

People on the move: top North East appointments and promotions of the week

Haines Watts has expanded its corporate finance team in Newcastle to meet growing demand.

Alex Glennie and Rebecca Patterson have joined the team as corporate finance trainee and corporate finance executive respectively to support the team with growing demand for its services. The new starters come as Chris Hird, corporate finance team lead was promoted to partner, and Lee Jefferson to corporate finance manager.

Mr Hird said: "Our team are working on a number of significant transactions and I am looking forward to delivering these through to completion in 2023. In addition, the pipeline of future work is strong and I am looking forward to these projects coming online. When I first moved to Haines Watts I was a one-man corporate finance team, so I am really proud with the growth of the service line and the quality of the team we have built."



Mick Laffey has joined Burnetts
(Image: Burnetts)

Mick Laffey has joined **Burnetts** at Dean Street as legal director in the serious injuries department, specialising in cases where people have suffered catastrophic injuries. Mr Laffey is a former chair of the Newcastle Trainee Solicitors' Group and for 15 years has been a senior litigator for APIL – the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers.

He has built a reputation for his work in numerous serious injury cases, fighting for clients who have suffered brain, spinal or amputation injuries. He said: "I wasn't really looking for a new job but I was so impressed with how professional and friendly the company is and how it operates at such a high level that I knew I wanted to be part of it. This is a great opportunity and I am really looking forward to being part of such a fast-growing department."



Jen Hallam, business development director, and Rachel Sweeney, film and content director at Gardiner Richardson's studio in Newcastle

(Image: Gardiner Richardson)

Newcastle-based brand communications agency **Gardiner Richardson** is marking its 25th anniversary with two new hires. The business, set up in 1998 by Lucy Gardiner and Darren Richardson, has enlisted former ITV News Tyne Tees journalist Rachel Sweeney as film and content director. Jen Hallam, former associate director at Manchester creative communications agency Tangerine, joins as business development director.

Other new starters include Kirsty McNaught, formerly of Tyne Rivers Trust and Darlington Borough Council as senior PR manager, and content manager Matthew Thomas formerly with Allies Group and editor of NE1 Get into Newcastle. Steve Jackson re-joined as content manager last year, having left the firm in 2002 to spend much of the past two decades working in Vietnam in senior communications roles with international

charities.

Co-founder Lucy Gardiner said: “Now we’re 25, we’ve been reflecting on what got us here and how it will shape where we go next. We’ve always focused on bringing people together through ideas, stories, brands and businesses and we know this mindset will put us in a strong position to take on whatever the next 25 years brings.”



Alison Thompson of Seaward

(Image: Seaward)

County Durham electrical test and measurement company **Seaward** has announced several senior appointments.

Alison Thompson has been appointed as HR Manager at the Peterlee based group, in a new role that will see her become part of the senior leadership team, while Andrew Simpson joins as business development manager for Calibrationhouse, which provides specialist services for electronic, optical and dimensional test equipment.

In the US, Gregory Jung has been appointed national business development manager of Rigel Medical, to expand the brand's operations across North America. Elsewhere, Seaward UK has promoted Gregg Brown to commercial director and John Madden becomes operations director.

CEO Chris Callan said: "Our investment in talented people is the linchpin of providing top quality products and services to customers right across the world. We look forward to both continuing to grow their careers at Seaward and contributing significantly to our future success."



(L-R) CEO Jon Dudgeon and Chairman Dave Gibson.

(Image: Dan Aziz)

Cloud accountancy firm **Blu Sky Chartered Accountants** has appointed a chairman to help accelerate its UK wide growth. Co-founder Dave Gibson has stepped down from his position as CEO and taken on the role of chairman, 14 years after launching the North Shields business with Jon Dudgeon, who has now moved from the role of CFO to take up the CEO position.

It is hoped the move will facilitate a further 20% increase in turnover in the next 12 months. Mr Gibson said: "We've always run our board in a structured manner and we are great at holding people accountable. However, as we continue to grow and as the legislations that we operate in become more complex, there was a genuine need for a role to focus on governance as we go forward. Blu Sky is in more than capable hands with Jon Dudgeon as CEO, Steven Robinson as COO and a management team who are far more of an age with our clients. The whole team has so much drive and ambition to keep us ahead of the game in our own industry."

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