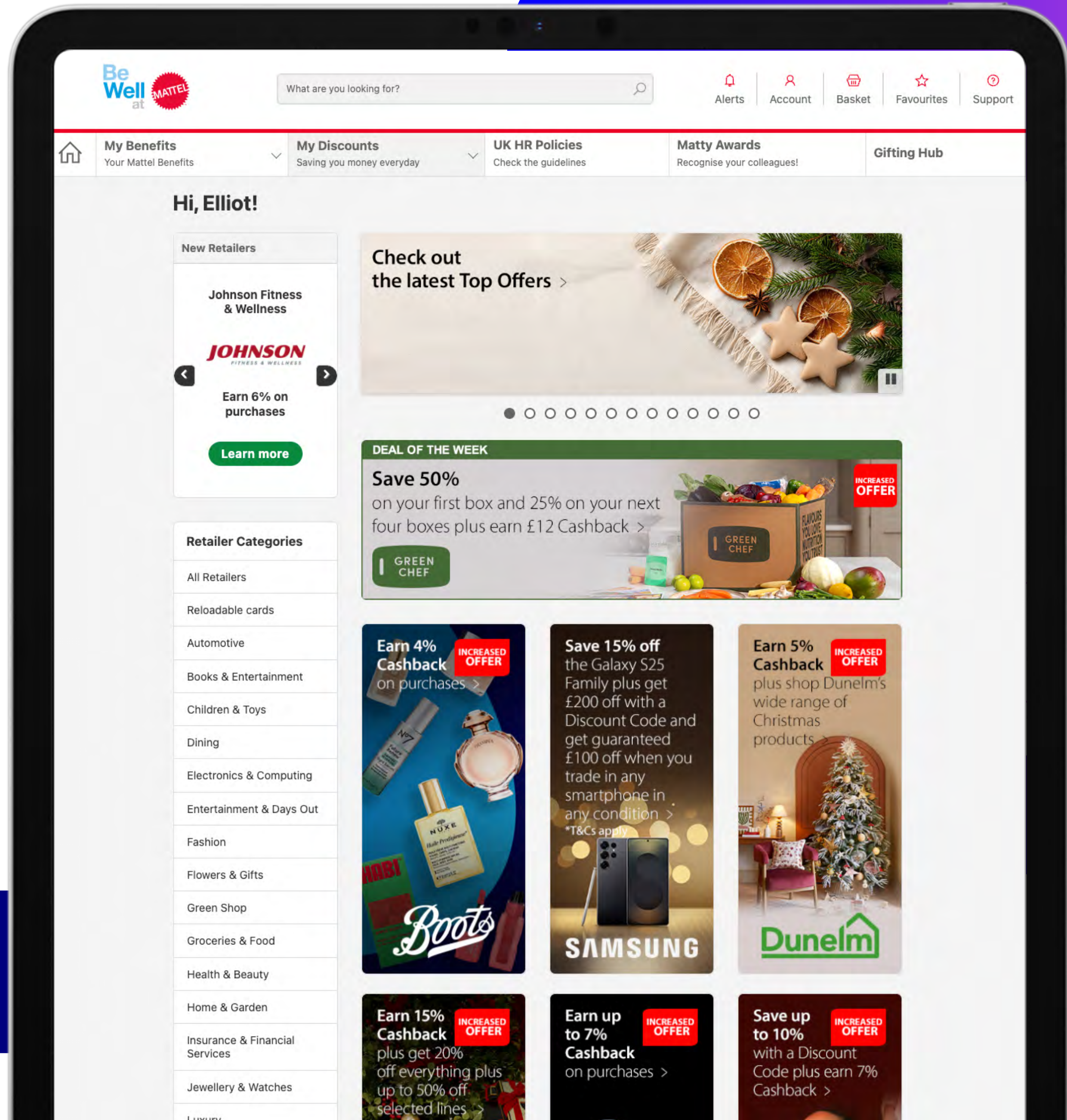
Within a month of **Be Well at Mattel's** launch, engagement with the benefits page increased **by more than 45%**, and use of employee discounts **increased by over 50%**. Feedback showed that awareness of four of the company's most under-utilised benefits had risen significantly. **94%** of the Mattel UK workforce became users of the system, with **20%** having taken part in the 'scavenger hunt' activity as part of the launch campaign.

### Employee satisfaction and retention

In less than 6 months there was a **notable improvement in employee retention**, and survey results showed that **satisfaction had increased by +2 points** in line with the boost in benefits visibility and engagement. Mattel UK consequently ranked as one of the best workplaces for employee wellbeing in the **'Great Places to Work in 2025'** list – reflecting its enhanced benefits visibility and engagement.

### Significant time savings

The People & Culture team began receiving fewer queries about benefits, which helped ease the admin burden and allowed for greater focus to be placed on more strategic initiatives.



Best strategy for supporting employee health & wellbeing

# How Homes for Students halved sickness absence levels and supercharged its eNPS through a wellbeing-focused digital campaign

**189%**

ROI from employee wellbeing campaign

**22-point**

increase in eNPS



**Homes for Students®**

## The strategy:

### Wellbeing campaign

Supported the health and wellbeing of the company's multigenerational workforce through a dedicated 10-month long campaign.

### Digital engagement

Laid a foundation for long-term employee engagement through use of the system's built-in communications tools.

## The results:



**43%**

reduction in sickness absence levels



**94%**

active user rate



**£8,000**

worth of Cycle to Work orders, saving employees £2,800 and the organisation £1,200 in National Insurance contributions



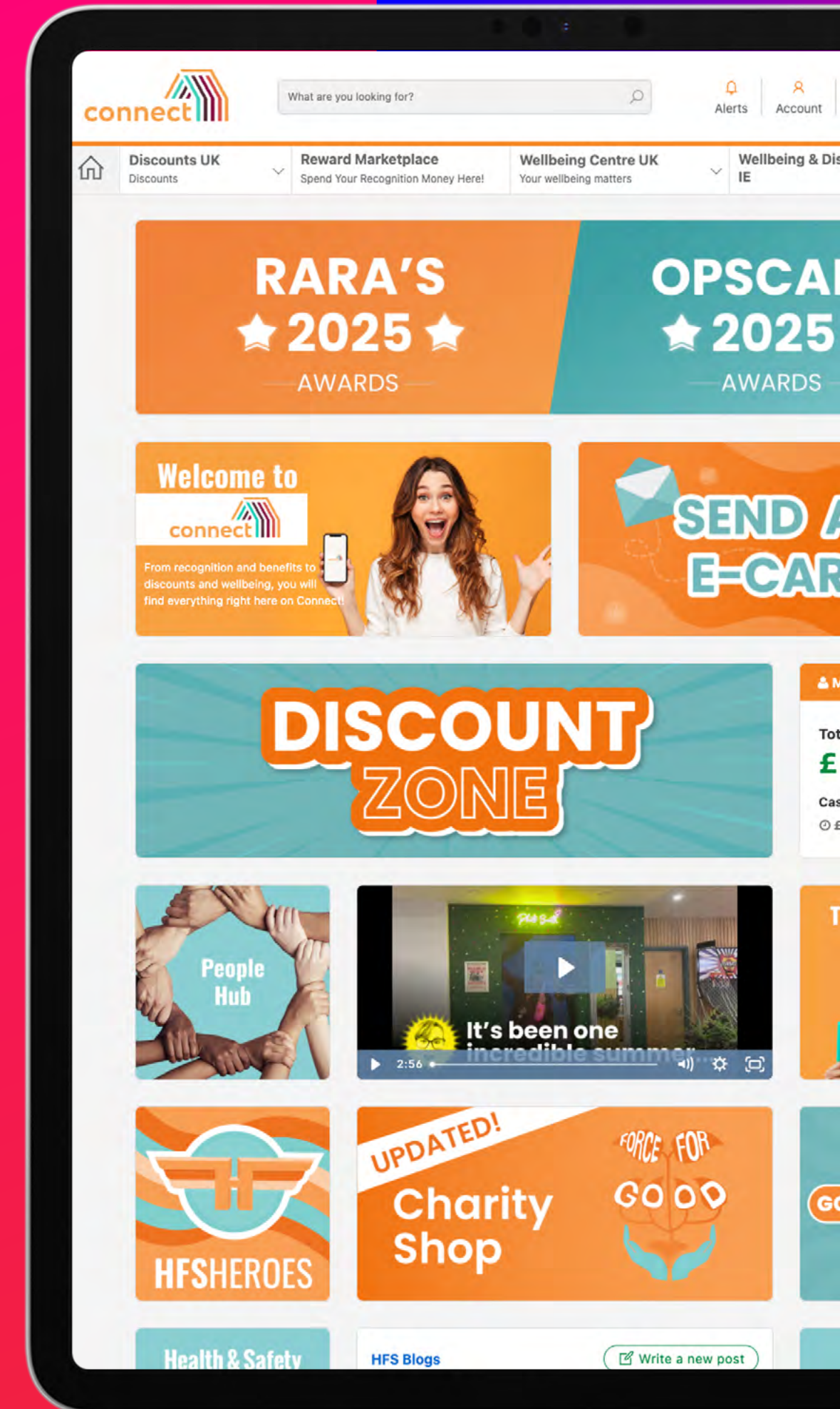
**£6,000**

saved in employee discounts in one year



**2,000**

Wellbeing Centre views



Read the full story

Working alongside Reward Gateway | Edenred, Homes for Students (HFS) launched a campaign to improve the health and wellbeing of all employees, regardless of age, role or location, delivering an impressive ROI and significant reduction in sickness absence.

**Industry:**

Housing

**Number of employees:**

1,200

**Solutions:**

- Discounts
- Communications
- Reward & Recognition
- Wellbeing
- Cycle to Work

**The organisation**

Homes for Students (HFS) is the UK and Ireland’s leading provider of purpose-built student accommodation, managing over 55,000 beds in 55 different cities.

**The challenge**

Having rapidly expanded from a small team of seven to more than 1,200 employees working in a variety of desk and field-based roles across 200 properties and two central offices, the HFS workforce was diverse and widespread. While this growth brought many opportunities, it also presented challenges. HFS recognised the need to introduce a renewed approach to employee health and wellbeing that would be inclusive, accessible and of

value to all – helping to reduce stress and sickness and boost the morale, engagement and productivity of its team.

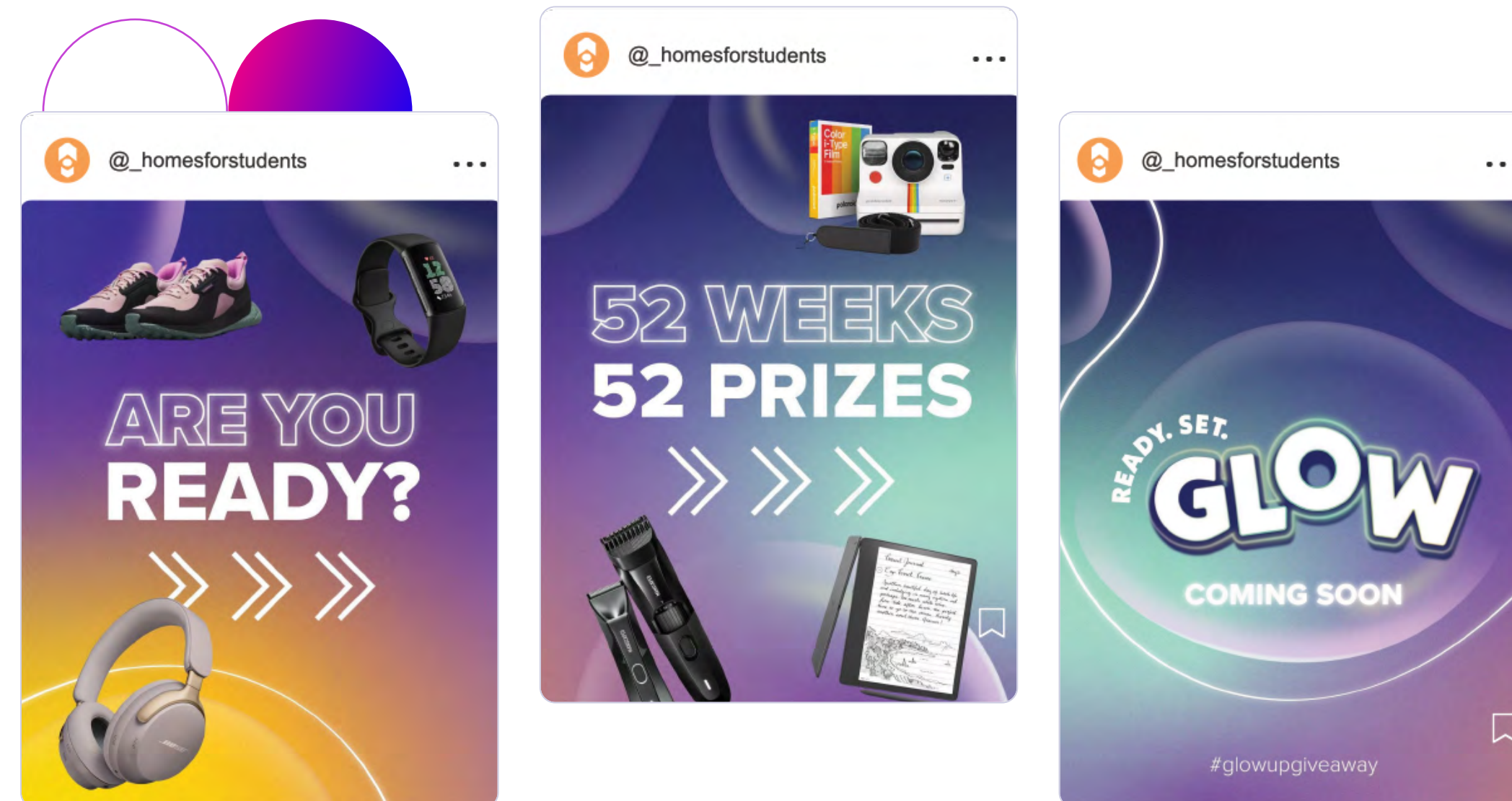
**The goal**

The company wanted to be better positioned to support the health and wellbeing of every team member – regardless of role, age or location. The aim was to build a campaign that would lay the foundation for long-term employee engagement by promoting a framework around the key pillars of physical, mental and financial wellbeing. It needed to be informative, inspiring and fun, ensuring employees could benefit from tips, tools and resources throughout the entire year.

**How we helped**

HFS partnered with Reward Gateway | Edenred a few years prior to launch its communications system. As such, it had the perfect digital location to host an engaging, accessible campaign. The system, named Connect, became the home of ‘Ready, Set, GLOW’ (RSG) – a 10-month, blog-led internal wellbeing campaign that followed a month-by-month content calendar, aligning with different seasonal wellbeing themes. Each month featured a themed blog post promoting the resources and content available as part of the Wellbeing Centre within Connect, a poll and prize draw, and a theme-based prize to encourage participation.

Supported by monthly wellbeing sessions, appreciation events and an employee survey, the team adopted a multi-channel approach to raise awareness of the campaign across the entire workforce. RSG was promoted through a company-wide monthly newsletter, manager briefings and rotating banners on the Connect homepage. Employees were encouraged to contribute their own tips and stories, creating a two-way wellbeing conversation.



## What they achieved

### Return on investment

'Ready, Set, GLOW' was a huge success, with wide-reaching results that achieved a very tangible return on investment... turning a **£4,500 spend** into a **£11,200 gain**. The campaign delivered meaningful support in the short term, while strengthening the wellbeing strategy in the long term.

### Employee wellbeing

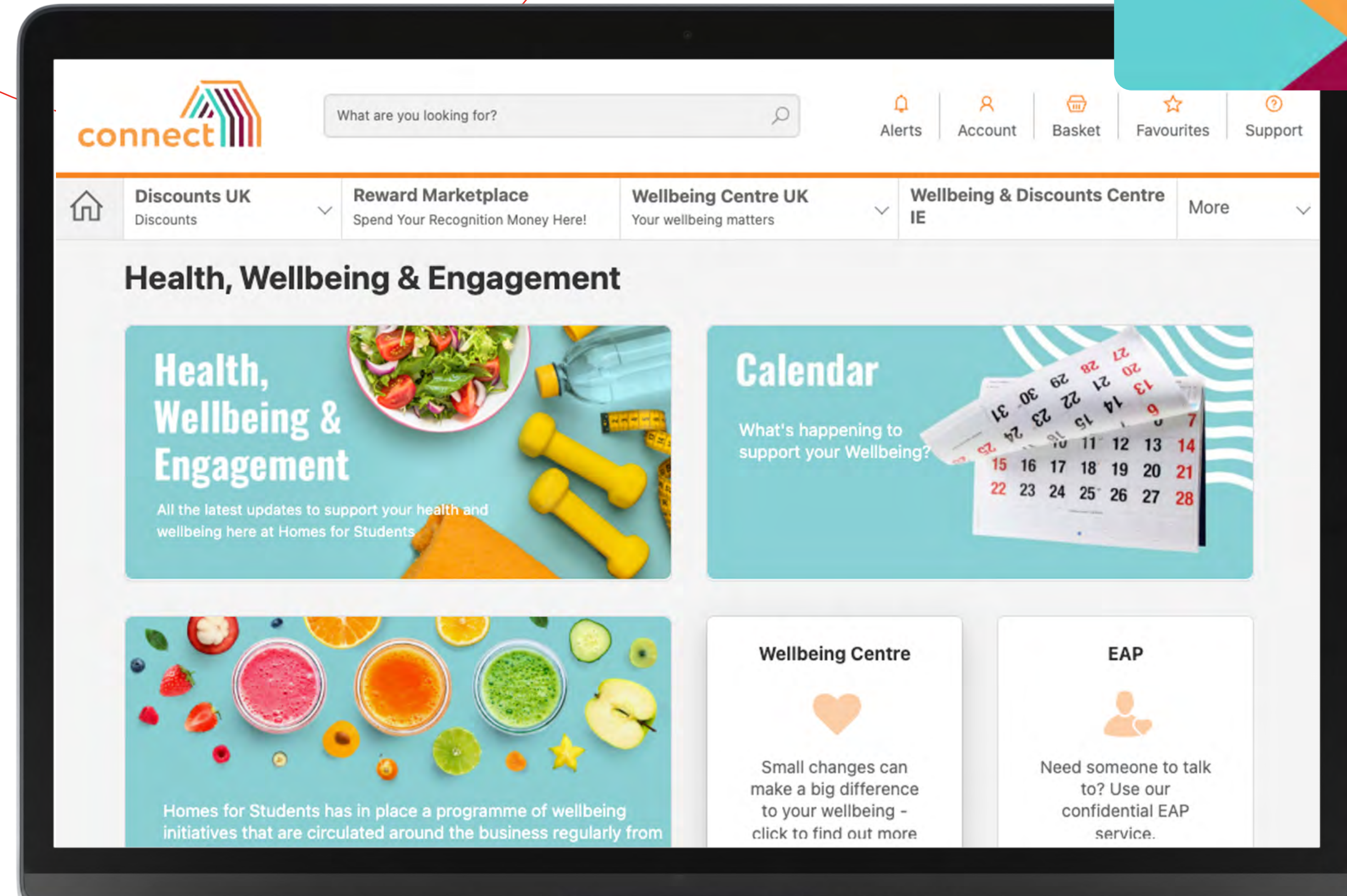
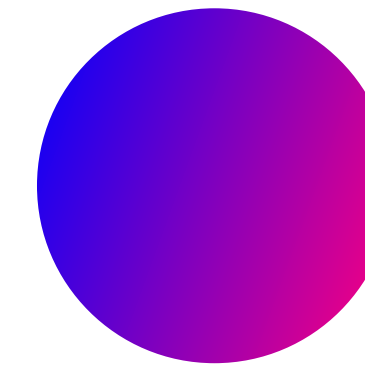
At an operational level, sickness absence reduced **from 2.6% to around 1.3%**. The new benefits launched in response to employee feedback shared in the wellbeing survey were incredibly well-received and encouraged greater adoption of pre-existing benefits – including employee discounts and Cycle to Work – resulting in combined colleague **savings of almost £9,000**.

### eNPS

In the quarter following the launch of the wellbeing campaign, Home for Students' employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) **increased by 22 points**.

“Through a multi-channel approach, we were able to make wellbeing visible, personable, enjoyable and practical for every colleague, in every location.”

**Communications Manager,  
Homes for Students**



## Best Culture of Appreciation in a Small Business

How Cornerstone's appreciation strategy boosted engagement, supported retention and delivered huge employer and employee savings

**£54k**

saved in yearly employer National Insurance contributions

**£140k**

of total employee savings in one year



### The strategy:

**Aligned culture & values**

Relaunched R&R programme with new values within a fully branded system to ensure full alignment and clarity.

**Inclusive appreciation**


Created a culture to show value to employees not just for what they achieve, but for who they are, wherever they are.

### The results:

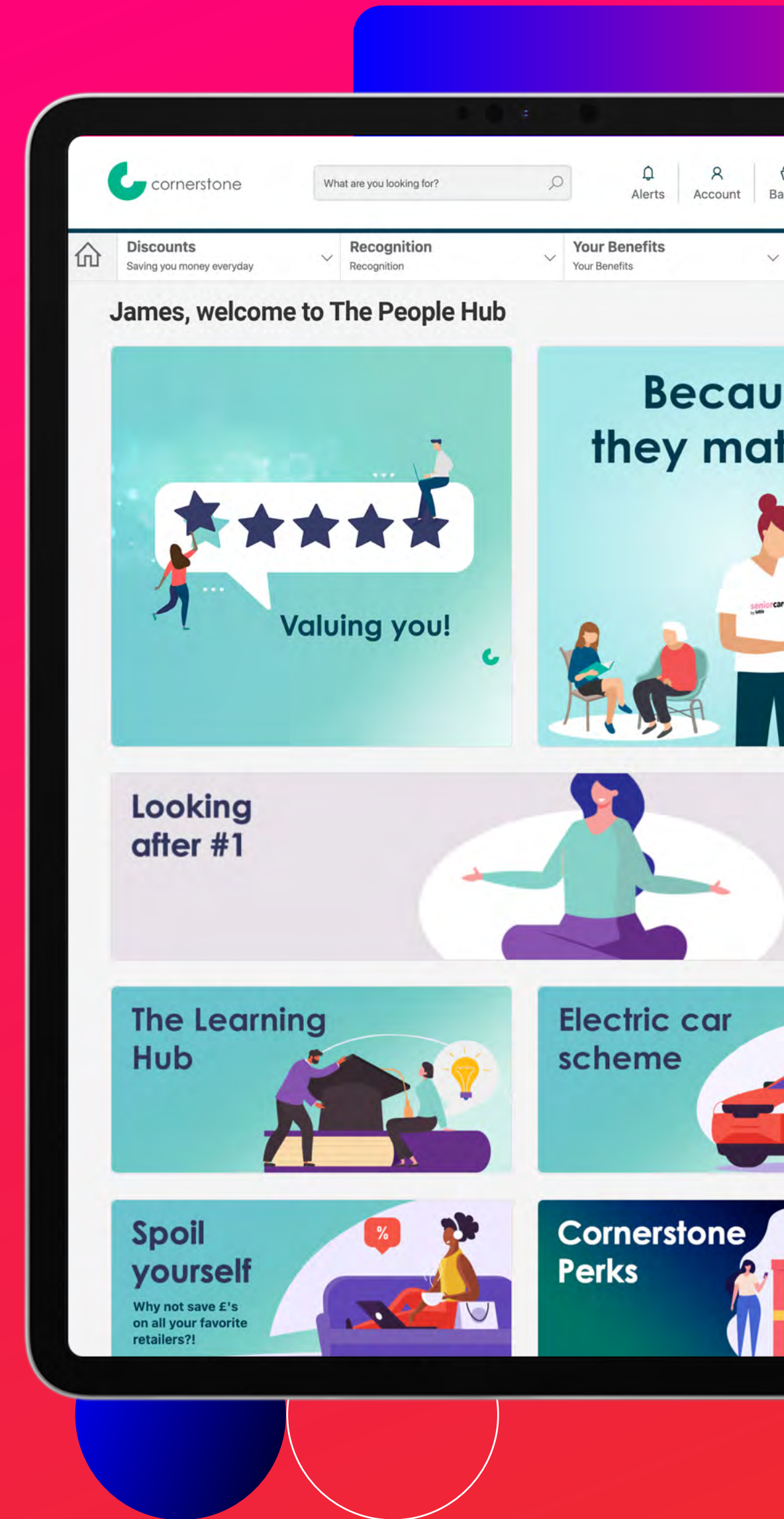
 **100%**  
active user rate

 **£14,000**  
saved in discounts

 **£101,000**  
through Holiday Trading, saving employees £23,000 and the company £10,000 in National Insurance contributions

 **£324,000**  
through Car Benefit orders, saving employees £103,000 and the company £44,000 in National Insurance contributions

 **£11,500**  
spent in rewards



 [Read the full story](#)

With a national hybrid workforce and a lack of consistency when it came to employee recognition, Cornerstone partnered with Reward Gateway | Edenred to drive a 25% increase in recognition and significant employee and business savings.







#### Industry:

Telecommunications

#### Number of employees:

314

#### Solutions:

-  Discounts
-  Communications
-  Reward & Recognition
-  Car Benefit
-  Holiday Trading
-  Cycle to Work

### The organisation

Cornerstone is the leading mobile and digital infrastructure provider in the UK, managing more than 15,700 sites and holding a 35% market share. The organisation employs a diverse hybrid workforce of 300+ home-based staff, field-based engineers and corporate teams.

### The challenge

Employee feedback had revealed that recognition was inconsistent across the company and lacked alignment with Cornerstone's culture or values. Engagement surveys and exit interview data highlighted clear themes – employees wanted more real-time, peer-to-peer recognition that increased the visibility of appreciation across the organisation and cultivated a stronger sense of individual value. The people team faced a challenge – to create an aligned and inclusive appreciation strategy that would reach every Cornerstone employee, regardless of location, team or role.

### The goal

The goal was to move beyond occasional gestures of thanks to fully embedding appreciation into the everyday employee experience. Cornerstone's plan was simple: to create a culture where employees felt truly valued, not just for what they achieve, but for how they work, who they are, and the impact they have.



### How we helped

Cornerstone developed a refreshed recognition strategy built upon three core pillars - Instant Recognition, Manager Enablement and Celebration of Milestones. The organisation used its Reward Gateway | Edenred system, 'The People Hub', to bring the strategy to life, enhancing visibility and consistency across the company.

Rebranding the R&R programme as **Valuing You**, the relaunch was timed to align with campaigns on inclusion and the introduction of Cornerstone's new values. Employees were encouraged to use the system to send eCards and nominate colleagues for instant awards that aligned with the values.

Managers were equipped with bespoke recognition toolkits, coaching sessions, communications and training, and encouraged to embed appreciation into all meetings and communications. Work anniversaries, personal achievements and collective successes began being celebrated across internal channels.

Every element of **Valuing You** was creatively designed to reflect Cornerstone's branding and culture, making recognition feel personal and inclusive and keeping participation high post-launch. Cornerstone also used real-time system analytics to track engagement by department, identify gaps and adjust their approach when needed.

## What they achieved

### Participation and interaction

With **100%** of Cornerstone's employees becoming active system users, the surge in participation and interaction was hard to miss! Recognition **eCards increased by more than 25%** since the relaunch of **Valuing You**. **843 instant awards** were sent, representing a **34% increase** year-on-year.

### Retention and engagement

Employee engagement results continued on an upward trajectory from **68%** to **70%** in one year, and voluntary turnover remained low at just **6.2%**. **70% of employees** reported receiving 'appropriate recognition for good work' and agreed that 'everyone has an opportunity to receive special recognition'. Importantly, **75%** also agreed that 'management shows appreciation for good work and extra effort', reflecting the increased confidence among managers to effectively recognise their team members.

### Cost savings

**£11,500 was spent** through Rewards, and **£14,000 saved** in employee discounts. Cornerstone also supported the wider needs of its people with a Holiday Trading programme and Car Benefit scheme. Both of these offered optional benefits to Cornerstone staff that could boost their financial wellbeing and support their work-life balance, helping also to reduce the **National Insurance contributions by £126,000** for employees and by **£54,000** for the business.






"The insights helped us adapt quickly and refine our approach to ensure recognition reached everyone."

**People Advisor, Cornerstone**



### Top eCard senders in the last 30 days

Recognise

Rank	User	Sent
1	 Charles Drew	21
2	 Mae Jemison	13
3	 Katherine Johnson	11
4	 Otis Boykin	10
	 You	0

## Best overall appreciation strategy

# How Copart UK drove a huge improvement in employee retention and benefit satisfaction

37%

reduction in employee turnover over two years

86%

recognition engagement score



### The strategy:

## Improved accessibility

Streamlined the process for Copart UK's employees to access all of their benefits in one central location.

## Employee appreciation

Help employees to feel connected, supported and valued by promoting the utilisation of key benefits that would meet their needs.

### The results:



98%

active user rate



£15,600

worth of Cycle to Work orders, saving employees £5,000 and the organisation £2,200 in National Insurance contributions



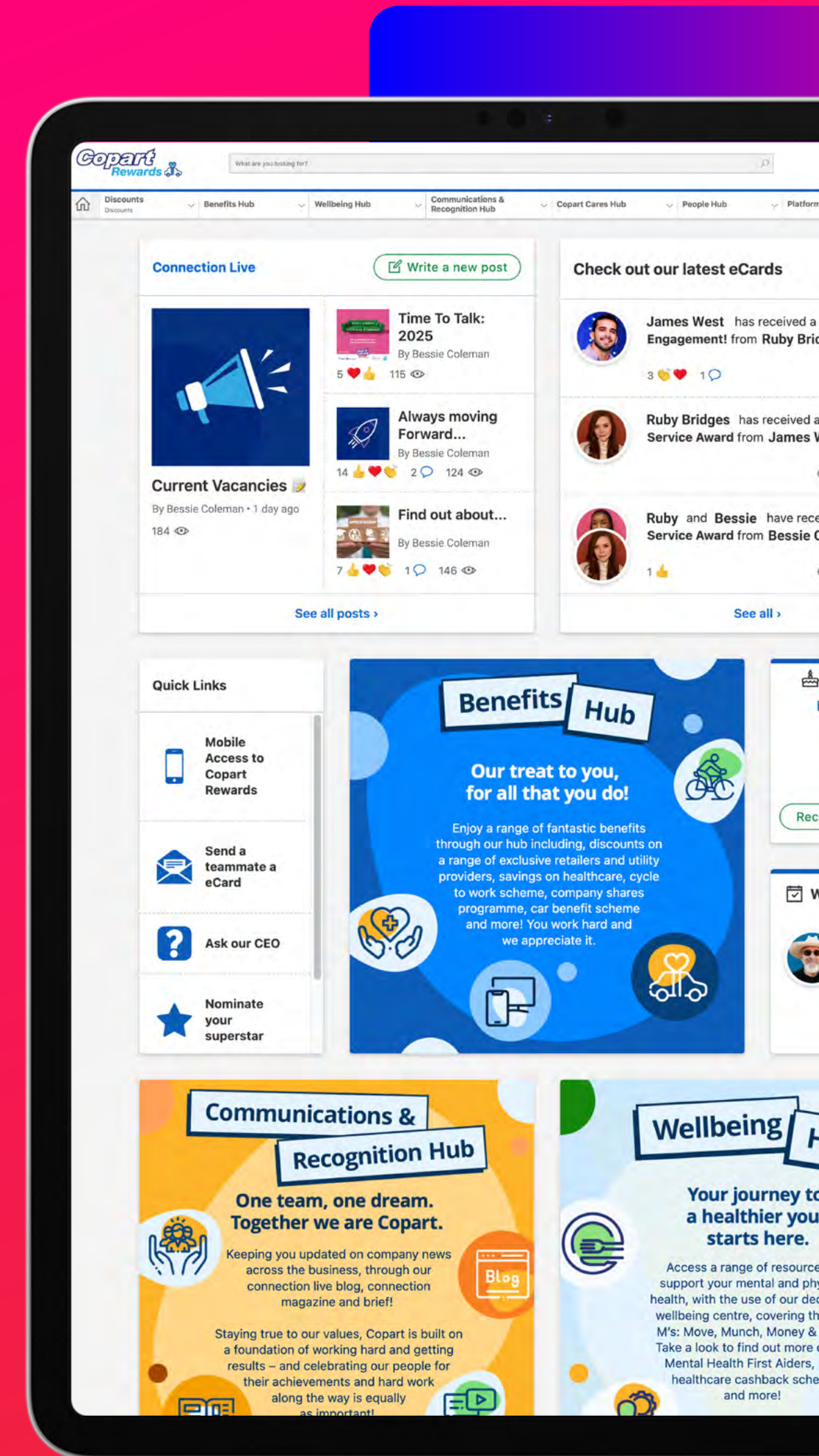
£24,000

saved in employee discounts



Over 2,500

Wellbeing Centre views



Read the full story

Copart UK introduced its Reward Gateway | Edenred system to connect teammates and make benefits more accessible. The results were profound, achieving a 98% active user rate and a significant improvement in employee turnover.

**Industry:**

Automotive

**Number of employees:**

1,750

**Solutions:**

- Discounts
- Communications
- Cycle to Work
- SmartTech™
- Wellbeing
- Recognition & Reward

**The organisation**

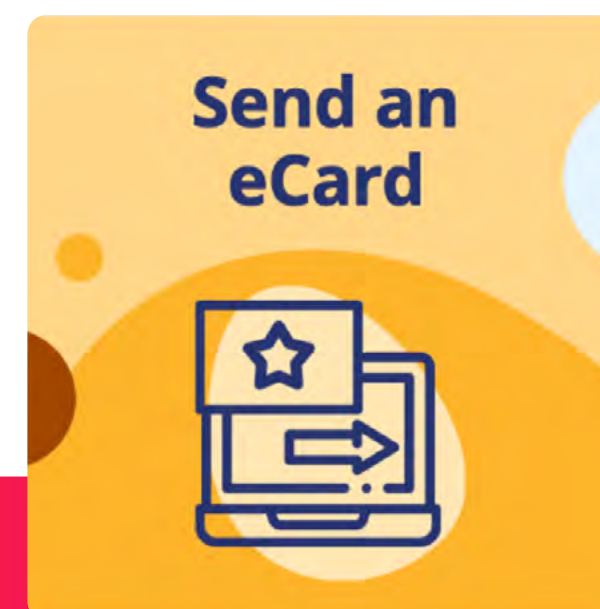
As the global leader in online car auctions, the majority of Copart UK's workforce are operational employees, working on the frontline of the business.

**The challenge**

Employee turnover had reached 48%, and participation in engagement surveys had been relatively low. In response, the People Experience team knew they needed to make some changes that would help Copart UK's employees feel more connected, supported and valued.

**The goal**

The first step was to revamp the organisation's workplace tech with an employee experience hub. The new system needed to be fully accessible for every member of Copart UK's diverse workforce, and needed to make it easier for employees to access information about their benefits.



**How we helped**

Copart UK partnered with Reward Gateway | Edenred to develop a vibrant new system that would meet employee needs and improve the utilisation of key benefits. As a result, **Copart Rewards** was launched.

The new system effectively streamlined the process for Copart UK's employees to access all of their benefits via segmented hubs. Individuals from right across the business were involved with the development of **Copart Rewards**, helping ensure the system was as useful and engaging as possible.

The People Experience team worked closely with Reward Gateway | Edenred to drive **Copart Rewards** from strength to strength. As the number of active users went up and up, Copart UK continued to develop the system and streamline access to employee benefits with user-friendly 'mini hubs' that were highlighted in company communications.

## What they achieved

### Retention

**Copart Rewards** has had a profoundly positive impact on the business. Since the system's introduction, Copart UK has experienced a consistent decrease in employee turnover, dropping by an **impressive 37%** from a **48%** turnover rate to **30%** in just two years.

### Participation and satisfaction

The system achieved a **98% active user rate**, and the most recent employee engagement survey saw an **88% increase in participation**. In turn, 90% of survey participants said they were extremely satisfied with the benefits available to them via Copart Rewards, which is reflected in the whopping **£24,000 of savings** through Discounts and the **£65,000** that's been spent through Rewards.

### Peer-to-peer recognition

**Copart Rewards** has well and truly put peer-to-peer recognition under the spotlight, with **11,580 recognition moments** being shared since the launch of the programme, and the recognition engagement score **soaring to 86%** over two years.

"We have a really vibrant system that's had lots of teammate engagement and participation. The support that we get from our Client Success Manager at RGER has an incredibly positive impact on our business."

**People Experience  
Manager, Copart UK**

## SmartTech



## Nominate your Superstar



## Discounts



Best Benefits Launch  
or Relaunch category

# How KeolisAmey Metrolink transformed its employee and customer experience by elevating internal communications

**6% boost**

to employee engagement score  
within just a few months

**Highest-ever  
score**

on the UK Customer  
Satisfaction Index

KEOLIS amey

The strategy:

## Frontline engagement

Relaunched a centralised  
system that could be easily  
accessed by frontline workers,  
helping to connect and engage  
the entire workforce.

.....

## Increased usage

Built awareness and boosted  
usage of key benefits by  
creating a one-stop shop that  
all employees could access.

The results:



**84%**

active user rate,  
up by over 47%



**76%**

employee engagement  
score, up from 72% in  
just a few months



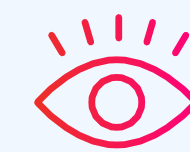
**94%**

of tram drivers reached  
via communications



**£19,000**

saved in  
employee discounts



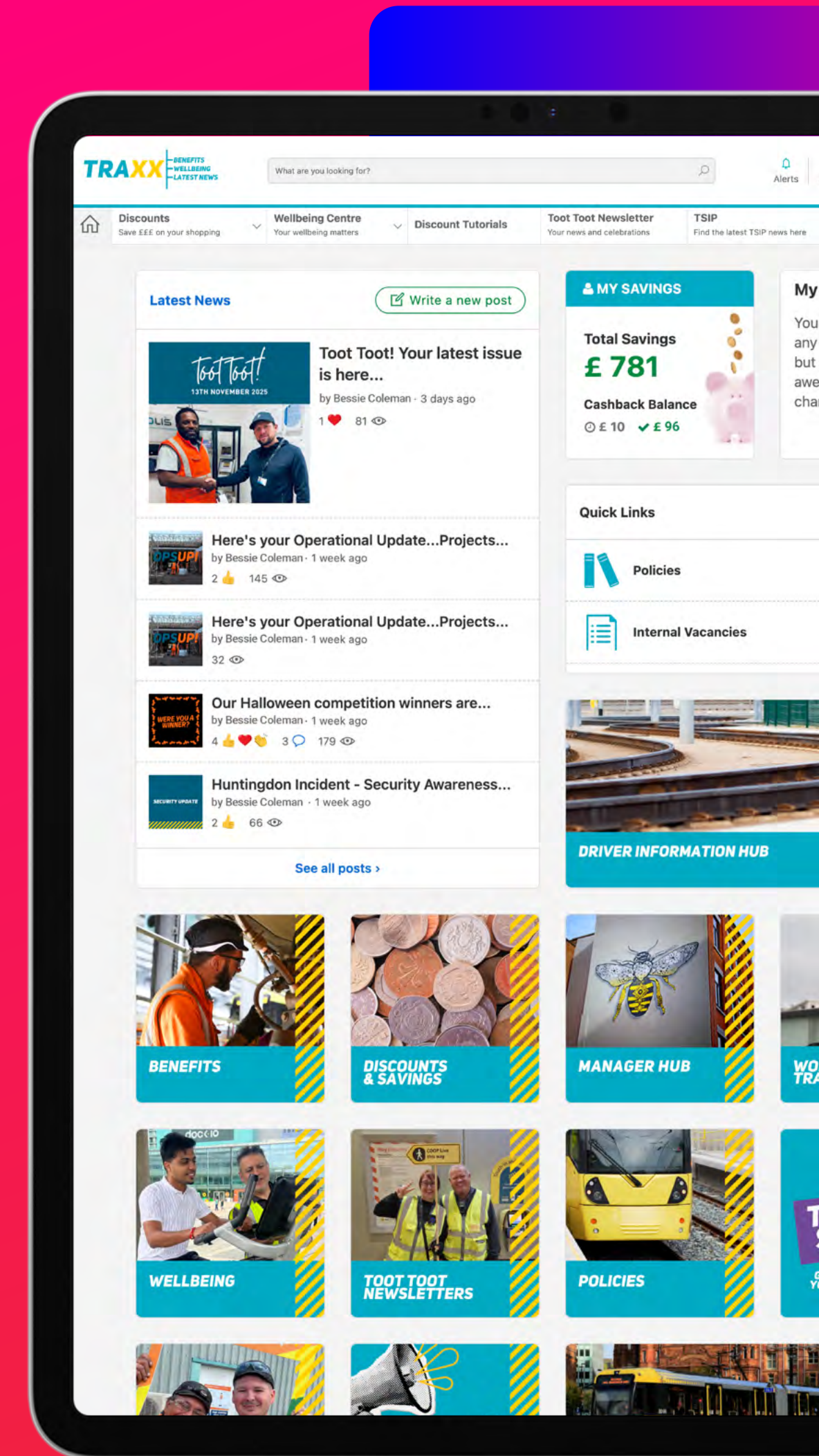
**1,200+**

benefits hub views



**860+**

Wellbeing Centre views



Read the full story

Working alongside Reward Gateway | Edenred, KeolisAmey Metrolink (KAM) redeveloped its under-utilised discounts site to create a central employee system that transformed internal communication and provided a one-stop shop for benefits, discounts and wellbeing.

**Industry:**

Transportation

**Number of employees:**

1,000

**Solutions:**

- Discounts
- Communications
- Reward
- Wellbeing

**The organisation**

KeolisAmey Metrolink (KAM) works on behalf of Transport for Greater Manchester to manage the Metrolink tram that keeps the city connected. KAM runs a 24-hour, 365-day operation, employing around 1,000 people across a wide range of roles.

**The challenge**

With over 70% of employees in frontline roles such as tram drivers and engineers, the vast majority of KAM's workforce doesn't have access to a company device or email account. It had become almost impossible for the organisation to communicate consistently with hard-to-reach frontline teams, and a recent engagement survey had revealed that

many colleagues were completely unaware of the benefits available to them. KAM's People Experience team knew they needed to make a change that would allow them to communicate important company news, updates and important messaging about benefits.

**The goal**

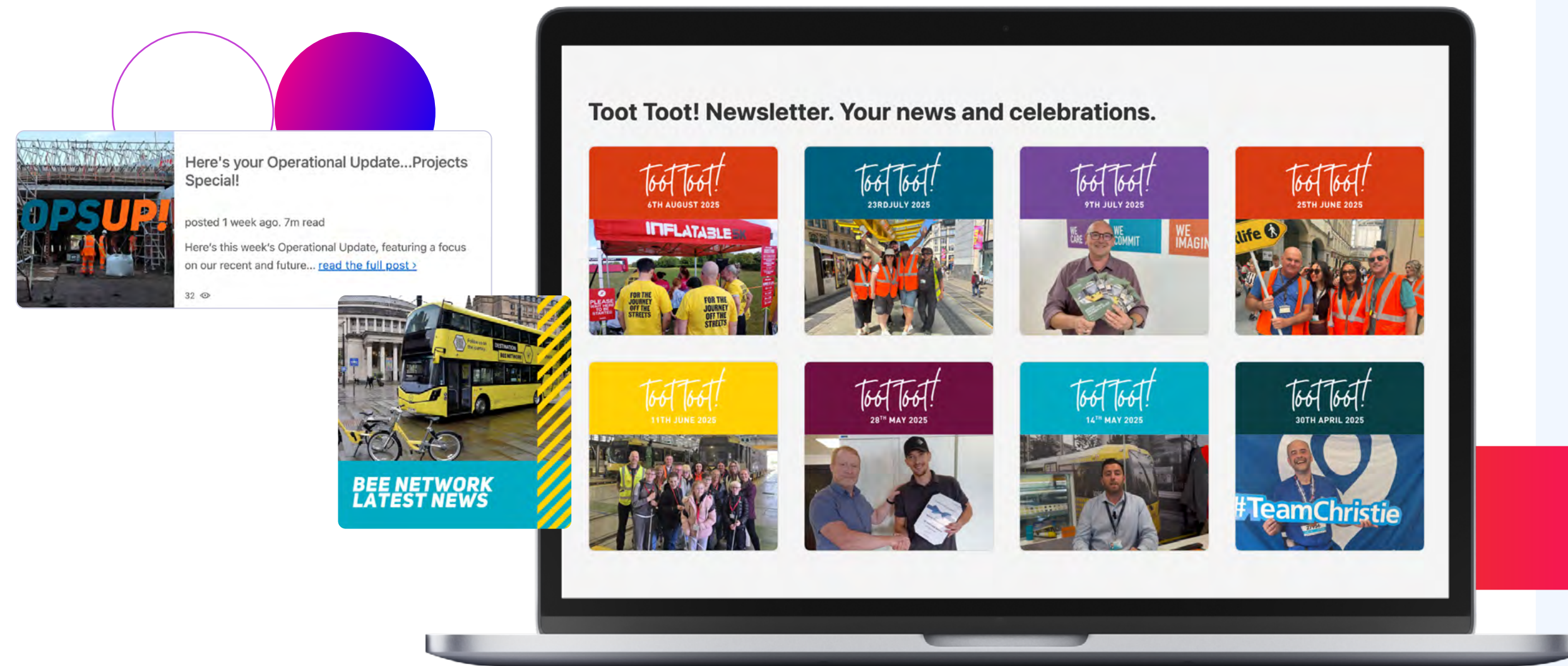
The organisation decided to transform its existing under-utilised discounts platform – **Traxx** – into an engaging one-stop shop for benefits, two-way communication, wellbeing, recognition and reward. It wanted to create a central hub that connect and engage frontline workers, while improving access to, and utilisation of, key benefits.

**How we helped**

Engaging the expertise of Reward Gateway | Edenred, the People Experience Team dived into a complete revamp of the system. After creating a new logo and redesigning the layout of the homepage, they added a blog to share company news and updates, introduced an interactive benefits hub and launched an easy-to-access Wellbeing Centre.

Evolving from a sole focus on employee discounts, the new-and-improved Traxx enabled KAM's People Experience Team to better target communications and provide tailored updates to specific teams. By providing segmented communications, including a Manager Hub for leaders, the team ensured the entire workforce could feel connected and engaged with not only what was happening across the business but what was most relevant to them.

**Traxx** was relaunched with a multichannel campaign that aimed to spark excitement and encourage more app downloads. The campaign included new noticeboards featuring QR codes, an engaging physical poster campaign, desktop imagery for online team members and a 'Win This or That' competition on the blog.



## What they achieved

### Participation

After the relaunch of **Traxx**, KAM noted an extremely positive uplift in system usage, registrations and interaction with the new company blog. The active user rate on the system **increased by over 47%** just a few months after the system was reintroduced. **94% of tram drivers** – previously KAM's hardest to reach colleagues – became active users.

### Employee engagement

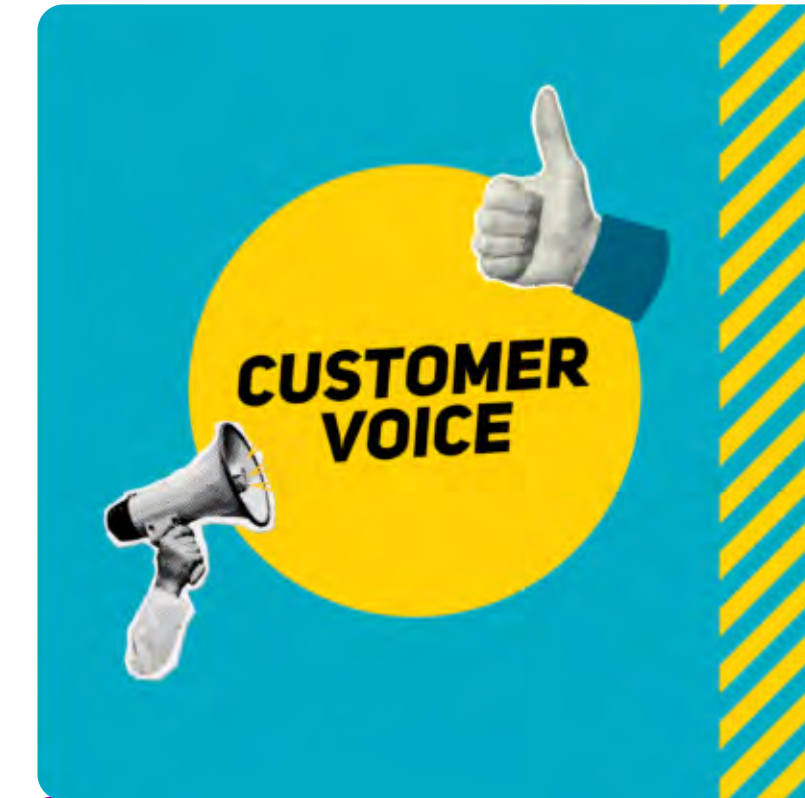
KAM's employee engagement score rose from **72% to 76%** in the months following the relaunch. And by making the benefits package more visible and accessible, with communication a central focus, the score on 'benefit competitiveness' **increased by 9%**. Employee spending through discounts also **increased by 37%**, helping to support colleagues through the heightened cost of living with **savings of £19,000**.

### Customer satisfaction

The increase in employee engagement was also reflected externally, as KAM achieved its **highest-ever score on the UK Customer Satisfaction Index** – 5.9% higher than the average satisfaction score for train operators in the UK.

"We know that by engaging our employees, we can ultimately enhance our customer experience. As a result of revamping our system and improving our communications around benefits and culture, we've achieved our highest satisfaction score to date in the UK Customer Satisfaction Index."

**Senior People Experience  
Manager, KeliosAmey Metrolink**



## HR Team of the Year

# How Lomond transformed its EVP to boost retention and deliver tangible business savings

**£125k**

saved in yearly employer National Insurance Contributions

**30%**

drop in employee absenteeism



### The strategy:

## Consolidated tech

Connected and empowered dispersed teams with centralised access to communications, recognition and benefits

## Scalable integration

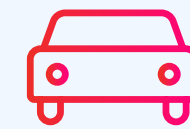
Navigated rapid growth and constant change to support the financial wellbeing of a growing multigenerational workforce

### The results:



**92%**

active user rate



**£834,000**

value of Car Benefit orders (£110k saved by Lomond and £267k by its employees in National Insurance)



**£72,000**

of Holiday Trading (saving employees £23,000 and the organisation £10,000 in NIC)



**£37,000**

of employee tech purchases covered through SmartTech™



**£18,000**

saved through employee discounts in one year



[Read the full story](#)

As Lomond continued to grow and diversify, it needed to develop a new people strategy that would better support its ever-expanding multigenerational workforce. Partnering with Reward Gateway | Edenred, Lomond's HR team created and launched an award-winning EVP that achieved transformational results.








**Industry:**

Real Estate

**Number of employees:**

2,800

**Solutions:**

-  Discounts
-  Communications
-  Wellbeing
-  Reward & Recognition
-  Car Benefit
-  Cycle to Work
-  Holiday Trading

**The organisation**

Lomond is the UK's leading network of lettings and sales agents, with a national workforce of more than 2,800 people across 200 branches. The company operates in a high-growth and high-demand environment, acquiring a new company almost every single month.

**The challenge**

This rapid growth and continual change presented Lomond with significant integration demands. The HR team needed to support the diverse needs of its ever-expanding multigenerational workforce - integrating new employees seamlessly and effectively, while maintaining high employee engagement scores.

The HR function needed to be able to deliver consistent value to the business while navigating rapid growth and constant change in a resource-limited environment.

**The goal**

Lomond wanted every employee, whether new or long-standing, to experience consistent support, growth opportunities and recognition. To achieve this, the company set about streamlining its HR processes and leveraging technology to create more capacity for strategic work and provide responsive, solution-focused support to leaders and team members.

The plan was to develop and implement an end-to-end people strategy that would enable Lomond to attract, develop and retain the highest quality candidates.



**How we helped**

Lomond's HR team developed a new strategy around a simple but powerful framework – Get Great Talent, Grow Great Talent, Keep Great Talent. There were clear phases and KPIs for each pillar – time-to-hire, internal promotion rates, and retention percentages. Partnering with Reward Gateway | Edenred, Lomond began to reimagine its EVP through its employee engagement system in a way that balanced operational delivery with long-term culture building.

Employee communications were centralised through the system, branded LOMONDlife, while recognition across all levels was enabled, and a wide range of benefits were made more accessible to the geographically dispersed workforce – all in one digital location. The system also served as a hub for wellbeing resources and engagement tools, providing the HR team with realtime data that allowed them to adjust their delivery.

By aligning recruitment strategies, enhancing onboarding processes and launching targeted development programmes, Lomond began accelerating the integration of newly-acquired employees while building leadership capability and internal mobility. Each initiative was designed for scalability so it could be quickly adapted for new teams, making sure the new three-pillar framework was embedded across all people processes.

## What they achieved

### Engagement

The launch of the Get, Grow, Keep people strategy and introduction of the LOMONDlife system had a profoundly positive impact on Lomond's workforce. **92% of employees are now active users** of LOMONDlife, with **1,200 recognition eCards** sent, **£1,000 spent** through Rewards, and **4,000 Wellbeing Centre views** in just 12 months. Engagement survey results have shown a significant rise in both 'satisfaction with career development opportunities' and 'feeling valued at work'.

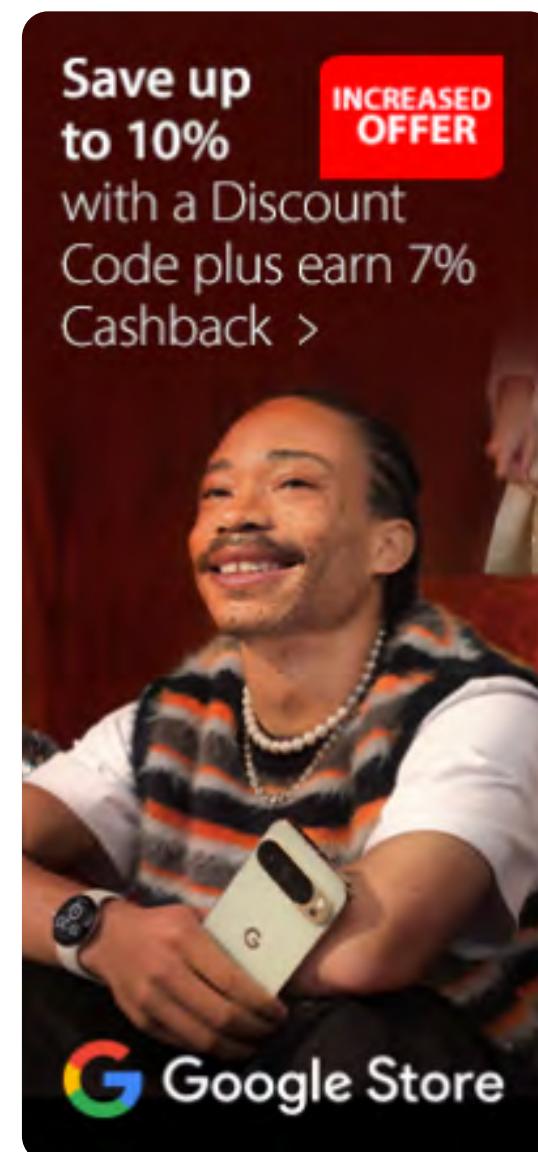
### Financial wellbeing

Employees **saved £18,000 through employee discounts**, purchased **£72,000 worth of annual leave** through Holiday Trading, and placed **£7,000 of Cycle to Work** orders. Employees also saved an impressive **£267,000 through their Car Benefit** scheme, and spent **£37,000 through SmartTech™**.

### Return on investment

Sickness absence **decreased by 30%** compared to the same period the previous year, and time-to-hire reduced – enabling faster filling of critical roles during growth. At the same time, employee retention in the first 12 months of employment improved across all regions.

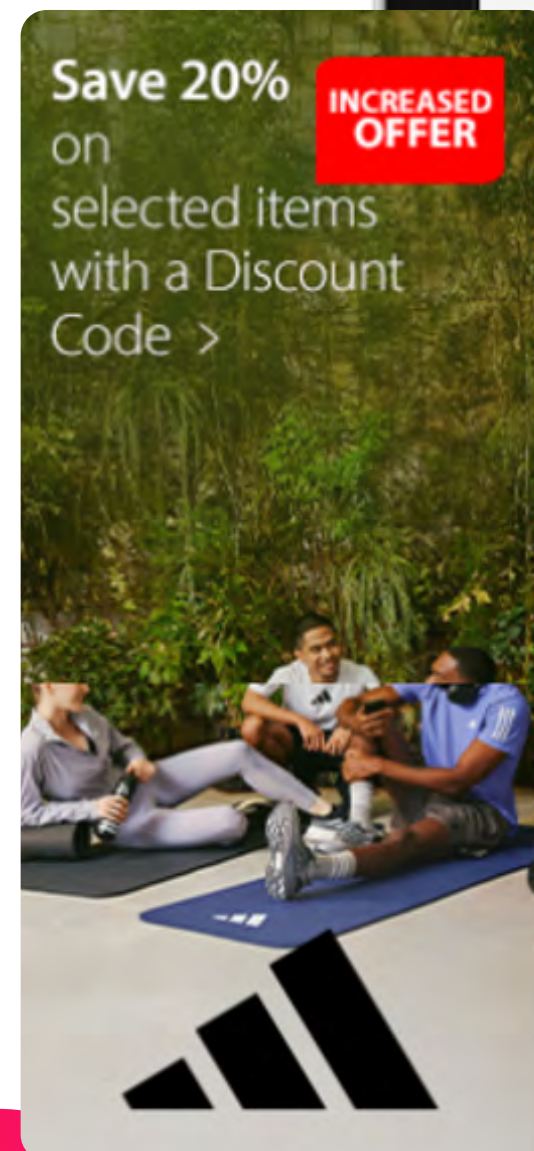
The range of salary sacrifice benefits have also delivered savings to the business, reducing Lomond's **National Insurance contributions by £125,000 in one year**. The transformative effect of Lomond's new people strategy resulted in the company achieving **Great Place to Work** certification and being recognised as a **Sunday Times Best Places to Work 2025**.



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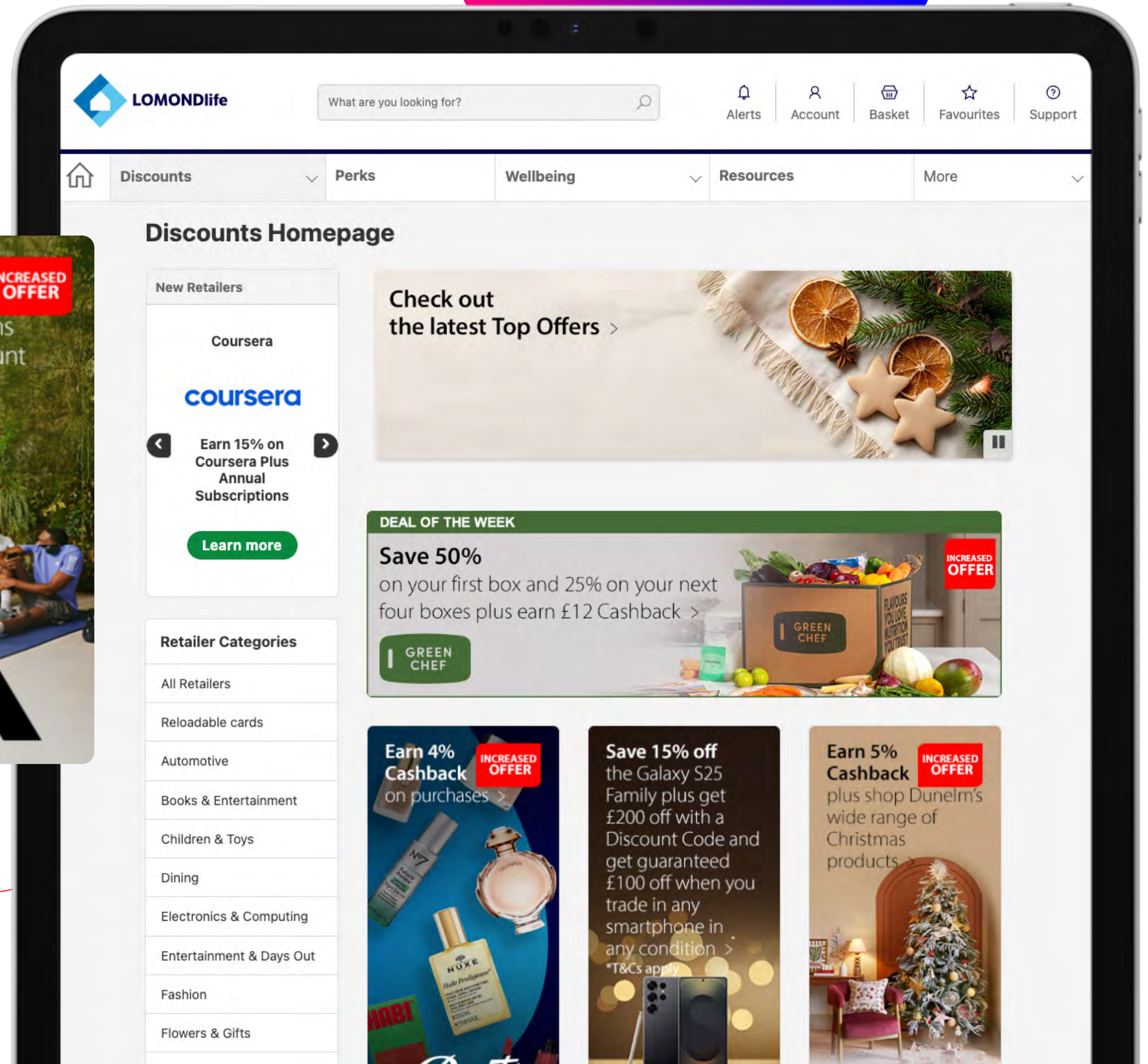
**INCREASED OFFER**

Google Store



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LOMONDlife

What are you looking for?

Alerts Account Basket Favourites Support

Discounts Perks Wellbeing Resources More

### Discounts Homepage

New Retailers

Coursea

**Learn more**

Earn 15% on Coursera Plus Annual Subscriptions

Check out the latest Top Offers >

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Save 50% on your first box and 25% on your next four boxes plus earn £12 Cashback >

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- Dining
- Electronics & Computing
- Entertainment & Days Out
- Fashion
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**INCREASED OFFER**

Save 15% off the Galaxy S25 Family plus get £200 off with a Discount Code and get guaranteed £100 off when you trade in any smartphone in any condition >

\*T&Cs apply

Earn 5% Cashback plus shop Dunelm's wide range of Christmas products >

**INCREASED OFFER**

## Best Financial Support Strategy for Employees

How Equans UK & Ireland boosted the financial wellbeing of its people, transformed its culture and delivered business savings

**£70k**

saved in yearly employer National Insurance Contributions

**£269k**

savings made by employees in one year



### The strategy:

## Financial empowerment

Built resilience amongst employees through financial education, engaging content and saving tools delivered through the system

## Frontline connection

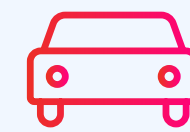
Navigated rapid growth and constant change to support the financial wellbeing of a growing multigenerational workforce

### The results:



**£437,000**

of employee tech purchases covered through SmartTech™



**£183k**

value of Car Benefit orders (£25,000 saved by Equans UK and £58,000 by its employees in National Insurance)



**£354k**

of Holiday Trading (saving employees £111k and the organisation £47,000 in NIC)



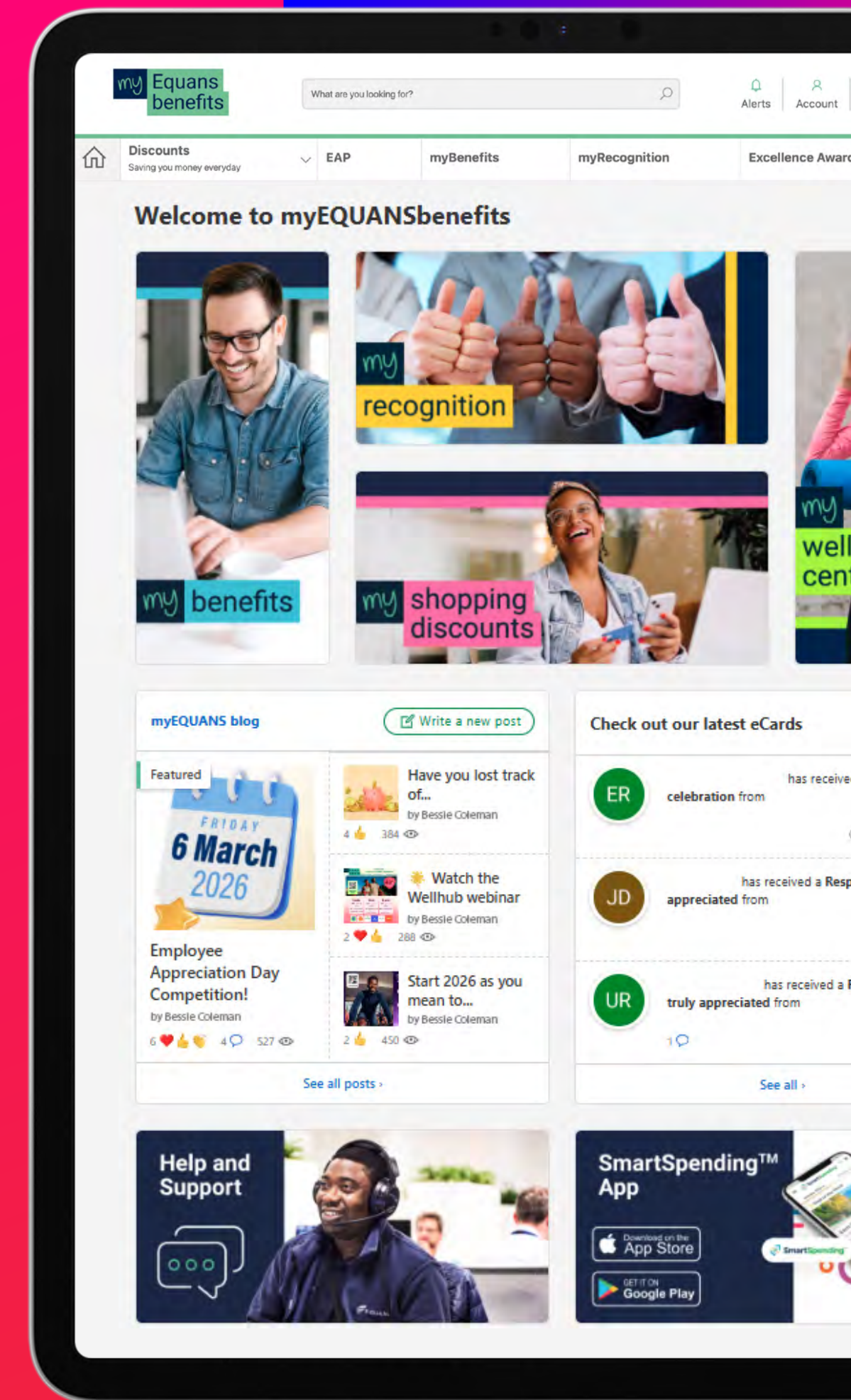
**£101,000**

saved through employee discounts in one year



**3,700**

Wellbeing Centre visits



[Read the full story](#)

With heightened costs presenting an ongoing challenge, Equans UK & Ireland partnered with Reward Gateway | Edenred to deliver a comprehensive financial wellbeing strategy that would support all of its employees.

**Industry:**

Energy

**Number of employees:**

11,000

**Solutions:**

- Discounts
- Communications
- Cycle to Work
- SmartTech™
- Holiday Trading
- Wellbeing Centre
- Recognition

**The organisation**

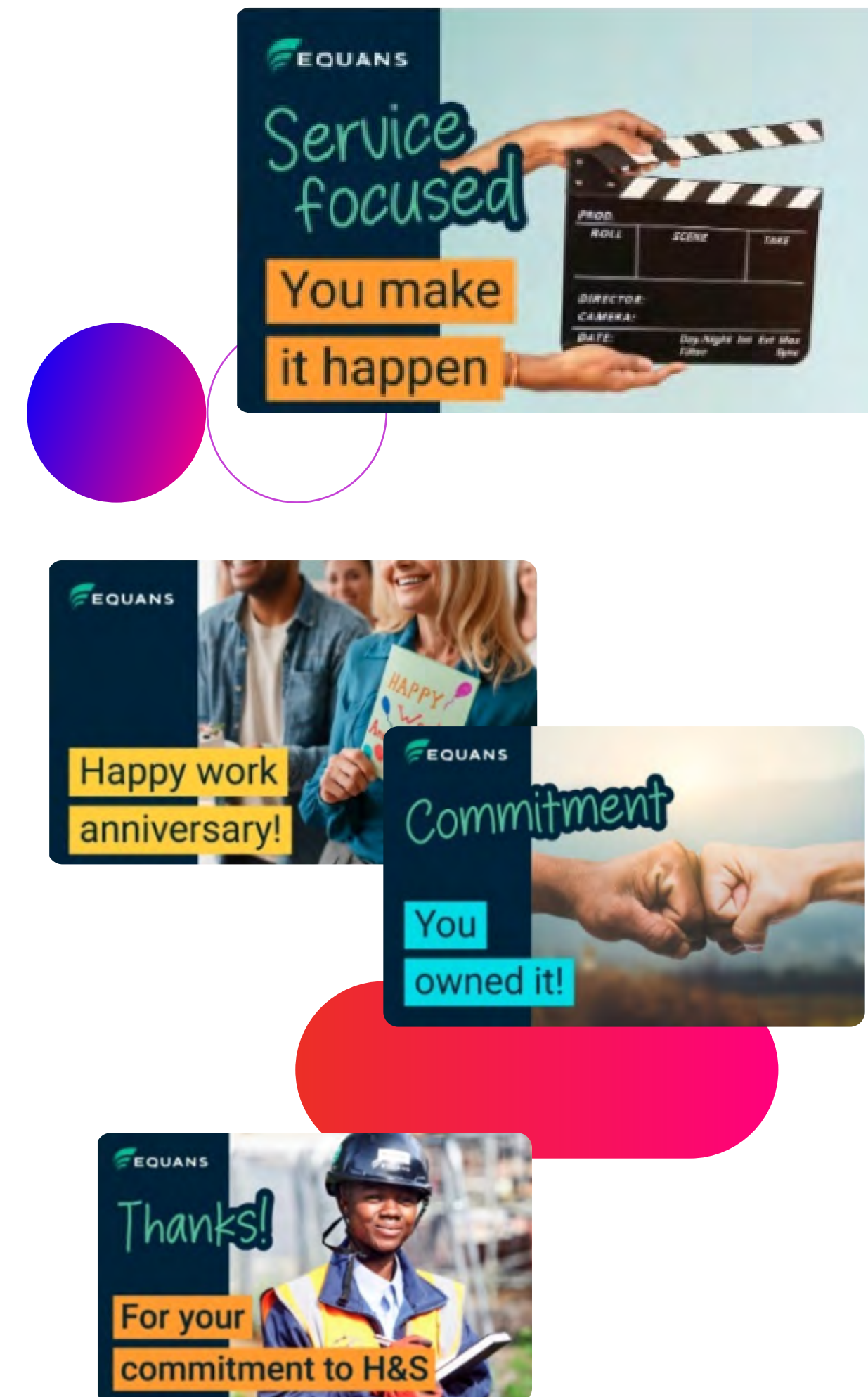
Equans UK & Ireland provides solutions that enable sustainable decarbonisation across the built environment.

**The challenge**

With the expensive cost of living presenting a continuing challenge in the UK and Ireland, the HR Benefits team wanted to support its employees by strengthening their financial resilience. But with over 11,000 people across remote, site and field-based roles, any new strategy would need to be inclusive, engaging and accessible for all. Insights and feedback from employees had identified three key needs - practical financial tools for immediate support, education to increase financial confidence and engagement opportunities that would resonate across different demographics.

**The goal**

With the new financial wellbeing strategy starting to take shape, Equans wanted to refresh its Reward Gateway | Edenred system, myEQUANSbenefits to deliver even more impactful benefits that employees could use instantly, alongside content and resources that would support their financial, physical and emotional wellbeing. The HR Benefits team needed to ensure this strategy aligned with its values, and could engage hard-to-reach employees through tailored channels and formats, including bespoke content for DE&I employee-led networks.



**How we helped**

Combining tangible benefits with targeted education and relatable storytelling, Equans developed and delivered a personalised strategy through myEQUANSbenefits that met employees where they were. This provided everything from immediate financial help to support in planning for future goals.

Salary sacrifice and deduction benefits such as Cycle to Work and SmartTech™ helped to offer financial support for larger purchases, while Holiday Trading allowed staff to take financial decisions over their annual leave and better manage their work-life balance.

Equans promoted its partnership with Wellhub and the Reward Gateway | Edenred Wellbeing Centre, to provide tools and resources that supported employees across all pillars of wellness. Recognising the links between financial pressures, stress and emotional wellbeing, the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) was embedded into every communication touchpoint, ensuring employees were aware of the free, confidential advice and support that was available to them.

Using data and insights from the system, Equans' HR Benefits team identified and then interviewed the company's 'Top 10 Savers' in employee discounts, discussing things like saving techniques and favourite retailers - sharing these stories with the wider workforce to drive system engagement. In addition to targeted webinars and bespoke benefit presentations for specific employee

networks, Equans also introduced free 1:1 mortgage advice sessions - supporting employees through arguably the largest purchases they would ever need to make.

## What they achieved

### Financial wellbeing

The financial wellbeing campaign achieved significant, tangible results across the workforce. In just three months, mortgage advice sessions were fully booked every month, with additional slots added. Budgeting webinars achieved high attendance and positive feedback, and the 'Top 10 Savers' stories were viewed over **5,000 times** – sparking employees to share saving tips and stories locally.

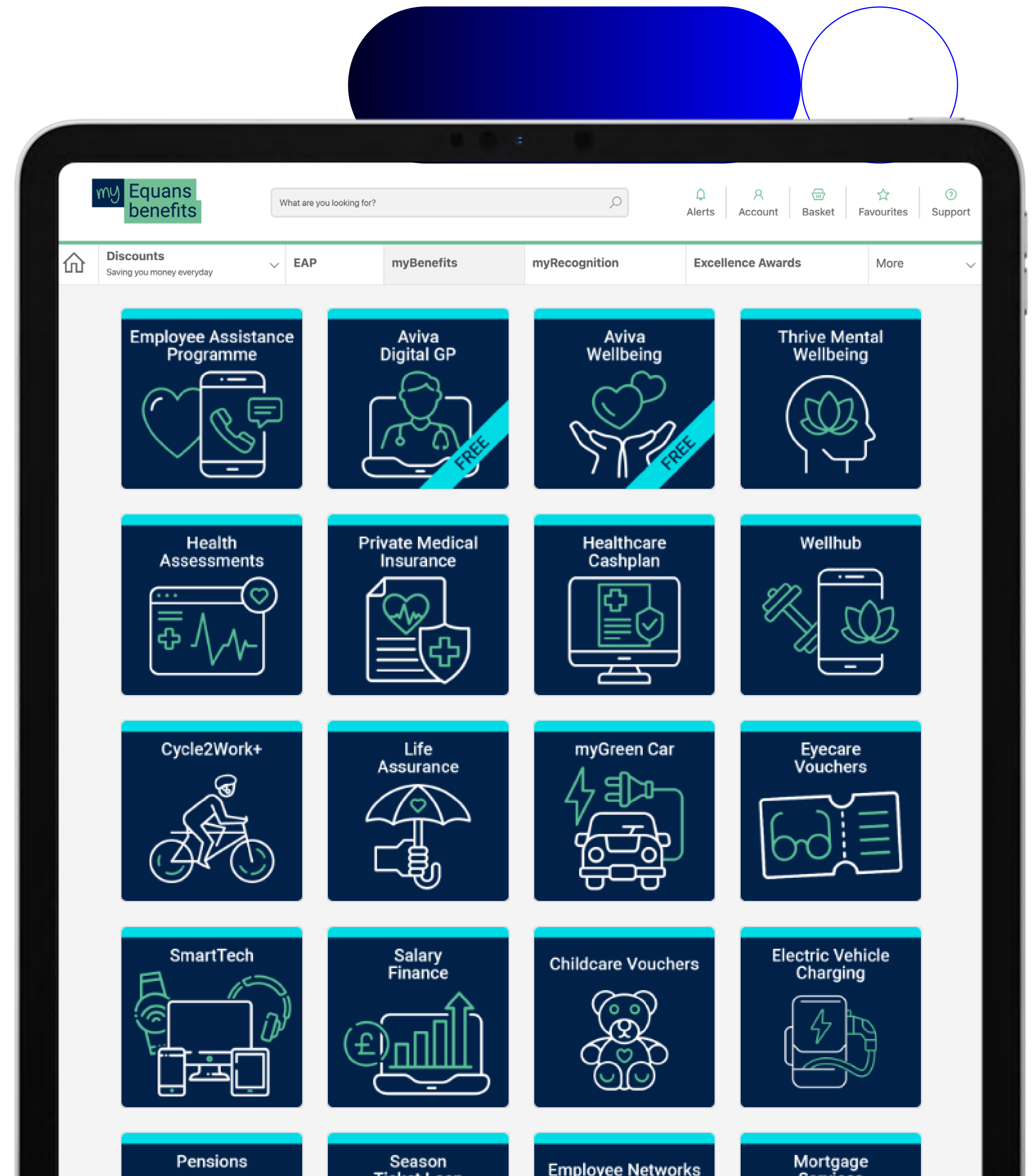
The entire campaign successfully positioned financial wellbeing as a core part of Equans' culture - normalising conversations, encouraging peer learning, and improving access to financial tools and resources. Most importantly, it helped employees to navigate the heightened costs and financial pressures with confidence and long-term security.

### Payroll and NI savings

Employees experienced significant savings through the system, including **£101,000 in discounts**. Salary sacrifice programmes including Holiday Trading and Cycle to Work, which saw **£354,000 of annual leave purchased** and **£183,000 of bike and equipment orders** respectively, helped to generate huge savings for both employees and Equans. As a result, the National Insurance contributions of employees **reduced by £169,000** and for the organisation by **£72,000**.

### Participation

Uptake of the Wellhub **increased by 7.5%** during the campaign, and consistent promotion of the EAP contributed to a doubling of year-on-year utilisation. Usage of the benefits system also increased throughout the campaign, peaking at a **76% active user rate** and a **7% increase** in registrations.





# Appreciation Awards 2025

Looking back at the Appreciation Awards, it's clear that the incredible results being achieved by people teams across the UK aren't just a cultural win - they're a strategic advantage. This year's finalists and winners once again demonstrate how Reward Gateway | Edenred clients are using employee appreciation as a catalyst for not only transforming workplace culture and supporting their people, but for propelling **performance, business growth and long-term organisational resilience.**

The stories highlighted here represent only a fraction of the innovative, people-first strategies being deployed across our client community. Each one shows how intentional recognition and support can strengthen engagement, unlock productivity and create the conditions for sustainable success.

I hope these examples leave you inspired, energised, and even more committed to championing appreciation as a core lever for growth – for your people, your teams and your organisation.

