

WMpeople.co.uk announces 2023 Top Employer Awards winners

Submitted by: WM People Ltd

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WM People has announced the winners of its 2023 Top Employer Awards (<https://www.wmpeople.co.uk/events/top-employer-awards/>), celebrating best practice in flexible, family friendly working and diversity and inclusion in the face of the ongoing economic turbulence affecting people's lives.

The Awards, now in their 13th year, were presented at a ceremony in London's Soho Hotel on 7th February - the first face-to-face event since Covid - and were preceded by a keynote speech by Jane Portas, author of The Risks in Life Series of award-winning insight reports and financial wellbeing guides, creator of 6 Moments That Matter and author of the Insuring Women's Futures' manifesto. The Awards were followed by a Q & A with the judges and Jane Portas on best practice trends and challenges.

The categories in this year's fiercely contested Awards, sponsored by NHS Professionals, reflect the main priorities of many HR managers over the last year.

There were nine categories: Best for Mental Health, Best for Returners, Best for Flexible Working, Best for Family Support, Best for Career Progression for Women, Best for Diversity and Inclusion, Best for Older Workers and Best for SMEs.

Winner of the Overall Top Employer Award, based on the winners of all the other categories, was Lloyds Banking Group.

The judges felt that Lloyds has shown that it is truly leading in this space and continuing to innovate and move forward through its commitment to piloting and testing new initiatives. Its focus on agile working continues to deliver and they praised the well-rounded and inclusive way Lloyds approached their work culture.

Other winners included:

Best for mental health, sponsored by Kearney: Vistry Group

This award celebrates employers who have been exemplary in the way they have sought to protect their employees' mental health.

The judges highlighted Vistry Group's focus on work redesign, the recognition of financial wellbeing, the commitment to mental health first aiders and wellbeing champions and the sense Vistry is measuring impact and responding to the issues their industry faces. In an industry with a high suicide rate, the judges felt Vistry Group stands out for the structural approach it takes to wellbeing and the range of support it offers.

Best for Diversity and Inclusion, sponsored by Nespresso: ServiceNow

This award is for organisations who demonstrate actions taken to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

The judges were impressed by ServiceNow's focus on inclusive hiring, outreach and unconscious bias training and the amount of data, showing they were measuring impact and improvement. They also noted that ServiceNow takes an inclusive approach to wellbeing and acknowledged that different groups have different wellbeing issues.

Best for Flexible Working, sponsored by FDM Group: Lloyds Banking Group

This award is for employers who show how they promote and manage flexible working and encourage a flexible culture in their organisation.

The judges felt Lloyds is continuing to lead on flexible working and is looking at structural ways to encourage more part-time working, with everything backed by statistics. They liked how Lloyds is delivering agility as a default option and how flexible working does not seem to affect employees' career progression. They were also impressed by the group's ongoing commitment to innovation.

Commended was Paddle for the way flexible working was embedded in the company. The judges felt what Paddle is offering is very mature for a small company, with its approach being based on choice and autonomy.

Best for Family Support, sponsored by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme: Unilever

This award is for employers who demonstrate how their policies and practice support working families and carers.

The judges said Unilever's support is comprehensive and fully embedded, including fertility support, manager coaching, unified parental leave, parental buddies, mental health first aiders, bereavement support and a panel to consider flexible working rejections and address individual pockets of management resistance.

Morgan Sindall was commended for its outstanding domestic abuse policy in response to growing awareness of the issue during Covid.

Best for Career Progression for Women, sponsored by McDonald's: MediaCom

This award is for employers who demonstrate that they have stand-out programmes or initiatives aimed at returners – those who have taken a career break and are looking to get back into the workplace.

The judges were impressed by the level of female representation in senior roles, MediaCom's approach to the menopause, the coaching they offer, their focus on apprenticeships and squiggly careers and their commitment to 50/50 candidate lists. There is a lot of support for training and returners and their entry was backed by a range of strong case studies.

Best for Returners, sponsored by Sky: J Murphy and Sons Ltd

This award is for employers who demonstrate stand-out programmes or initiatives aimed at returners – those who have taken a career break and are looking to get back into the workplace

The judges said J Murphy and Sons Ltd's approach is outstanding and that they are fulfilling an important social role and giving prison leavers a voice and a range of support. They liked how senior managers are involved in mentoring, ensuring everyone is involved. They said they could feel the compassion behind what they are doing.

Best for SMEs: Birdie

This award is for SMEs who demonstrate a real commitment to work life balance practices.

The judges think Birdie offers excellent support for caregivers and an impressive commitment to flexibility and diversity at all levels. There are strong initiatives in the area of wellbeing and onboarding for parents returning from parental leave.

HTG was commended for its flexibility and the sense that it genuinely cared about its employees.

Best for Older Workers, sponsored by J Murphy & Sons Ltd: Lloyds Banking Group

This award is for employers who provide details of what they do and how it helps older workers, including through metrics, how they are monitoring success and individual case studies which show impact.

The judges singled out Lloyds Banking Group's midlife reviews and focus on line manager conversations, their financial security support, flexible culture and the Your Future Your Way initiative which put employees in the driving seat. It is clear that Lloyds saw what they are doing as a positive to retain older workers and are committed to making progress.

The Award judges were Gillian Nissim, founder of WMpeople.co.uk; Andy Lake, director of ; Jennifer Liston-Smith, Head of Thought Leadership for Bright Horizons Work+Family Solutions; Dave Dunbar, Head of Digital Workspace at the Department of Work and Pensions; Clare Kelliher, Professor of Work and Organisation at Cranfield School of Management; and new judges Salma Shah, Writer and Founder of Mastering your Power, and Kim Chaplain, Associate Director for Work, Centre for Ageing Better.

Gillian Nissim, Founder of WM People*, said: "The Awards are about celebrating the resilience and creativity we have seen across the year and looking forward to what is to come this year, armed with ideas about not only what helps to motivate our teams in troubled times, but why it makes such a difference so that the business case is clear and obvious."

*WM People brings together workingmums.co.uk (<https://www.workingmums.co.uk>), workingdads.co.uk (<https://www.workingdads.co.uk>) and workingwise.co.uk (<https://www.workingwise.co.uk>).

A copy of the Best Practice Report based on last year's Top Employer Awards is available here (<https://www.wmpeople.co.uk/wm-people-launches-2022-best-practice-report/>). The next Best Practice Report will be out in May 2023. For more information, contact Mandy Garner on 07789 106435 or email

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