# Linear News



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# **OUR FINAL 2023 NEWSLETTER**



Welcome to the end of year Linear Recruitment newsletter publication. For Linear, 2023 has been another extremely busy, productive and at times, challenging year as we grapple with inflation, higher interest rates, salary/wage increases and a continued candidate skills shortage. Generally, 2023 has been a testing year in the labour market with permanent hiring dropping and temporary hiring flat. In the Construction Industry permanent hiring has experienced the steepest rate of decline out of all sectors and there has also been a decline in temporary hiring in the industry.

However, although it has been a challenging year at Linear, we have actually bucked the trend. Our perm fee billings have increased by 6% on 2022 and in the construction sector, temp fee margin has increased by 15%. This is testament to the hard work of our amazing employees, not only this year, but in previous years. We also are working with quality clients, both long-standing and new and we have an extensive database of loyal, hardworking and reliable candidates to call on which has all contributed to the positive performance.

From talking to our clients many believe that next year they will be coming back into the labour market or increasing activity. There are signs the construction market is starting to move in the right direction and a recent rise in planning approvals indicates this. As a company we are feeling very positive about next year. We have just completed our budgets for 2024 and we are forecasting a 15% growth in gross margin which is basically coming from current operations. The expectation is that come January we expect to be extremely busy.

As a company we are always looking at how we can improve, whether that be technology, people or working methods and this year we have made improvements on all fronts. One major project is the introduction of a new CRM system. As well as a substantial monetary investment the implementation has taken up a vast amount of man hours from all our staff but going forward the new system will make us more efficient, improve our working practices, make the registration/job application smoother for candidates, and take our marketing function to another level.

We have also invested in our wonderful teams this year. In Manchester we recruited a new Branch Manager in Gary Jones who has since recruited new staff to add to his team, we also have a white collar perm and contract Consultant starting in January which will compliment the trades team that we have in the North West. The future of our Manchester office is a really exciting prospect. The Architecture team has also grown this year and we have exciting plans in place for further expansion next year and beyond. Our Rail | Power | Infrastructure division has increased in numbers from five to eight, enabling the division to cover more areas in the sectors that we work in. The Company has also added to the construction teams in Newcastle and Sheffield and also our Industrial division. This puts us in a strong position to push on next year and again grow as a company whilst serving all our clients' and candidates' needs as we do.

At Linear we work with local charities and also give back to the community by sponsoring a number of sports teams. This year our annual charity event was a fantastic success. All our staff were involved in a cycle challenge which resulted in us cycling a combined 2000 miles in five working days and raising £2000 for two charities: TOFS and Daft as a Brush. You can read more about this on the next page.

Another success story has been the EOT. This is the first full year that the company has been owned by the EOT which enables staff to have a say in the running of the company. They have successfully implemented a number of changes this year, from working hours to an increase in recycling. The EOT really enables the staff to buy into the company and enables us to give something back to our wonderful people.

Finally, I do hope that you enjoy the newsletter and find it informative. If you require any information or advice, please feel free to contact one of our offices.

Gareth Tomkins Managing Director

# **CHARITY NEWS**

In September we embarked upon our annual charity event, and this year it was to cycle the distance across our offices between John O'Groats to Land's End - a mere 1,000 miles. We were also awarding prizes to the office with the most miles and the person with the most individual miles, just as a little incentive!

It was clear after the first day that energy levels were high and we managed to cover just over 400 miles between us with the Newcastle office taking an early lead. After a second successful day, we managed to take the total to over 800 miles so we decided to increase the challenge and double it, cycling the distance from John O'Groats to Land's End and then back again. After day 3 the Sheffield office took the lead, which they then managed to keep a hold of for the rest of the challenge.

At the end of the week, we'd cycled an incredible 2002 miles between us, and a huge congratulations goes to Grant Patterson who clocked up the most miles, cycling 315 miles across the week. Breaking the offices down; Newcastle cycled 885 miles, Sheffield 1,017 miles and Manchester 100 miles.

The participation levels were really impressive and a massive thank you to everyone who took part in the challenge.

More importantly, we were doing this to try and raise as much as we possibly could for our two nominated charities for 2023; TOFS and Daft as a Brush Cancer Patient Care. Daft as a Brush provide a free transport service to and from the Freeman/RVI Hospitals in Newcastle for outpatients undergoing chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy treatment. We've got personal experience of the service they offer, and we'd love to raise lots for them.

TOFS offers support to people born with Tracheo-Oesophageal Fistula (TOF) and/or Oesophageal Atresia (OA), rare congenital malformations of the gullet and windpipe. Immediate neonatal surgery is a treatment, not a complete cure. TOFS are UK-based and receive no publicsector support. Linear's Elliot Birtwistle has a child affected by the condition, and has had lots of support from this amazing charity.





We're incredibly proud to say that we managed to raise an incredible £1964 in the end which is just brilliant. Thank you to each and every person that donated to us, we're so grateful.





Gareth Tomkins kicks us off



Grant Patterson



Alex Wasawo and Ashley Kelly



Gareth Arnold and Alex Moth

Geoff Taylor and Marc Cameron



Scott Morton, Joe Poste, Ryan Hayes, Gareth Tomkins, Jack James, Ashley Kelly, Alex Wasawo, Megan Hopkins, Emma Fitzgibbons and Lily Turner

## **WELCOME TO ISHITHA KASHIM**



In October we welcomed Ishitha Kashim to our thriving Architecture division as a Senior Recruitment Consultant and she has hit the ground running. Here we take some time to get her thoughts on the Architecture sector, as well as to get to know her better.

#### Tell us a little bit about yourself

After completing my BA and MA in Interior Architecture and Design, I embarked on a career as an Interior Designer with a prestigious London-based studio. Specialising in high-end luxury designs, I was working on super-prime mansions for celebrities, including footballers and members of the Royal Family. However, as all things changed in both my professional and personal life, I had to embark on a new path to ensure I could continue to progress but also remain involved in a space that I love.

This realisation led me to transition into the role of a Recruitment Consultant, specialising in the engineering division. Focusing on Building Services, Architecture, and Interior Design, I successfully established a 360 desk, becoming the sole consultant generating revenue for the Architecture and Interiors sector. Leveraging my extensive background in Interior Architecture and Design, I developed a keen understanding of clients' needs, drawing from my own experiences navigating interview stages and familiarity with various styles and software.

Having recently relocated to Newcastle, my priority was to align myself with a company emphasizing Construction and Architecture. I wanted to also join a team who shared a similar background or was actively recruiting within the Architecture industry - hence my decision to join Linear.

#### What does your role at Linear involve?

At Linear, I serve as a 360 Consultant within the Architecture division, working alongside Elliot (Birtwistle) and extending my reach across the southern region. My focus is on growing and strengthening both existing and new relationships with clients and candidates down South.

#### How do you think the Architecture sector is performing and how do you see it going in the next couple of years?

The current state of the Architecture sector appears stable, with recruitment playing a significant role. The impact of Brexit has been substantial, leading many RIBAqualified Architects to relocate abroad, creating a challenging market in the UK. Despite these challenges, I anticipate a thriving market. There's a clear demand, and I anticipate a busy period ahead.

### What do you find the most challenging aspect of your role at Linear?

Adjusting to the Newcastle accent might pose an interesting challenge! All jokes aside, rebuilding a desk and navigating a new database can be demanding, as well as establishing a rapport with a new set of clients.

### What three words would you use to describe Linear Recruitment?

Supportive, exciting and friendly.

#### What do you like most about Linear?

The support from everyone has been exceptional. Moving from down south to Newcastle Geoff (Taylor) and Elliot have been super helpful in guiding me every step of the way. From day one, Elliot provided PSLs for me to work on, allowing me to seamlessly dive into my new role. Thanks to his help, I successfully placed someone within my first 6 weeks at Linear.

### Any advice to candidates looking to make their next career move?

It's essential to assess your comfort level and the potential for growth in your current position. If you find that there's no more room for progression or the role is no longer challenging, it might be the right time to consider making a move. I recommend keeping an eye out for all new opportunities and having interviews at companies that you may not always consider, it may just be the job you've been looking for in the end.

#### What do you like to do outside of work?

Beyond my professional life, I have a passion for travel and discovering new places, especially trying out new food spots. This year, I'm thankful to have visited some new places: Fethiye (Turkey), Dubai, Lanzarote, Brussels and Edinburgh. Traveling is a huge motivation for excelling in my job!

### If you were stuck on an island what three things would you bring?

My prescripted sunglasses, a survival guide and a solar powered water proof device!

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# **EOT UPDATE**

Linear Recruitment moved into an Employee Ownership Trust in September 2022 for three main reasons:

- To reward our loyal and hardworking employees
- To give the company stability moving forward with ownership succession that preserves the business and its culture
- To give our employees a voice on the board enabling a clear and collaborative way of working

The EOT Board is made up of Company Chairman Adam Turner, Operations Director Geoff Taylor, a Non-Executive, and a Linear Employee Representative.

Since the company made the transition, the EOT Board has met up regularly to review the performance of the business as a whole and to work on subjects raised by our staff members via the Employee Representative.

Notable changes made have been:

- We've reduced our standard operating hours to allow a more flexible approach to the working day, without impacting on the service provided to our Clients and Candidates
- We've reviewed our Rewards & Benefits packages enabling us to further increase our candidate attraction and retention performance
- We've agreed and implemented a new CRM system allowing us to improve our service provision to our Client and Candidate base
- We've agreed upon the latest destination for our annual weekend away for our top performers this time, Barcelona!



We are delighted with the move to the Employee Ownership Trust so far and look forward to further progress across 2024. At this point we would like to thank the outgoing Employee Representative Joe Poste for his hard work and contributions across 2023 and look forward to welcoming Scott Morton into the role for 2024.

# SPORTING UPDATES



Congratulations to our Operations Director Geoff Taylor who completed the Kielder Half Marathon in October and managed an incredible time of 1h30m58s, a new PB! Secretly we know he's a little gutted not to have broken the sub 1 hour 30 minute mark, but given Kielder's undulating course, we know that record will be broken soon.

Well done Geoff!



We're also delighted to be a proud sponsor of Caribbean Angels U14s for their current season and how amazing do they look in their new Linear kits?



Linear is now also the very proud sponsor of Middlewood Rovers JFC under 9 blues. The sponsorship is extra special for Linear as our MD Gareth's son Harry plays for the team.

Good luck for the season ahead!

# **INDUSTRIAL NEWS**

Christmas spirit is certainly in full swing at Linear Industrial's Sheffield site.

We've had our annual Christmas jumper day, our Christmas night out, a chocolate coin giveaway and we're looking forward to having more fun with our Very Merry Lottery, Wear-Christmas-Socks-to-Work Day, Find the Reindeer competition, Christmas fashion day and much more.

We've also had some end of year awards and would like to say a huge congratulations to our winners.



L-R Spiros, Evelina and Kasia

Spiros Shengjergji won a couple of awards; People's Choice (which was voted for by Linear colleagues) and Employee of the Year. Spiros has been with us for the last two years and he fitted in right from the start. He's quickly adapted to life as a Co-ordinator and is a valuable member of the team, and goes above and beyond. He is an absolute pleasure to work with, professional, fun and has a great personality. Well done Spiros!

Congratulations to Evelina Jakimova who has won the 2023 Special Recognition Award. Evelina began working for Linear in 2018, and during this time, she has worked within the Industrial Department, Power and Utilities and then moved back again to Industrial. Her performance, attitude, and commitment to all of these roles has been amazing and she has proved herself to be a fantastic team player. She took on the role of Account Manager under difficult circumstances and has helped to cement our relationship with one of our largest clients.

Congratulations also to Kasia Rick who has won the People's Choice Award for 2023. Kasia has worked with us since 2019 and she has laid the groundwork for where we are today; her dedication towards our client Frasers and our colleagues is second to none. She has developed into a wonderful and valued team member which is why, with good reason, her Linear colleagues have voted to give her this award.

This year has thrown some challenges at Industrial, starting with a big tender process at the start of the year. After a successful tender we then welcomed new colleagues to our Sheffield team and introduced new shift patterns. We just want to say a huge thank you to the Sheffield team for all their efforts and especially at this busy period. The hard work and dedication shown by all of the staff has allowed us to successfully complete this year on a high! Thank you.



### **STAFF UPDATES**

There have been some new faces added to the Linear teams over the last six months.

Our Newcastle team welcomed Ishitha Kashim to the Architecture sector as a Senior Recruitment Consultant in October and she's fitted right in and is off to a flying start. She'll be focusing on recruiting across the Southern region of the UK. Matt Cassady joined the Newcastle office in November, and will be working on Construction and Civils roles across the North East.

In our Sheffield office Saphia joined our Rail | Power | Infrastructure team. Saphia will be focusing on Trades and Labour roles across the Power sector, working with Joe Poste.

We are pleased to announce that Justinas Sakavicius has been promoted to Senior Co-ordinator at Linear Industrial & Engineering. Justinas has demonstrated incredible growth and development and offered amazing support to his team. We appreciate the efforts put in by him and know that he will continue to take up the new challenges with the same enthusiasm in the future. Congratulations Justinas and we wish you the best of luck in your new role. We've also two new permanent faces in Industrial, Gintare Elezi and Kristina Pavlikova, who are both working as Co-ordinators on our team.

### **DELIVERING JOY**

We're delighted to once again be able to contribute towards Dunelm's brilliant Delivering Joy Christmas campaign, helping to Deliver Joy to people in the local community who might otherwise go without.

We've also had our special Little Helper below drop off some of the gifts,





### STARS OF THE QUARTERS



Our Star of the Quarter for Quarter 3 was none other than our returning hero Ryan Hayes. Ryan returned to the Linear family in April this year and had an immediate and significant impact resulting in a stellar third quarter, supporting our Construction clients across Yorkshire with quality permanent staff.

Awesome work Ryan! You can learn more about Ryan, his role at Linear and what he's done previously in the interview we've done with him on page 9.

Well done to our other nominees too, Laura Wilson, Morgan Burgess and Alex Wasawo. Great work all round.



Our Star of the Quarter for Quarter 4 is our Payroll Administrator Lily Turner.

Lily has been instrumental in helping the company integrate our new CRM system which, as expected, has thrown many obstacles and hitches at her from a payroll perspective but she has dealt with these in a calm and confident manner and worked extremely hard to make the changeover a successful one.

Not only has she had the CRM integration to deal with but the weekly payroll has been on the increase over the last three months and her work ethic has been exemplary to deal with this.

Congratulation Lily this is thoroughly deserved.

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# **ARCHITECTURE SALARY SURVEY**

#### LINEAR RECRUITMENT ARCHITECTURE SALARY SURVEY

recruitment



forg with the value of a work life balance and flexibility, obstry salary is a priority for overall job satisfaction, and with seeing again how important the company culture is, allowed 80% of responses water raised as other a 4 or 5 on the work life balance. When shall be considered with the same state of the same state of the same state of the area with life balance. When shall be considered with a substrate paople are happy in their role, SSK of respondence area, a 3% observance compared to late year's result.



We recently conducted our second Architecture & Design salary survey and we're really excited to be able to present this data. We hope it provides invaluable insight into the sector pay and conditions as well as help gauge overall job satisfaction, helping us to learn what matters most to candidates in terms of their overall job package.

To produce this report, we've combined our own data on placements we have made the last year, vacancies we 've been working on, along with the results from the external salary survey that we created, sending the survey out to candidates on our database along with distributing it across our social channels.

We believe this report will help us continue to improve our service levels and give us a greater understanding of our market, enabling us to serve our clients and candidates better and better. It will help us to ensure we work with the best clients and place the best candidates in roles that are well-remunerated and where job satisfaction is paramount.



To download a copy of our report, then please click here or you can scan the QR code below.

Alternatively, you can contact one of our offices and we'll happily email it to you or pop a copy in the post. If you have any questions or feedback, we'd love to hear from you; just get in touch with us.



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### LET'S MEET RYAN HAYES



Ryan Hayes rejoined Linear in April this year and has had an immediate and significant impact, even winning Star of the Quarter for Quarter 3 this year. His role is focused on supporting our Construction clients across Yorkshire with quality Permanent Staff.

#### Tell us a bit about yourself

I kind of fell into the world of recruitment. Having returned from a month travelling through Asia, I needed to find a new role. I applied for several, and after speaking to various Recruitment Consultants, I thought that's a job I could do, so I set my sights on securing a role in recruitment and within a sector that I genuinely had a passion for.

My recruitment journey started back in 2007 when I joined my first company as a Trainee Recruitment Consultant supplying Trades & Labour (I still remember my first placement from all those years ago) and the recruitment buzz got me, and 16 years later I'm still enjoying it, albeit looking a little greyer on top!

#### Can you tell us about your history with Linear?

During my first stint at Linear Recruitment (2012 - 2015), I joined the rail department supplying blue and white collar workers throughout the UK – it was a very demanding role working 7 days a week (sometimes days and nights) but also a very rewarding one which enabled me to save enough money to put down a deposit on my home. The lure of the Construction industry was too much so I decided to accept a new opportunity elsewhere supplying freelance white collar personnel which then lead onto to me focusing on building a new permanent desk from scratch for the Yorkshire region.

After a buyout of the company I was working for by a London-based agency, I wanted to follow heart and roots as a Yorkshireman and return to work for Linear who has an excellent reputation within the region, so having returned in April 2023, I'm currently a Senior Consultant suppling permanent staff to various Contractors throughout the Yorkshire region and enjoying my time here once again.

#### How do you think Linear has changed in that time?

It was nice to be welcomed back by some familiar faces – who like a fine wine, have aged well, but like any good company to work for Linear has the right principles and values in place which has enabled them to be successful. The biggest difference however, Linear Recruitment is now an Employee Ownership Trust, which means the employees have become owners of the company we work for. The other big plus is the 16:30 finish on a Friday!

How do you think the construction sector is performing, and how do you think it will perform as we move into 2024 and 2025?

UK interest rates are at their highest level for fifteen years and according to recent press articles, the number of companies going bust this year is on track to be the highest since the depths of the financial crisis in 2009. Construction is usually one of the first sectors to feel an economic downturn and one of the last to recover. In the past 3 months, the construction sector saw the sharpest increase in companies facing critical distress with an increase of 46%. Inflation levels are still expected to be above 5% at the end of the year, and 3-4% by mid-2024, above the Government's 2% target. We are however seeing government investment increasing in areas such as education facilities, health and prison facilities, transport infrastructure and the number of planning approvals has also been rising particularly in large new housing developments, where the value stood at almost £4billion, 79% higher than the same period last year. We are also seeing a surge in planning approvals for health-related construction projects and industrial buildings so I'm more optimistic about the near-future for the industry, despite a recent industry decline due to material and labour supply shortages.

### What do you find the most challenging aspect of your role at Linear?

The most challenging aspect of my role is sourcing the top talent that every company strives for. Gone are the days where you can put ads out for roles and expect 5-6 good candidates to apply. Now you have to actively 'headhunt', 'approach' and present opportunities to them.

### What three words would you use to describe Linear Recruitment?

Approachable, hardworking and honest.

#### What do you like to do outside of work?

Most of my time is spent tidying up after my one year who is very messy (she gets it from her mother's side), but I love my sports, watching football, playing golf and most recently heading back into the gym to get rid of the dad bod I've developed.

### If you were stuck on an island what three things would you bring?

My pillow - I need my beauty sleep.

An unlimited supply of Cadbury's Turkish Delight.

And dependant on location, either Factor 50 suncream (otherwise I'd look like a lobster) or my woolly golf hat to keep my big ears warm!

<u>ryan.hayes@linearrecruitment.co.uk</u> 07749 494 969 Hardworking

# Integrity

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# Uncomplicated

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