

Case Study – BT

1. Why did BT set up the Carers Network? (eg your aims/objectives)



BT currently supports its people with caring responsibilities, through personal flexible working arrangements, time off to meet caring commitments and flexible team-working.

We set up the **Carers Network** in recognition of the huge commitment and responsibilities borne by a large number of BT people who currently have caring responsibilities and for those who will have caring responsibilities in the future.

BT's Carers Network Aims

- To connect and support people within the company who have caring responsibilities.
- Set up and maintain strategic relationships with external support organisations to give colleagues best practice advice and guidance.
- Challenge the business to improve policies, processes and its culture to ensure any member of staff who has caring responsibilities feels welcome and to help attract new members of staff who are also carers.
- Act as a consultancy to the business by reviewing initiatives to ensure they are meeting best practice standards.
- To develop the leaders of the network through training and coaching and by recognising and celebrating their input and success.

2. What was involved in the process of starting up the Carers Network? What type of network did you decide to set up? (i.e virtual, informal face to face, formal network).

The Carers Network is one of 10 formal BT Networks set-up with some uncomplicated governance and elected Chairs.

To access our yearly Carers Action Plan that has details of events and objectives for 2020-21, click [here](#).

3. How did you publicise and promote the Carers Network?

- a) Internal social media site “Workplace” for Carers set up
- b) Internal links to promote Carers Network
- c) Links to Employers for Carers (EFC) to support Employees and their Line Managers
- d) Group email distribution list established
- e) Webinars – recorded and shared
- f) Promotion through BT Diversity and Inclusion team
- g) Cross working with other Networks within BT. {Mental Health, Disability etc}
- h) Exec Sponsorship from BT Executive Committee

4. What processes/provisions have you put in place to sustain the Carers Network for the future?

Please see our yearly Carers Action plan [here](#).

5. What advice would you give to other organisations who want to set up a carers network?

Obtain buy-in and support from your Diversity and Inclusion Team. The BT Group Diversity & Inclusions Team continues to provide support through regular engagement and has helped ensure our success. This support includes:

- 1) Leadership development training and advice
- 2) A maturity framework to help shape and develop ideas and initiatives
- 3) Funding to help pay for events, merchandise and commercial partnerships
- 4) Securing a Senior Exec sponsor to influence decision making and initiate culture change from the most senior level of the organisation.
- 5) A supporting letter for the Chair and Co-Chairs to send to their Line Manager supporting and encouraging allocated time to work on the Carers Network.
- 6) Engagement and alignment with the nine other BT networks so knowledge and experience can be shared.
- 7) Enabling change through networking and introductions which have helped with sharing knowledge and organising events.

Benchmarking

Working in harmony with Carers UK to work towards a formal accreditation has formed the basis of our planning for the year and has helped focus us on what/when is required to sustain a long-term Carers Network.

Resources and Resilience

Finally, recruitment for co-chairs and network allies are very important to help drive and maintain the necessary resource for the workload that is required to run a successful Carers Network. There is lot of work involved