

Wickes Case Study: Transforming employee relations with actionable insights

empower® enabled an insight-driven approach to Employee Relations (ER) management for one of the UK's leading home improvement retailers. Line manager empowerment was optimised within **3 months** of launch. This transformation empowered line managers to self-serve employee relations matters and enabled HR to proactively address issues and improve employee experiences.



Technology Partner
of the Year
Winner 2023

Wickes

The Company

Wickes is a leading home improvements retailer with 230 stores in the United Kingdom and plans to open more stores in the future.

Wickes is committed to providing customers with the products and services they need to improve their homes, and be house proud, whether they are homeowners or local tradespeople. It strives to be a partner that customers can rely on for advice and support to help achieve their home improvement goals.

AdviserPlus has been a strategic partner of Wickes since 2021. Wickes chose the innovative *empower*® solution from AdviserPlus because of their expertise in employee relations, as well as their technology-led and insightsorientated approach to ER transformation which delivers better employee experiences.



80%

of employee relations tasks are now manager-led



50%

reduction in tribunal claims



At a Glance

Industry:

Home Improvement Retail

Key challenges:

Managers needed to be empowered to self-serve more employee relations (ER) matters, and HR required better reporting capabilities to identify and improve areas of inconsistency in the way in which ER cases were managed throughout the business.

Solution:

empower® by AdviserPlus delivers the analytics and data visualisations that provide actionable insights for HR to proactively support line managers and drive positive change across the organisation. Guided journeys enable line managers to self-serve employee relations matters consistently and with confidence.

Results:




80% of employee relations tasks are now manager-led. The HR team is able to identify and address the root cause of issues impacting employee relations, and proactively improve manager capability. There was also a **50%** reduction in tribunal claims.

The Challenge

Wickes de-merged from Travis Perkins in 2021 so that both companies could pursue their own independent strategies to deliver the best service to their customers. Following the completion of the de-merger, Wickes had the opportunity to review its policies and processes and the technology platforms in place to support an agile HR function.

In undertaking this review, the HR leadership team identified the need for a fit-for-purpose employee relations case management system that would enable its newly-formed Employee Relations function to be set up for success and to support the strategic objectives of the business.

Wickes identified the following requirements:

-  A solution which enables line managers to develop the confidence and capability to take greater ownership of people matters.
-  Visibility of key people metrics across the organisation and insights to inform HR and business decisions.
-  Efficient means by which the team can respond to Subject Access Requests and access a full audit trail for employee relations cases.

AdviserPlus was successful in its bid for the contract and its innovative *empower*[®] solution was implemented and successfully launched in 2022.

The Solution

The AdviserPlus *empower*[®] solution was selected because it provided specialised ER technology designed by ER specialists who could translate the real world of ER to the configuration of the platform. This innovative solution enables the simple, efficient and compliant management of ER cases, providing a full audit trail and detailed MI.

For the first time, both managers and ER advisers had visibility of their employee relations cases, including a record of the advice and communications, key dates and letters, thus creating a full and comprehensive audit trail.

Managers can raise their own cases and are taken on a guided journey. This pre-populates letter templates, including meeting invitations, with key information from the case when required. There are configured points where the journey is locked where the manager is then required to engage the HR team on a matter of complexity or risk.

All ER policies are configured within *empower*[®] delivering a consistent user experience. This translates technical or legal policy wording into operational language that managers understand and leads the Manager through the application of the policy in a simple process flow, helping to ensure consistent policy approach.

Analytics dashboards can be filtered down into different business areas to help identify trends and hot spots, enabling Wickes to act and make decisions proactively.

The solution is fully Wickes branded, the terminology is aligned to its culture, and it's known internally as My ER. Since the initial implementation, we've developed processes that address new requirements to support the adherence to FCA obligations.



HR NOW HAS REAL-TIME VISIBILITY OF INSIGHTS TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS FASTER THAN BEFORE

The Benefits

The benefits delivered by the **empower**[®] solution have been truly transformative, delivering:

- + **Simplicity** - Clarity of HR processes, tasks and priorities simplify the complexity of managing ER process, with technology applied in the right places at the right time.
- + **Efficiency** - Delivering employee relations through a built-for-purpose solution maximises the productivity of the HR team, line managers and employees.
- + **Engagement** - Digital guidance with the safety net of case advisory support means managers can develop better and employee relationships, and reduce process cycle times.
- + **Assurance** - Reassuring stakeholders that all HR tasks are carried out with efficiency, effectiveness, and full compliance with policies and obligations, in a timely way.
- + **Consistency** - Enabling line managers to self-serve employee relations matters through a structured framework means a demonstrably consistent approach to people matters across the organisation.
- + **Visibility** - Clear data visualisations and actionable insights enable HR and business leaders to proactively identify and address the root cause of issues that may be impacting employee experiences.

The Results

- + **80%** of tasks in the management of employee relations matters are now entirely manager-led.
- + Line manager empowerment was optimised within **3 months** of launch.
- + **Manager self-service** provides managers with the ability to confidently progress employee relations matters in the moment, no matter what time of day or night.
- + As a direct result of the actionable insights delivered by the **empower**[®] solution, Wickes was able to identify the **root cause** of an issue that required additional manager training to improve the support of neurodivergent employees.

Armed with the insight from its ER data, Wickes engaged the National Autistic Society to support its team with better training and more awareness of the unique talents and challenges of autistic colleagues to help create a more inclusive environment.

“The consistency delivered in the management of employee relations matters and the insights we now have access to have been business changing. Partnering with AdviserPlus has enabled us to proactively transform ways of working and create a more agile, business-driven ER function. We really value the proactive relationship we have with AdviserPlus, which enables us to identify opportunities to continually improve.”

Louise Skeoch, Employee Relations Manager, Wickes

“Our partnership with Wickes continues to go from strength to strength and we're proud to be considered trusted strategic partners for a brand that puts employee experience at its heart. We look forward to continuing to enable Wickes to deliver people-first employee relations strategies.”

Sarah Greene, Customer Relationship Manager, AdviserPlus

AdviserPlus' award-winning solution

AdviserPlus is the proud winner of the British HR Awards 2023 'Technology Partner of the Year' award.

The Awards celebrate companies that are transforming people experiences and helping to shape a new future of work in HR, so it is an honour to be recognised as a leader in tech-enabled people empowerment.



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AdviserPlus is part of the Empowering People Group

AdviserPlus is part of the Empowering People Group, a leading UK provider of specialist technology and innovative HR, change and employment law solutions that simplify the complexity in HR. Our experts share a deep understanding of today's complex HR landscape, delivering advice, insights, analytics and interventions that make a real impact.



Find out more [here](#).



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About Us

AdviserPlus is an award-winning provider of employee relations transformation solutions. Working with large UK corporates and FTSE 100 companies, we combine expert people, industry leading technology, and insightful analytics to revolutionise ways of working for HR. Our mission is to simplify the complexity in HR and empower line managers to improve employee experiences and drive commercial performance.