



Helping Britain achieve net zero through employee benefits



In conversation with Vanessa Corsie, Pensions Operations Manager at EDF

Helping people around the UK keep the lights on is what EDF does day-in, day-out, so it makes sense that looking after their people is also a priority for the energy giant. On a mission to align their benefits and business strategy, EDF needed benefits technology that could support the financial wellbeing of their people, and help them hit their sustainability goals. We spoke to **Vanessa Corsie, Pensions Operations Manager** at EDF, to find out how they did it with an award-winning employee benefits scheme.

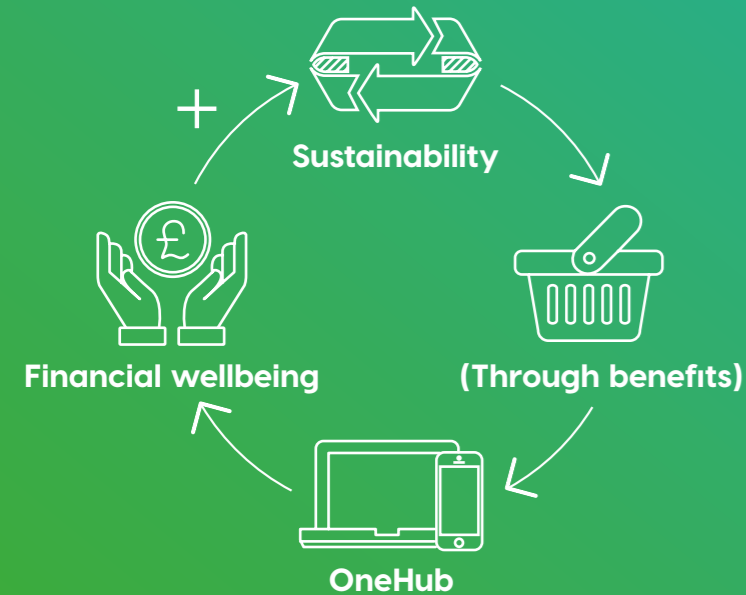
Vanessa Corsie,
Pensions Operations Manager

Finding a benefits technology provider who takes the time to understand your strategy and company culture is essential.

A household name in the UK, EDF is the country's largest producer of low-carbon electricity, currently providing one fifth of the UK's electricity and serving over 5.5 million customers. With 12,000 UK employees across 25 sites including power stations and customer contact centres, they have a broad and diverse employee population to cater to when it comes to their employee benefits. EDF is passionate about sustainability; they're on a mission to help Britain achieve net zero – and they're starting with employee benefits.

How would you describe your benefits strategy?

“Our main goal when coming to Benefex was to align the benefits strategy to our corporate strategy, which is helping Britain achieve net zero. We also have a big focus on financial wellbeing, so we looked at bringing our priorities and the employee journey together into one place.”



Tell us about your approach to financial wellbeing

“EDF believe from a moral perspective that making sure we’re giving our employees the support they need across all aspects of wellbeing is the right thing to do to.”

“We often talk about the vulnerable groups that are affected by poor financial wellbeing, but for me, the eye-opening thing has been that people across all paygrades can face financial difficulties. The average UK household debt is something like £15,000 and not everyone has financial education from an early age, or even in adulthood.

“We also considered the impact of financial wellness on presenteeism

and absenteeism. Of course, it’s difficult to measure, as these are impacted by many different things, but our research showed that 63% of employees are worried about finances, and as a result are distracted at work. And a Mind survey of our workforce recently found that 73% of our employees were finding it difficult to concentrate in the world of Covid.



The offering

“We have two solutions really: a financial wellbeing hub where people can get information, advice, and guidance. Then there’s also a scoring mechanism on there so people can learn a little bit more about their own financial wellbeing. About a year ago we also introduced a way to facilitate salary-deducted loans which have been really successful; we’ve helped roughly 150 people so far just through salary-deducted loans.”



Centralising your information

“I had found it difficult to navigate all the different ‘things’ that came under the world of wellbeing and benefits, so we worked with Benefex to put these all together under our myBenefits platform to make sure it was intuitive and straightforward to navigate.

“Having all of the tools and content centralised and easy to signpost helped us improve our communications as well, as we could just point to a single place that people could land on, which increased engagement. My aim was to get to a point where – if someone new joins the organisation – they can just log on to myBenefits and find what they need from day one.”



Helping Britain achieve net zero

What did that look like from a benefits perspective?

“Our electric vehicle launch was really important to our corporate strategy of helping Britain achieve net zero. We talk a lot to our customers about how they can reduce their carbon emissions, and we wanted to extend that to our employees.

“In 2020 we launched a salary sacrifice electric vehicle scheme and, already in 2021, 470 employees have ordered electric cars, which has been unprecedented for the supplier and a fantastic result – that’s 470 petrol cars off the road, because EDF employees have chosen to go electric.

“As well as the environmental positives, it’s really helped our people to understand the savings they can make through our salary sacrifice car scheme versus a private lease, and the uptake was incredible! It also worked very smoothly with our ‘generation electric’ company campaign. As an energy organisation, we’re working to build an ‘electric future’, so it’s helped bring employees on board in that journey as well. Plus, as an added bonus, EDF has made a huge employer NI saving, too.”

How did you approach communications to support your benefits strategy?

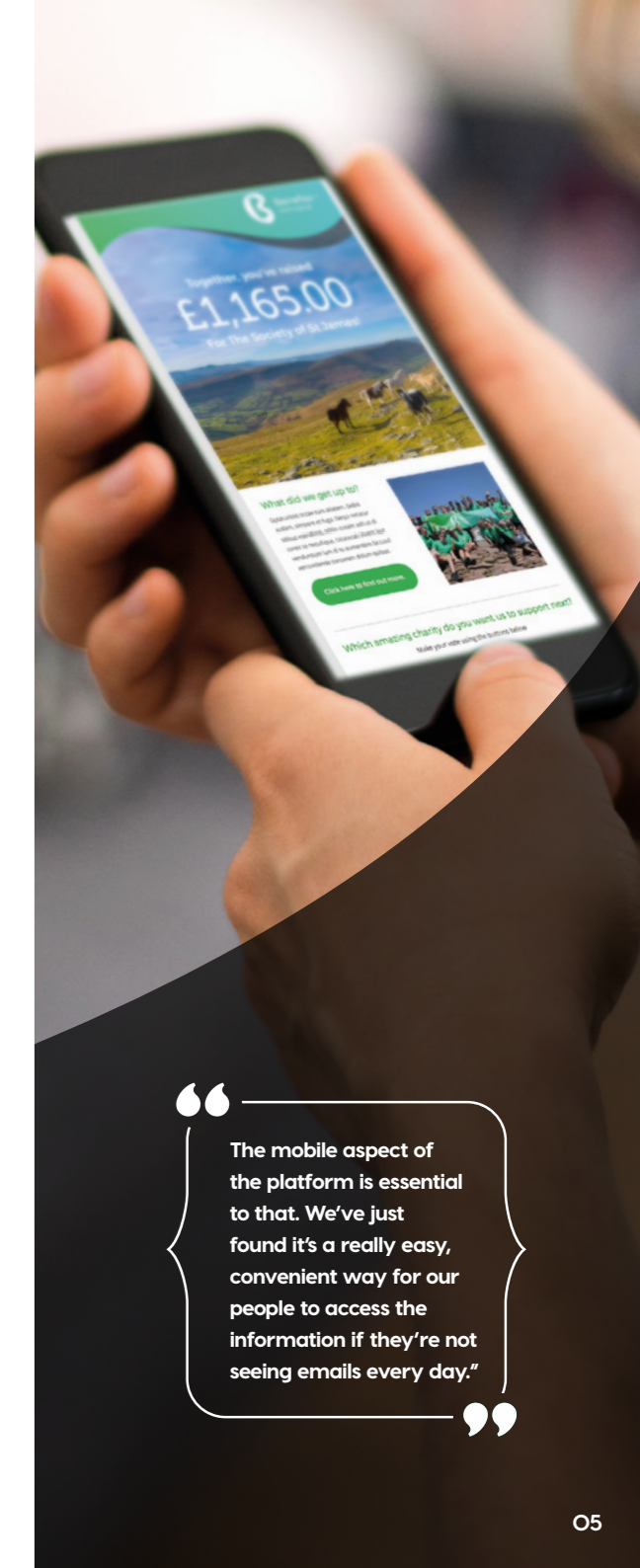
“We use Benefex’s Communications Manager (a branded email building tool), and through that, all our emails come ‘from’ the providers but through us, ensuring everything was dual branded to help reassure employees that these financial wellbeing services were trustworthy. We also communicated to our people through the HR team, our line managers, and at all-employee briefings.

“This staggered process really worked. We also found having everything together in one place meant things like pensions – which sometimes just don’t engage certain employees – were getting increased attention as it was easily accessible alongside other financial content.”

Reaching offline workers

“We have a population of people who work in the field with our customers, and people who aren’t sat in front of a computer, so email isn’t always the best communication method for us. Our people who work in the field all have what we call ‘tough pads’, that make sure they have access to our systems. Giving everyone access to the platform from any internet-ready device really does help.

“We’ve made a big deal about the fact that myBenefits is accessible from any device, so all of our employees can log on outside of the workplace in one way or another. Even across the weekend, about a thousand people will go on the platform, maybe to share their choices with partners and family.



“The mobile aspect of the platform is essential to that. We’ve just found it’s a really easy, convenient way for our people to access the information if they’re not seeing emails every day.”

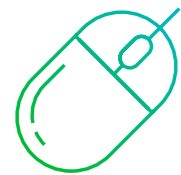
What results did you achieve?

As a result of all these efforts, EDF's employee engagement sky-rocketed! EDF's people are engaged with their myBenefits platform, and their advocacy of EDF increased.

Vanessa Corsie,
Pensions Operations Manager

To see the hard work of Benefex and the team pay off like this is just extraordinary. It's incredible to see the platform and benefits working alongside our corporate strategy like this and making a real difference, both to our employees and the planet.

The stats pack:



72%
employee
engagement



3,000
active financial
wellbeing accounts



470
petrol vehicles
off the road



190
salary sacrifice
loan beneficiaries

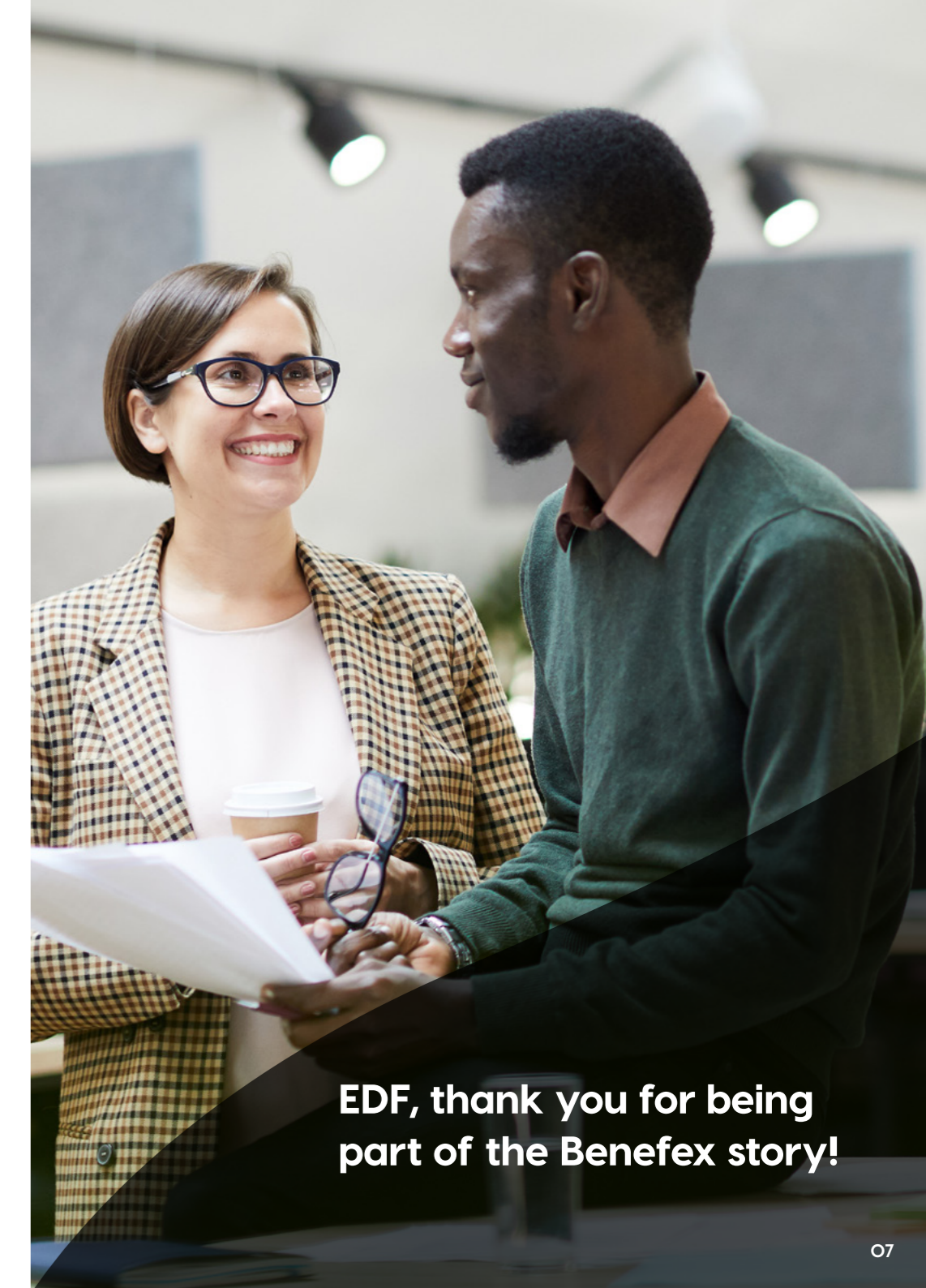


£400k+
in employer
NI savings

What were Benefex like to work with?

"Working with Benefex has been great. The team are really flexible and eager to help. I'm pretty demanding, we've made lots of changes and lots of enhancements, and we do so on a regular basis! But what Benefex have done is put in place ways to enable this to happen on a regular basis, so everybody is aligned to the strategy that we've set and the goals that we're trying to achieve."

"It's crucial to pick the right benefits provider. Get people who really understand what your strategy is and what your company is like, and who take the time to spend with them to make sure they really get the culture of your organization. Working with Benefex has been fantastic."



EDF, thank you for being part of the Benefex story!



Benefex™

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