

## Case study: Tideway “Tribes” #InItTogether – Improving Mental Health

### Summary

As the COVID-19 pandemic spread and the UK Government announced a national lockdown, the importance of staying connected, whilst working remotely, was brought into sharper focus.

Whilst our colleagues on our construction sites continued to work with additional measures in place to minimise the risks from the virus, our office staff were required to work from home.

The Tideway Mental Health Working Group considered ways to ensure colleagues could replicate the “water cooler” moments and stay connected with each other, albeit virtually. The group recognised that the challenges being faced by individuals could create a sense of isolation and feeling alone in facing these challenges.

In response, the group launched the Tideway #InItTogether Tribes. Colleagues in similar situations could meet to connect and chat in a safe and supportive space. By bringing together individuals with similar challenges the Tribes were intended to show that the feelings and emotions of dealing with these challenges were also being faced by others in similar circumstances. Opportunities and coping mechanisms could be shared creating a sense of togetherness.



Tribes were established for the following groups:

- Struggling with working from home
- Adjusting to 24/7 with your partner
- Living on your own
- Sharing a space with housemates
- Acting as a carer
- Single parents
- Expecting a child in lockdown
- Parents with young children
- Parents with teenagers
- Support on furlough leave

There were voluntary hosts for each of the Tribes and they met as frequently as the group decided. Employees were encouraged to get involved with a Tribe and/or create a new Tribe if they didn't find one that quite suited them and their situation or interest.

Other activity groups soon emerged, including:

- Sport chatter
- Walking and talking
- Baking and home cooking

Post-lockdown a few of the Tribes have concluded as they were only useful during the lockdown months; however, many have continued so our employees still have that safe space and newfound friendships to chat, share and support each other.