

# Employee Wellness More Than a Buzzword in HEAnet and EduCampus

**Susie Leacy, People Operations Director at HEAnet and EduCampus, on improving the employee experience while working remotely.**

HEAnet CLG, Ireland's National Education and Research Network, was incorporated in November 1997 and provides Internet connectivity and associated ICT services to education and research organisations throughout Ireland, including all primary and post-primary schools. HEAnet's vision is enabling Ireland's digital ambition and its mission is delivering common, repeatable, shareable solutions for all of education.

EduCampus Services was set up in April 2015 by the Higher Education Authority as a subsidiary company of HEAnet CLG. EduCampus' vision is to empower higher education through quality IT shared services. It is an education sector shared service that provides business critical ICT application services and Management Information Systems (MIS) systems to the Higher Education and Research sectors in Ireland. Together, HEAnet and EduCampus form the HEAnet Group.

## SUPPORTING PEOPLE

"The COVID-19 pandemic changed how we do our business on a day-to-day basis. Not seeing our colleagues and clients face-to-face has been challenging and something that we are all looking forward to reconnecting with," says Susie Leacy, People Operations Director at HEAnet and EduCampus.

"Both HEAnet and EduCampus had contingencies in place, which supported us adjusting and our teams adapted without disruption to our services. A key priority has been providing support to our people, who are at the centre of what we do, during this time. This has been advocated and championed by the HEAnet CEO, Ronan Byrne, EduCampus CEO, Paddy Naughton and our Senior Leadership Teams, which has helped foster our strong focus on wellbeing."



Susie Leacy,  
People Operations Director, HEAnet and EduCampus

## SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS

"Despite COVID-19, 2021 has been a significant year of achievement for both HEAnet and EduCampus. Both companies have successfully grown their client community while maintaining a strong focus on our people," Leacy adds.

HEAnet worked closely with their clients and various stakeholders on many initiatives which were aligned to the HEAnet strategic themes of connectivity, security, identity, brokerage and research engagement. Key highlights for HEAnet include introducing over 180 new eduroam Wi-Fi locations, significant progress in the Research Engagement space and continuous growth of the HEAnet Brokerage Services that generate savings of approximately €7.34 million annually across the education and research sector.

EduCampus supported the formation of new multi-campus Technological Universities, aligning their systems to ensure their future success. Key highlights for EduCampus include working in partnership with Higher Education Institutes on their journey to establish the new Technological Universities, implementing new contracts to ensure the future success of EduCampus clients, as well as migrating and upgrading the main enterprise systems to modern, cloud-based environments for all EduCampus clients.

## FOCUS ON WELLBEING

"Wellbeing and health is a huge passion area for my colleague Niamh Dawson (our Workplace Experience Coordinator) and I," states Leacy. "We have been developing our Wellbeing culture over the last number of years in particular after we joined the Ibec Keep Well Mark in 2016. When COVID-19 landed, we had a strong foundation around wellbeing. Throughout 2021, we reiterated that we are not 'Working from Home', we are all 'At home during a crisis, trying to work' and the personal, mental, and emotional health of our people is always the most important thing."

The wellbeing calendar they have developed focuses on different themes throughout the year, with monthly newsletters outlining the initiatives and supports in place over the coming weeks. From increasing the number of Mental Health First Aiders, to encouraging outdoor meetings, every effort was made to make positive changes across the organisation, as well as offering virtual supports such as yoga, parenting supports and financial advice.

"Our approach to wellbeing and health is more than our planning or initiatives, we are building a culture where we encourage all to focus on and prioritise their wellbeing and health and that of their colleagues. We see this as a journey and while we have more to do to embed this further, we are pleased with what has been accomplished and are looking forward to enhancing this over the coming years."

## YEAR AHEAD

"HEAnet and EduCampus achieved a lot in 2021, which could not have been achieved without our people and all their efforts and dedication. Our focus on wellbeing and health is our commitment to our people; our appreciation for all they achieve for HEAnet and EduCampus.

"We will continue to work closely with our clients, with the Department of Education, and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science to develop and



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Workplace Experience Coordinator, HEAnet and EduCampus.

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leverage the national asset that is the HEAnet and EduCampus," says Leacy.

"We appreciate that like other organisations many are fatigued from the pandemic. In the first part of the year, we will be focusing on supporting adequate capacity across both HEAnet and EduCampus. As we move into hybrid working, supporting wellbeing during this transition is a priority as well as initiatives around mindfulness, resilience, activity challenges, and regular wellness related webinars are on the agenda."