

Sainsbury's case study: Empowering line managers to self-serve employee relations matters

Responding to feedback from managers about the need to reduce reliance on HR when dealing with employee relations matters, Sainsbury's implemented a solution that enables line managers to self-serve ER cases 24/7.

The solution gives line managers the flexibility to access support and progress ER cases at a time that suits them, without having to engage HR in simple cases that don't require their expertise. Simple, digital guided journeys transform ways of working and improve the consistency of employee experiences.

Sainsbury's

About Sainsbury's

Sainsbury's, one of the UK's largest multi-site and multi-brand retailers, opened its first store over 150 years ago in 1869. Sainsbury's reach now consists of more than 600 supermarkets, in addition to over 800 convenience store and those of leading digital retailer Argos. Central to its remarkable success is over 150,000 dedicated colleagues who play such a key roles in delivering for its customers and the overall business strategy.



63%

of line managers are self-serving ER cases, with no HR intervention



70%

of short-term sickness cases are self-served digitally by line managers

At a Glance

Industry

Multi-channel retail

Key challenges

Sainsbury's, operating in the non-stop retail sector, needed a modern solution for managing ER matters at all times, particularly for night shift managers.

Solution

empower[®] simplifies employee relations case management processes by allowing line managers to independently handle people matters at any time. This streamlines processes, improves consistency, and enhances organisational agility.

Results

63% of line managers now self-serve employee relations cases with no HR intervention, reducing HR workload and transforming employee experiences. Additionally, **70%** of short-term sickness cases are managed digitally by line managers, delivering cost-efficiencies and helping to support all managers consistently, even outside of the HR department's working hours.





The Challenge

Sainsbury's operations run 24 hours a day, but the HR team is not available at all times. Consequently, employees working different shifts may have a different experience when it comes to handling people matters.

An innovative, flexible solution was required to enable managers to have access to support when they needed it, so that they could manage ER cases consistently, at a time and in a way that suited them.

Sainsbury's wanted a digital solution that empowered line managers to self-serve more employee relations matters at any time of day.

Sainsbury's identified the following requirements:

- ✦ **User-friendly, 24-hour self-service case management that enhances efficiency by empowering line managers to self-serve people matters around the clock.**
- ✦ **Real-time visibility of employee relations insights to help monitor case loads, and support data-driven decision-making.**
- ✦ **Digitalised short-term sickness processes to facilitate a proactive approach for effectively managing absence.**
- ✦ **Cost-effective HR technology and advisory services that allows HR to allocate more time to complex cases and strategic initiatives.**



The Solution

At the heart of the HR transformation at Sainsbury's is **empower**® by AdviserPlus, which has digitally simplified Sainsbury's employee relations processes and transformed ways of working for HR and line managers.

The transformation ensured employee relations policies were more accessible and easy to understand for managers. The introduction of guided journeys has enabled managers to access necessary information seamlessly and independently, marking a significant milestone in their digital transformation journey. This move has also reduced the need for HR's involvement in less complex employee relations matters that would have previously been escalated to HR.

The **empower**® solution gives Sainsbury's the flexibility to continually tailor their processes to meet the ever-evolving demands of the business. The scalability of the solution allows for continuous improvements and adjustments, making it well-suited for addressing peak periods in the retail sector. **empower**® analytics capabilities provide real-time visibility of case progression and delivers actionable insights that enable a more data-driven approach.

A collaborative risk framework, developed in partnership with AdviserPlus, played a crucial role in identifying and addressing high-risk cases, giving the Sainsbury's team greater control and insight into their case data. This proactive approach resulted in remarkable benefits.

Additionally, by leveraging the expertise of the AdviserPlus team as consultants, Sainsbury's found that they played a pivotal role in shaping its strategies and turning innovative ideas into actionable plans. This has significantly contributed to improving the management of people matters.

The scalability of the solution makes it well-suited for addressing peak periods in the retail industry.



Key benefits and results



Managers empowered to self-serve employee relations matters

Over a 12-month period, line managers successfully managed **63%** of employee relations cases without HR intervention, resulting in a reduction in HR workload and improved consistency in the management of ER matters. Managers are able to effectively advance cases without requiring HR involvement and the benefits of this manager empowerment have exceeded expectations.



A data-driven approach to employee relations

Actionable insights that are unlocked with **empower**[®] enable a data-driven approach to decision-making. Trend analysis facilitates a proactive approach to identifying and addressing the root causes of issues that could be contributing to employee relations issues. This, in turn, contributes to improving the overall success and culture of the business.



Leveraging industry benchmarking & best practice

The ability to leverage industry benchmarking and best practice insights has proven to be invaluable for Sainsbury's. AdviserPlus excels in this area which enables them to refine processes and continuously improve experiences.



Streamlining ER processes to mitigate risk

Through **empower**[®] guided journeys, consistency in the processes for managing employee relations matters are improved, reducing risk. Manager prompts, lock points and automatic escalations ensure compliance is maintained efficiently. This enables managers to proactively do the right things at the right time to reduce the volume of cases that escalate.



Revolutionising sickness absence management

70% of short-term sickness cases are now self-served digitally with automated tasks and alerts, ensuring a proactive approach to sickness absence management, improving efficiency and reducing the cost of sickness management.

“Our successful partnership with AdviserPlus is built on collaboration. They understand the needs of our end-users and our industry, delivering a solution that is user-friendly, cost-effective, and secure. They have enabled us to transform our employee relations processes to ensure they remain employee-centric. Our experience working with AdviserPlus has been natural and easy, and their commitment to excellence sets them apart from other providers. It's truly refreshing to see that they value our partnership and never take it for granted. Working with their team is consistently a pleasure.”

Sam Offer, Director of HR, Sainsbury's

“The AdviserPlus team played a pivotal role in achieving a successful launch by emphasising the importance of communication. Their incredible hard work and dedication in creating content for our knowledge portal, technology, and engagement were outstanding. It's worth noting that effective internal communication is equally crucial for project success and they supported us in achieving this.”

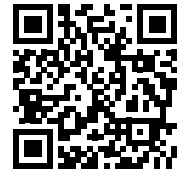
Andrea Blundell, Head of Employee Relations, Sainsbury's

AdviserPlus is part of the Empowering People Group

AdviserPlus is an Empowering People Group company, which brings together four expert HR and learning businesses to simplify employee experiences. The Group mission is to empower excellence and shape the future of HR, combining technology, people-centric policies, and employee development to empower people and drive business success.



Find out more [here](#).



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About Us

AdviserPlus is the UK's leading provider of managed HR advisory services. Working with large UK corporates and FTSE 100 companies, we combine expert people and industry leading technology to provide proactive HR advice and guidance, increase the capability of line managers and sustainably improve commercial performance.