

South
Yorkshire
Housing
AssociationCOME
HOMEGood
Work

Enabling employees to thrive at work for social good

Industry: Public sector

Number of employees: 70

Reason for change: Support wellbeing and facilitate the introduction of OKRs

Results: Every Good Work employee is actively engaged in regular 1:1 conversations with their managers and/or direct reports. Within these 1:1s, 93% of employees have addressed their wellbeing, and an impressive 95% of actions set by the Good Work team on OpenBlend are employee-led



David Venables,
Programme Lead, Good Work

The customer

Good Work is a public sector organisation that helps amazing people – including those who live with mental health conditions and disabilities – to find sustainable employment and thrive at work. Operating as a department within South Yorkshire Housing Association, the Good Work team helps up to 1,500 clients every year, providing them with free, one-to-one support and matching them with paid employment which is right for them.

We recently sat down with Programme Lead, David Venables, to find out how OpenBlend is enabling Good Work employees to reach their full potential at work – and by extension, how it's helping to support an invaluable employment service in South Yorkshire.



Good Work exists to help people find sustainable employment. This includes people living with mental health conditions, but also asylum seekers, ex-offenders, homeless people, and elderly people. We support anyone and everyone, and in a way that recognises people's individual strengths and capabilities. There's actually a lot of synergy with OpenBlend in that regard.

David Venables, Programme Lead, Good Work



Challenges & objectives

So what were the circumstances that led Good Work to engage OpenBlend back in 2021?

David explains how the department wanted to prioritise employee wellbeing, but also establish a more consistent means of managing and tracking performance over time:

“Demand for our services increased significantly during Covid, which meant we needed to really focus on helping our employees to stay well so that, in turn, we could continue helping the clients who rely on our service.”

Good Work's three core objectives:

1. Invest in employee wellbeing by providing employees with the tools they need to speak up and openly express what they need in order to stay well
2. Create a more consistent approach to managing and tracking performance by leveraging the right technology
3. Support the introduction of Objectives and Key Results by engaging performance management software that aligns with and supports the OKR model



OpenBlend led several training webinars, which worked really well, and we also arranged various internal workshops and drop-in sessions so that our employees and managers were given an opportunity to ask questions and find out more about the benefits of having regular and broad 1:1 conversations. We also used those sessions to talk about OpenBlend in conjunction with the introduction of OKRs so that people would understand its importance in those terms too.

David Venables, Programme Lead, Good Work



Why OpenBlend?

With a clear set of goals, the next step involved finding the right technology provider.

Explaining how Good Work was first introduced to OpenBlend, David says: “A colleague came across OpenBlend at an event, and was impressed by a demo of the platform. There was definitely a sense that it could help to facilitate the changes we were planning at that time, and so the platform seemed like a really good fit in those terms.”

In particular, David says OpenBlend ticked a number of key requirements:

- Enables effective 1:1 conversations at work
- Places a key emphasis on wellbeing and motivation, not just performance
- Helps managers to structure and guide 1:1 conversations
- Focuses on the employee as an individual
- Supports ongoing coaching and development
- Aligns with OKRs
- Provides a safe space for employees to talk openly and honestly
- Aligns with the GROW methodology



The roll-out...

Fast forward six months, and OpenBlend was being rolled out to the department’s ~70 employees. This involved a three-month “bedding in” period whereby managers were tasked with helping to get their direct reports up and running on the system. Naturally, some managers required more support than others, yet the end result was a resounding success. David explains:

“Three months after launch, all of our employees were using OpenBlend consistently. We’ve seen a high level of engagement since the beginning. That hasn’t waned over time, which speaks to the value that people are deriving from it.”

OpenBlend also ran a series of training sessions for managers and employees during the implementation, providing helpful tips and advice on how to get the best out of the platform.

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Employee feedback:

We use OpenBlend every month to monitor team performance and wellbeing, and the blend motivators encourage conversations about work and personal life. [These conversations] have supported raw, meaningful discussions about performance and wellbeing at work. The software is also intuitive and easy to navigate.

Michael, Employment specialist

Manager feedback:

OpenBlend empowers managers to have great coaching-based conversations with their team. The tool also supports managers to recognise each team member as an individual [...] and provides an easy framework for line managers who are less comfortable or confident in holding 1:1s. It has encouraged a more consistent approach in our department, and conversations have been two-way and constructive. Team members have particularly enjoyed the high five praise and recognition function.

Anya, Work and Wellbeing Manager

The results:

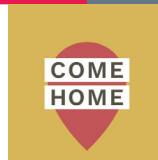
So eighteen months after OpenBlend's launch, what impact has David and the team seen so far?

Employees are now having an average of **two** 1:1 conversations per quarter

93% of employees have discussed wellbeing in a 1:1 (and wellbeing is added to the 1:1 agenda 20% of the time)

Employees have an average of **four** live OKRs

An average of three actions are created for every 1:1 conversation, **95%** of which are employee-led



Customer experience

Anyone who knows OpenBlend, knows that we're big on customer success. To hold ourselves to account, we always ask our customers about their experience of engaging and partnering with us. Here's what David had to say:

"We've had a very open and transparent dialogue with the OpenBlend team since day one. They're responsive and they really listen to our feedback, which makes it feel like a genuine partnership. They're also a team that continually demonstrates strong values and ethics, which is incredibly important to an organisation such as Good Work. We have a very strong working relationship that we look forward to continuing."

"OpenBlend is definitely enabling us to better support and monitor employee wellbeing. Our people are having regular conversations about a wide range of topics that matter to them, and which affect their ability to thrive at work. The way we approach performance management is much more consistent, and we have an invaluable means of tracking performance against our OKRs model."

David Venables, Programme Lead, Good Work

To learn how OpenBlend can support regular and effective conversations in your organisation, get in touch with our team

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