

Case Study – Sainsbury's

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

We wanted a place for our carer colleagues to be able to connect with each other in space for them, but also for people with an interest in caring and supporting those who do. We wanted our carer colleagues to be able to hear and share experiences with people who understood their specific needs alongside a committed group of colleagues who are able to champion the support resources we have available in order to promote these for colleagues in need. It's really important to us that our colleague feel supported and valued at work and starting our Carers Network enables us to offer that tailored support in a colleague led forum that is still strongly supported by the business.

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

We have a formal network with a published strategy and mission statement. We felt it was important to show how seriously we take our responsibility towards our carer colleagues. We consulted with a wide range of carer colleagues to ensure the solution we had was the right one.

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

We used a variety of channels including a feature in The Journal, our colleague magazine alongside a campaign on Yammer, notes from leaders and running various events around the country. Events such as Carers Week and Carers Rights Day also proved to be a great catalyst in promoting the network.

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

We maintain that the network is a place to share experiences and stories with likeminded colleagues who understand the experiences of carers. Additionally, we feel that the network has a strong part to play in representing the voice of carers in our business and so we frequently reach out the consult with the network on a wide variety of both colleague and customer focussed projects in order to ensure we cans support carers in the right way. We also feel the network has a vital part to play in supporting and challenging our business in our approach to carer colleague support and we're always looking for new ways we can improve and bolster this by using the networks vital insight. We sustain the network by keeping this approach fresh with the aim of continuous evolution and change of our support.

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

You need to really understand what a carer colleagues experience is like and how it differs to someone without these responsibilities. You also need to ensure that have genuinely committed senior sponsorship and leaders of the network who will make sure the group are well represented and can confidently articulate the needs of your career colleagues community by being informed through genuine listening and insight.