

People on the Move: new appointments in the North East

Newcastle law firm Muckle LLP has appointed six new trainee solicitors, taking its total number of trainees to 13.

The new intake of trainees will complete two years of training at Muckle, splitting their time into six-month stints across practice areas including corporate finance, commercial, property, employment, dispute resolution, banking, and construction.

The new cohort is made up of Northumbria University graduates Tom Seed, Katharine Ronn and Jess Gray, Durham University graduate Cameron Horton, and Sophie Cragg and Georgia Barber, from Newcastle University.

Muckle managing partner Jason Wainwright said: “We’re committed to growth, and it’s important to us that we invest in the future. Our people are at the heart of everything we do, so we concentrate on attracting, developing, and supporting talented people.”

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(Image: Virgin Money)

Ms Wilkinson will join Virgin Money from Thomson Reuters, where she is the chief information officer and head of TR Labs, Thomson Reuters' technology research and innovation centres worldwide. She has previously worked at NHS Digital, The Home Office and at a range of top financial services companies.

She said: "Virgin Money's digital transformation journey is well underway. I'm delighted to join the bank at this exciting time to help deliver its strategic ambition to be the UK's best digital bank and bring innovative new customer propositions to market to support its growth ambitions."

Virgin Money CEO David Duffy said: "Sarah brings leadership expertise in delivering change, innovation and digital customer experience, and has a strong track record of digital transformation. Along with her extensive knowledge of financial services, this will enable us to build on the good progress we've made in aligning our customer touchpoints, operations and technology, as we focus on continually improving the services we provide to customers."

Solicitor Sophie Fletcher has taken up a rural role with North East law firm Hay & Kilner.



Sophie Fletcher with Joanne Milne, partner in the private client team at Hay & Kilner
(Image: Footprints PR/Hay and Kilner)

Ms Fletcher, who grew up in a farming family on Teesside, graduated from Northumbria University in 2020, and will specialise in rural and farming business property work.

She said: “Much of my work so far has focused on residential property, but with my farming background, I’ve always had an interest in rural property matters and this new role is a great opportunity to combine both areas. Farming and rural businesses face their own unique set of circumstances and challenges when it comes to managing property assets, and with so much change within the sector at the moment too, there’s a great and growing need for the advice and guidance we provide.”

Joanne Milne, partner in the private client team at Hay &

Kilner, said: “Sophie is a talented solicitor who has both the legal expertise and personal knowledge that our farming and rural clients require, and it’s great to be bringing her on to our growing team.”

Accountancy and business advisory firm Haines Watts has welcomed 35 new trainees to the firm, including six in its Newcastle office.

To welcome the new team members, the graduates were invited to a regional induction at the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales headquarters in London, where they met peers from around the group and heard from trainees and partners on their career progression.

Regional people manager in the North, John Yeoman, said: “The day was a brilliant opportunity for our new graduates to meet with each other, it was so exciting to know that some of the connections and friendships they made will last throughout their careers.

“At Haines Watts, our values of show passion, be authentic and value relationships shine through in everything that we do. We wanted our graduates to feel this from the very start of their careers, bringing them together at the ICAEW in central London was the perfect opportunity to do this.”

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