

# Best Flexible Working Strategy Winner

## British Heart Foundation

Nothing quite shakes up your working patterns quite like a global pandemic. What happens next, however, is entirely up to you.

During the Covid-19 outbreak, British Heart Foundation (BHF) lost nearly £30 million income, was forced into massive redundancies and a hiring freeze, and shifted largely out of its offices into homeworking.

The BHF's HR team knew it had to reconnect its people with the charity, their colleagues and leaders, and support its recovery through uncertain times.

To understand its position, the HR team held a listening event involving focus groups of around 150 staff, and a survey completed by nearly 800 colleagues (a 72% response rate). It found that a massive majority – 83% – wanted to work in a hybrid manner.

From these insights, it launched its #FlexiblyConnected strategy, to empower BHF employees, enable them to connect with each other, and give them the tools, tech, and guidance to bring consistency and equity to that connection.

BHF was given the opportunity to downsize its London office; in one action, it could save money and enact a radical redesign of its in-person working habits.

Keeping people at the centre of efforts, it enlisted volunteers to a network of champions, led by senior leaders from each of the charity's directorates. These champions were key to the office's redesign, alongside the charity's D&I employee resource group (ERG), Kaleidoscope, to help build inclusivity into the design.

The move helped BHF utterly transform its approach to work.

Now, specific types of working space support differing modes of work – whether it be collaboration, creative thinking, private call or one-to-one spaces,



employees can choose where works best for them. Not only that, BHF has empowered teams to decide how they work best, according to a flexible working charter co-created with the charity's network of champions.

Employees were not left in the dark about these significant changes. Contracts have been updated to reflect the dual locations of work; communication has been clear at every stage, giving news as soon as it comes in, and inviting feedback. Guides and checklists for staff and managers were also created with the #FlexiblyConnected champions.

The results have been outstanding.

BHF may remain in a test and learn phase, but so far 95% of previous office workers now work on a hybrid contract; all teams have developed an agreement on how and where they work, including how they will support each other's wellbeing; and 82% of job applicants to the charity said the flexible working policy had attracted them to the role.

Further, moving office meant a reduction in the number of desks by almost half, and a reduction in storage by 66% – with no waste to landfill.

Staff have been thrilled with the change, with one saying the office is “a breath of fresh air,” and “buzzing”.

Overall, the programme has so far saved the charity £1 million. With each additional year in place, it is expected to save an additional £300,000.

Judges were particularly impressed by the strategy's inclusion of champions and the D&I ERG, celebrating the charity's clear link to organisational values. **HR**

### Shortlisted

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Allianz

NHS Midlands and Lancashire

KFC (UKI)