

Entrant company name: **23red**

Entry title: **Mumentum**

Category: **Education Campaign**

Brief, objectives and budget

Nearly two-thirds of mothers want to retrain for a new career, yet face systemic barriers: childcare costs, inflexible options, confidence loss, and parent guilt.

To address these challenges The Open University launched Mumentum, positioning the OU as an advocate for societal change that empowers mothers and primary caregivers.

Our objective was to increase salience and consideration amongst mothers and primary caregivers by showing that flexible study with the OU can help “Mums” move forward and explore their career options. We developed a campaign mantra: In a world where mothers are too often held back, the OU backs them to go further.

The idea, research and planning

We uncovered that while two-thirds of mothers want to retrain, systemic barriers – from childcare costs and rigid schedules to confidence loss and parent guilt – leave many feeling stuck.

The Open University (OU) was the natural choice to change that narrative and become the frontline champion for mothers who refuse to be held back, proving that flexible online education is the key to unlocking their potential. Our deep dive into mothers’ realities revealed a workforce brimming with ambition but clearly frustrated with a large portion of women that simply felt ‘stuck’ in their career, but with limited options now that they have parenting responsibilities added to their workload.

Strategy, creativity and innovation

We worked with OU academics and subject matter experts to conduct an evidence review of the existing barriers and respond with two practical toolkits as educational resources, one to support parents/primary caregivers on their return to work, the other to educate employers on genuinely welcoming them back.

This academic strength powered a game-changing partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), rolling out toolkits, training to over 650 Jobcentre+ sites with 300 work coaches live trained through webinars, digital pamphlets and posters distributed across GB. To make sure we truly had a UK-wide impact, the Department for Communities in Northern Ireland was also included and part of our campaign, extending our reach to 35 Job & Benefits offices across NI.

We launched the toolkits at a Westminster event that set the tone for change, where Minister Alison McGovern called the OU-DWP partnership a “match made in heaven.” The panel, featuring leading voices such as Justine Roberts (Mumsnet), Joeli Brearley (Pregnant Then Screwed) and author Tobi Asare (My Bump Pay), challenged outdated stigmas and called for change. Following the event, 10 influencers (such as Emily Clarkson, Louise Boyce, Bolaji Omisade and Farah Mehnaz), extended the conversation online, directing thousands to the toolkits and reinforcing the OU’s position as a trusted ally for mothers and primary caregivers returning to work.

Delivery/implementation of tactics

We launched the ‘Mumentum’ campaign with a simple truth at its heart, that mothers and primary caregivers should never have to choose between parenting and progression.

Phase I – Awareness: We created a disruptive visual stunt, hijacking parenting symbols in England, Scotland, Wales and N Ireland such as baby-changing rooms, pram access signs and adding mortarboard caps to signal: Mothers aren’t just carers, they’re graduates, leaders and innovators.

We recruited influential voices like Joeli Brearley (Pregnant Then Screwed) and Anna Mathur to take to their social channels to share images of the stunt on social media and discuss the research and turn Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and TikTok into spaces for honest, raw conversations. They drove mothers to the OU’s Mumentum hub, packed with free courses and real stories of mothers who have successfully upskilled and retrained with the OU and rewritten their futures.

Phase II – Action: Phase I sparked overwhelming response, proving this was a topic people were passionate about. the ‘motherhood penalty’ is a reality many women face and are already campaigning to change. So, we didn’t want to stop there.

We knew that inspiring mothers and primary caregivers to return to studying and gain new qualifications wasn’t enough if they would then face discrimination in the workplace so, for Phase II, we doubled down on delivering real-world solutions.

Measurement, evaluation and impact

The campaign reached over 3.5 million people across paid, owned and shared channels, with a further 29.4 million earned media reach through PR amplification. LinkedIn spotlighted the campaign through its #ConversationsThatMatter series, sharing expert insights from our Westminster event. Authentic advocacy by more than 10 influencers drove 89,000 engagements at an engagement rate of 2.5% – more than double the sector benchmark.

The Return-to-Work Toolkits resonated strongly as educational tools, attracting nearly 6,000 unique users - including 82% parents and 18% employers – and generating over 30,000 visits to the campaign microsite. Notably, 1 in 5 landing page visitors accessed a toolkit, and 1 in 10 toolkit users explored OU courses and resources, a clear demonstration of conversion through the funnel.

The DWP partnership scaled our impact nationally: toolkits were embedded in more than 650 JobCentres (with 300+ Work Coaches trained) across Great Britain, and in 35 Jobs & Benefits offices in Northern Ireland. This unlocked direct access to 1.5-2 million active users, one in five of whom are parents – equivalent to more than 400,000 jobseekers in England and 8,000 in Northern Ireland benefitting from real-world support. The partnership has been extended through 2026, ensuring Mumentum continues to support mothers and primary caregivers across the UK, while paving the way for further purpose-led campaigns with the potential to deliver lasting social impact.

Notably, the campaign shifted perceptions. The OU's brand tracker showed awareness that "the OU is supporting returning mothers" peaking at 26% among mothers of 0–5s in Q2 2025 – a +9pp uplift above the overall average.