



RewardGateway
the employee engagement people

Local Social Housing Provider Delivers a World-Class Employee Hub With a Unique Personality

Learn how Plymouth Community Homes harnessed
technology to boost staff satisfaction by nearly 30%





Industry:

Social housing



Number of employees:

600+



Platform features:

Employee benefits, employee communications, employee reward and recognition, employee wellbeing

About the company

Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) is one of the leading social housing landlords in southwest England, with a portfolio of 16,000 properties which provides homes to over 35,000 people across Plymouth and the surrounding areas.

Having previously struggled to unite and engage its wide-ranging workforce of mobile and community-based workers, PCH had big ambitions to become an employer of choice by revamping its approach to reward, recognition and internal communications.



The challenge

In 2019, Plymouth Community Homes found itself going through an intense period of change due to budget cuts from the national government and the founding CEO's decision to retire. The impact on staff was brought to light following a company-wide staff satisfaction survey which **revealed roughly half of PCH's workforce felt disconnected from the organisation** and unclear on its objectives.

Perhaps most worrying of all was that just 38% of employees said they felt their work was consistently recognised. Further focus groups with staff underlined that PCH's

benefits package had failed to keep pace with industry standards, and that there was no two-way communication through which staff could make their voices heard. Many staff were also having issues accessing the company's main intranet site, direct messages and team communications.

That led Plymouth Community Homes to start developing a new approach, one that would reflect its core ethos as a brand and bring the company up to speed with today's standards in employee engagement and recognition.



“The feedback we got from our people, particularly those working in the community or without a computer, made us realise exactly where we were going wrong. Staff couldn't access our intranet site from their devices, they weren't engaging with our benefits and they were completely baffled by some of our previous tools. Reward Gateway was the obvious solution for us because it simplified all of this and solved so many of our challenges within a single platform.”

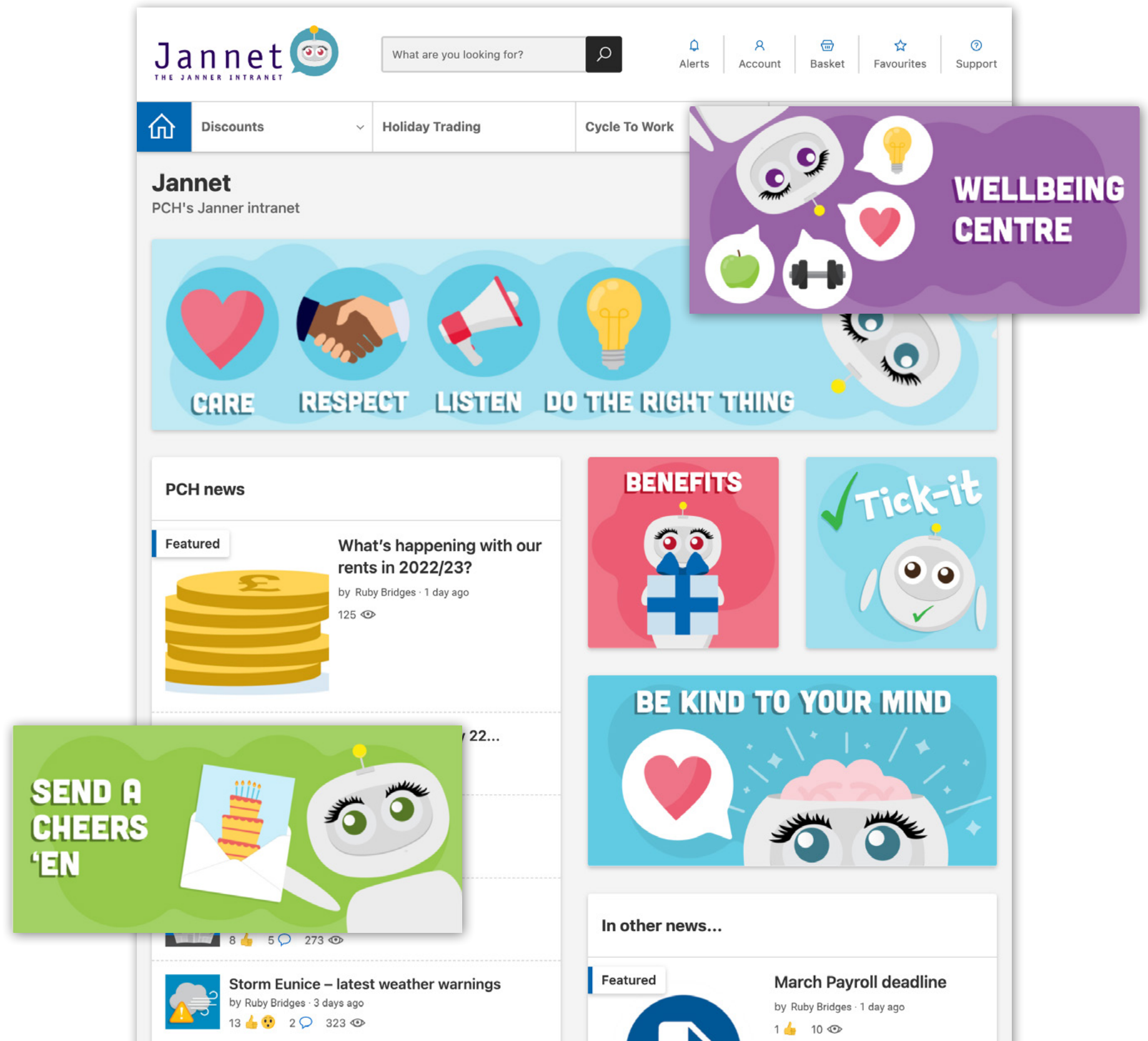


Angie Scott,
Head of Communications
and Marketing for PCH

The approach

Working closely with Angie and her team, Reward Gateway got to work on building a platform that would sit at the heart of PCH's communications strategy and connect employees across all departments within the business.

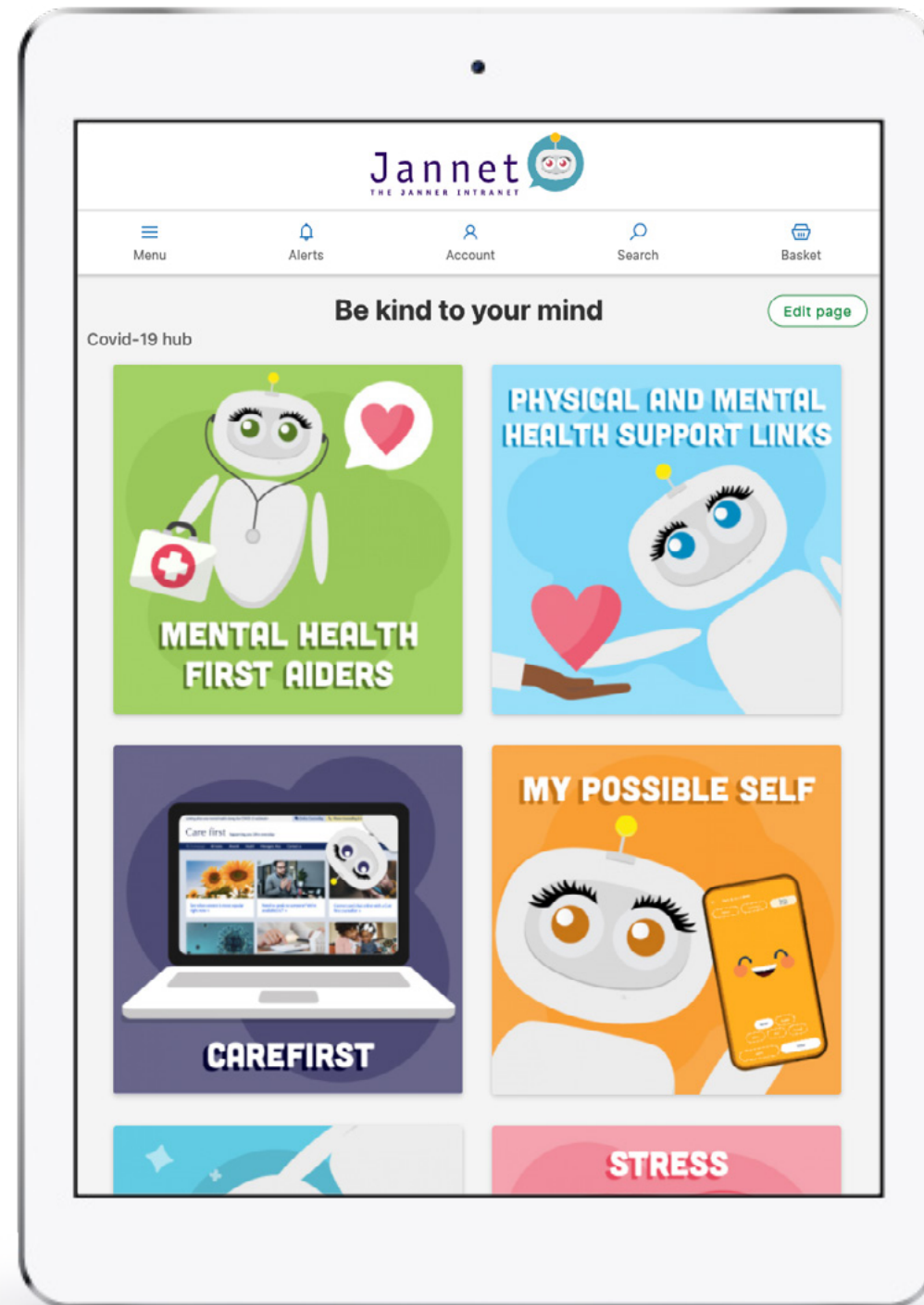
This wasn't just about sharing operational and practical updates, but also supporting people with useful, personalised content and promoting open channels of communication between senior leaders, line managers and staff. The new 'Jannet' hub enables managers and employees to share blogs, vlogs and updates which discuss different ideas and encourage two-way dialogue among their teams. An interactive Wellbeing Centre was earmarked as a priority so that all staff had access to a host of resources that support their physical and mental health.



Giving 'Jannet' a Life of Her Own

PCH knew that branding the platform in the right way would be crucial to secure buy-in and engagement from their entire workforce, so it tapped into its roots within the local community to come up with the name 'Jannet' – a play on 'Janner,' the regional nickname for people from Plymouth.

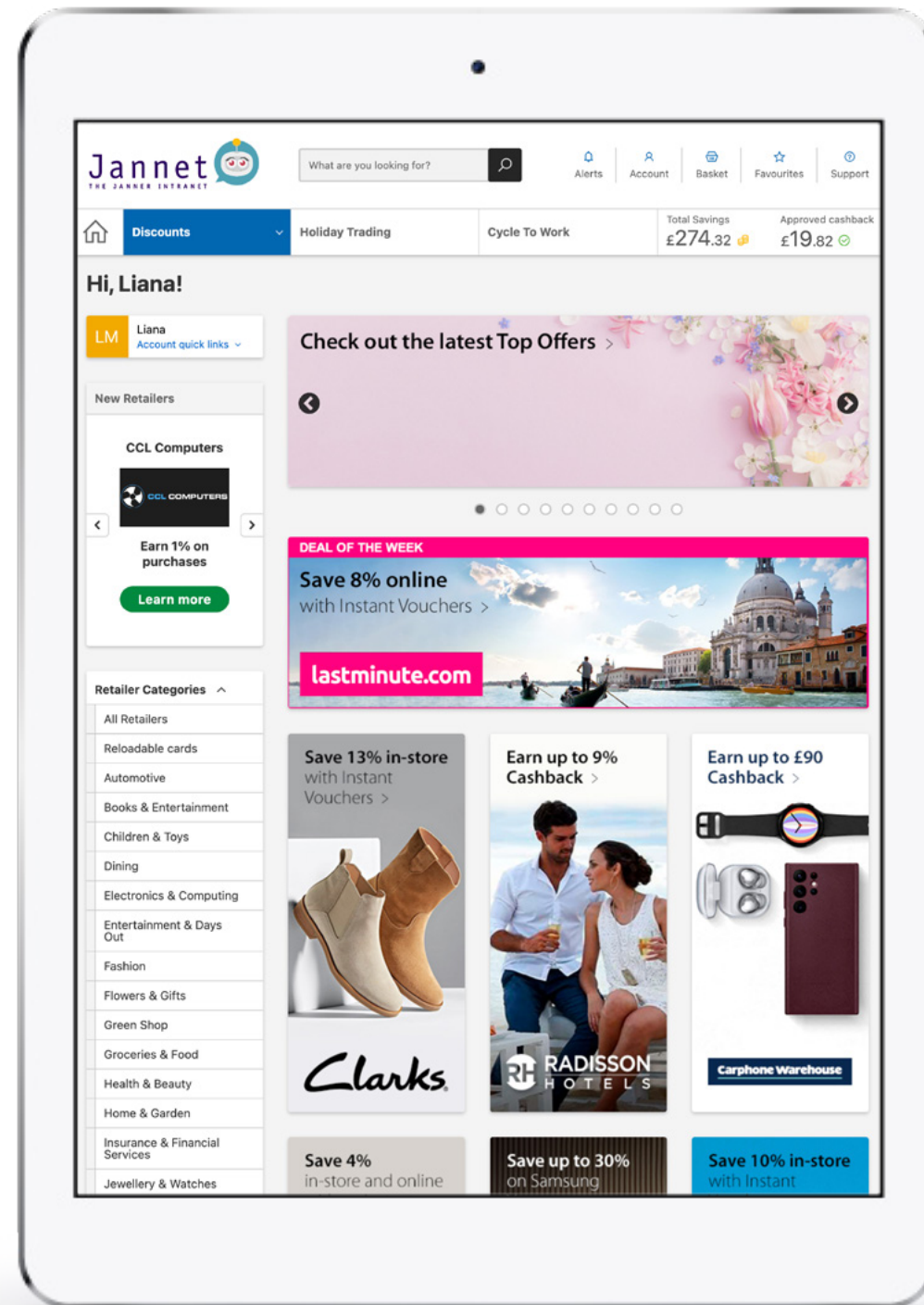
The last thing PCH needed was another stale, corporate intranet site, which is why the team decided to take things in a different direction by developing a proper personality and backstory to make the platform feel more relatable.



“Our ability to customise the hub is a big reason why it has become a central part of our day-to-day culture. It’s been amazing to read some of the lovely feedback and stories that people have shared, especially throughout the pandemic. Our people are actually using Jannet to help them cope and get by during really challenging times. As an employer, that’s something we could have only dreamed of beforehand!”

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“One of our core strategic goals as a business is to be an employer of choice. The modern job market is extremely competitive, so having a fantastic Employee Value Proposition is essential if you want to attract and retain the best people. The flexible benefits package offered by Reward Gateway was a perfect fit because we could tailor it to our needs and add in additional services when needed.”



Strengthening EVP through benefits, reward and recognition

PCH wanted to solve the challenge of reward and recognition by integrating a seamless eCard system that made it simple for both managers and colleagues to recognise great work. Employees were also calling for a stronger benefits and discounts offering, which is why PCH decided to introduce SmartSpending™ and Holiday Trading into their benefits offering to meet the demands of a broad demographic.



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“We’ve also seen really strong engagement with our new recognition system and nearly 2,000 eCards sent within our first year alone. Initially it was our managers that led the charge, but now we’re seeing just as much peer-to-peer recognition between teams and departments. Each eCard links with our organisational values and ‘Jannerisms,’ so it’s great to see those values getting ingrained in our day-to-day working lives.”

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“We wanted Jannet to seem like a PCH employee - the person to go to for any news, updates, communications and expert tips. We created stories to encourage engagement with different benefits, so Jannet can be seen trading her own holiday so she can shoot off in a caravan somewhere that weekend, for example. We can even change Jannet’s styles to reflect what’s going on, like when we were nominated for the Engagement Excellence Awards and posted a short animation of Jannet turning up in an evening gown.



Members of the PCH Comms Team; Alex Babb, Chris Parsons, Keleigh Stevens and Angie Scott. PCH won the Award for Most Creative Employee Engagement Platform Branding at the Engagement Excellence Awards 2021.

The results

Having already gathered the results from the company-wide satisfaction survey in 2019, it's remarkable to see the difference in employee opinions just 18 months after the Jannet platform launched.

But that's not all. The fact that **68%** of staff either sent or received an eCard last year feels like a giant leap forward given that PCH highlighted employee recognition and reward as one of their biggest problem areas.

As for flexible benefits, the SmartSpending™ app has been a real success for PCH with over **£134k spent** by employees in just one year. Holiday Trading has also seen strong uptake across various areas of the organisation, and over **£123k** spent since launch.

Staff survey results from June 2021



“The journey with Reward Gateway has been nothing short of incredible. When we first teamed up in 2019, there was no way we could have predicted the scale of success we’ve seen with the platform, or how it would play such an important role in our efforts around employee engagement and communications.”

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Our account manager has been so supportive of everything we set out to achieve and has guided us through some great strategies in terms of promoting the platform internally, discussing different capabilities and driving buy-in across our entire workforce. The whole experience has exceeded our expectations and has got us so much closer to who we want to be as an employer. We can't wait to see where we go from here!”



24% increase in staff who think PCH is a 'great place to work'



33% increase in trust of senior leader pandemic



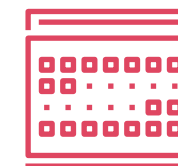
32% increase in feelings of recognition among staff



90% active users



£134k spent through SmartSpending



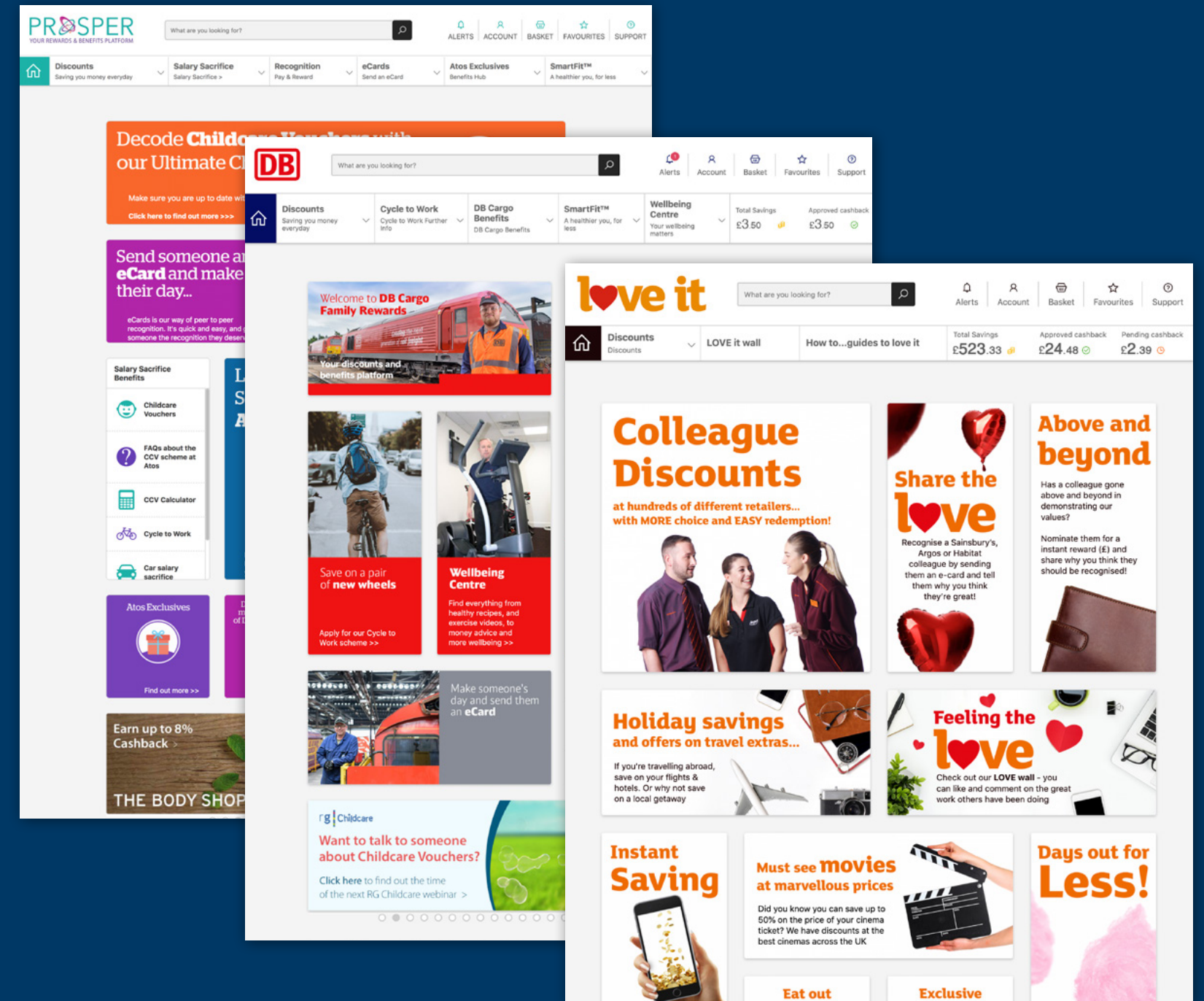
£123k spent through Holiday Trading

Interested in your own employee engagement solution?

Reward Gateway delivers the only platform that centralises employee benefits, discounts, reward and recognition, employee wellbeing and employee communication tools all in one place.

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Reward Gateway delivers employee engagement solutions to more than 2,500 clients worldwide.