



IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST

MORE THAN ACCOUNTING MACHINES
NORTH WEST
CULTURE REPORT

2022



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IN OUR 2022 CULTURE REPORT?

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

We aim to always be straight-talking but like with any culture, we've developed our own language. This is an overview of the acronyms we use throughout this document.

- ▶ AMP: Achieving my potential – our people development organisational framework
- ▶ BAME: Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups
- ▶ BUILD: BDO business strategy which stands for - Brand, Unifying Culture, International, Leading our Markets, Digital
- ▶ CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility
- ▶ EiC: Early in careers
- ▶ PEOPLE PROPOSITION: Our internal reference to the 'contract' between BDO as an employer, and each of our current and future employees. It 'contracts' the mutual expectations – what BDO will do for its people, and what it expects from each person in return.
- ▶ RI: Responsible Individual
- ▶ WORKABLE: The name of our Agile Working Framework.

FOREWORD

FROM ED DWAN, MANAGING PARTNER BDO NORTH WEST

CULTURE IS THE ALMOST INTANGIBLE CULMINATION OF THE IDEAS, VALUES AND BEHAVIOUR OF A GROUP. IN OTHER WORDS, IT'S NOT SO MUCH WHAT YOU DO, BUT THE WAY THAT YOU DO IT.

BDO launched our UK Culture Report to help us navigate the sometimes relentlessly changeable backdrop and guide our decision making. The report sets out what we are doing to adapt to ensure we are fulfilling our core purpose of 'helping you succeed' and achieving the best outcomes for everybody.

The 2022 North West Culture Report zooms in on BDO's culture in the region. We created it to give the insights you need to ensure you are choosing the right place to build your career and to showcase the people and personalities, which make our business tick.

In the North West, BDO has a vision to be 'the best firm in town.' We believe this means having the best clients which are advised by the very best people. Our promise is to support our team in their careers and personal development to help them succeed – whatever that means to them. Our 'town' is two cities, Manchester and Liverpool, where we have recently refurbished offices in the heart of the centres.

Our clients are from all corners of the region and beyond from some of the largest companies to early start-ups; typically, entrepreneurial and dynamic businesses that we can help achieve their longer-term goals and objectives. It's a winning combination.

I said earlier that culture is intangible, but it is something you can feel. Our people, clients and community can feel the difference of working with each other. We are a people powered business in which every one of our team of nearly 400 is far more than a number. That's why nearly two-thirds of the team have been involved in creating this report.

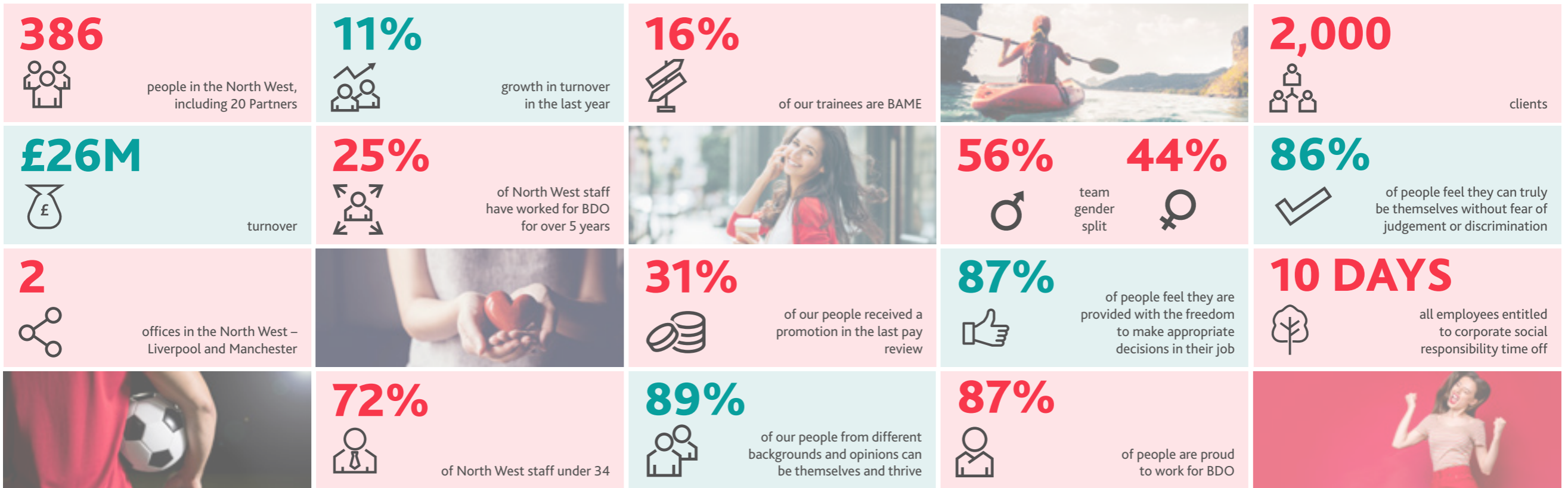


I'm proud to introduce you to the colleagues who make BDO North West the best team to work with in town. If we sound like the kind of team you would like to join, I look forward to meeting you in the future.

ED DWAN

BDO's North West
SBU Lead Partner

KEY CULTURE STATISTICS



OUR NORTH WEST CULTURE



In the last few years, we have launched many initiatives nationally and in the North West, which I feel supports our efforts around creating a great place to work for our people. At BDO, we have a national group called the U board (short for Unifying Culture), which I sit on. Our role is to ensure the wellbeing of all team members is always at the top of the agenda. It means we have a direct link to the national strategy and crucially that there are North West voices (and accents!) feeding into this.

ANGELA CROSS

Head of Tax and Member of the National U Board



New ideas have been brought to the forefront of our plans and accelerated because of the pandemic. One is **WORKABLE** - our agile working framework which has been developed as our approach to making work work for everyone at BDO.

The flexibility and trust around this has been well received. We plan to build on these foundations in 2022 and beyond and feel this really sets us apart in the industry. Recognising excellent work is essential so our team feel happy and rewarded. This underpins our strategy for sustainable growth and it's ongoing.

WORKABLE

MAKING WORK WORK FOR EVERYONE

I'm pleased Alix Gledhill and Laura Harper in the North West will continue to run our engagement survey with our local team to really understand what is important to people so we can formulate new plans to continuously improve and ensure everyone is supported.

We have some fantastic examples of leadership in the region. Hamid Ghafoor leads the BAME network nationally from Manchester which has culminated in new initiatives such as our Black Heritage Intern Programme in 2022. Elisabeth Carr also leads our women in business, INSPIRE group from the region.

The thing I'm most proud of is that everyone is encouraged to be themselves. We want our team to share IDEAS and see these come to life; provide opportunities for our PEOPLE so they can develop their skills and experience and build the TRUST in what we are all trying to achieve through effective communications.

We have a fantastic culture both locally and nationally built on our **core values** of Being Bold; Being Collaborative; Being Genuine and Being Responsible.



Our internal strategy is **BUILD** and the **U in BUILD stands for Unifying Culture**.

That means a culture where we are encouraged to be ourselves, are inspired and challenged, and are collaborative and successful.



OUR NORTH WEST CULTURE

OUR PEOPLE PROPOSITION

IS THE CONTRACT BETWEEN WHAT YOU'LL DO AND WHAT WE'LL DO

OUR THREE-PART PROPOSITION	YOUR WELLBEING 'Successful and Collaborative'	BEING YOURSELF 'Diversity and Inclusion'	CITIZENSHIP 'Challenged and Inspired'
WHAT DO YOU GET	 <p>Your Career Development</p>	 <p>Your Personal Development</p>	 <p>Your Recognition and Reward</p>
HOW YOU ARE SUPPORTED	 <p>Achieving My Potential (AMP)</p>	 <p>WORKABLE: Our Agile Working framework</p>	 <p>Success discussions, Mentoring, Coaching</p>
HOW YOU WILL BE EXPECTED TO BEHAVE	 <p>Our behaviours and our Values</p> <p>Your balance Your needs and the needs of your team, your clients and the firm</p> 		
HOW YOU ARE LISTENED TO	 <p>Individual conversations</p> <p>The Listening Programme Listening Events U Leaders Community Networks Storytelling</p> 		



BUILDING YOUR CAREER

VARIETY. CHALLENGE. DEVELOPMENT. HELPING YOU TO SUCCEED



WE ARE FOCUSED ON HELPING OUR TEAM MEMBERS TO DEVELOP A CAREER AND CONTINUALLY BE CHALLENGED. OUR CAREER DEVELOPMENT GUIDANCE AND INITIATIVES HELP YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY.



HEIDI HARPER

Senior Manager | Audit | Manchester Office

I completed the course aimed at those looking to move forwards into the Director role in October 2021. The course was run remotely over Microsoft Teams, with breakout sessions and activities.

I was nominated to help achieve my personal objectives of developing the relevant skill set to progress towards the Audit Director role.

It was a great way to challenge and push yourself in a safe space. The sessions that included role play with an actor were particularly useful as in no other circumstance would you get the option to have a trial run of a difficult conversation that you may have been putting off. The feedback received from the observers is also invaluable and has changed my mindset on how I will approach certain situations going forwards.

ACHIEVING MY POTENTIAL (AMP)

Our AMP framework is a set of criteria which underpins and guides everyone through your career journey with us. The framework will help you to realise your career aspirations with us, whatever that may be. It will help you to understand what is expected of you and provides clarity and consistency. The framework is made up of a set of core and technical competencies, our values and attitudes. It's not just about what you do but how you do it.

'Developing self and others' is a core part of our AMP framework and it recognises the importance of continuous learning, development and growth for everyone in the firm.

Our development activities support our 70:20:10 approach to learning. 70% is learning by experience through good quality on-the-job learning, 20% is mentoring, networking and learning from your peers and People Manager and 10% is taught classroom based activities (virtual or otherwise).

We have more than 1,000 different learning activities on a huge range of topics such as building commercial awareness, effective business writing, personal effectiveness and having everyday coaching conversations.

81% of our people believe they have clarity on their goals and objectives and **80%** believe that they are provided with sufficient challenge and opportunities in their roles.

BDO's People Listening Programme 2021

OUR EARLY IN CAREER PROGRAMME SUCCESS

SUMMER INTERNSHIP

Our six-week summer internship will run from 11 July – 19 August 2022 giving penultimate year university students the chance to experience working at BDO before interviewing for a graduate role. The programme starts with a week-long induction and training before the interns will immerse themselves into life at BDO. For the next five weeks, interns effectively become a member of the team and work with other students to complete a group project designed to apply their knowledge of the firm, their chosen sector, and the economy.

INDUSTRIAL PLACEMENT PROGRAMME

Our 12-month Industrial Placement programme will commence on the 5th of September 2022 giving third year university students the chance to experience working at BDO before joining as a graduate, upon successful completion of the placement. After a week long induction, students will become a member of the team where they will receive training, build their network, contribute to client work and develop their skills.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAMMES

During the 2021 intake we ran two flagship programmes – Black Heritage Programme for Black Heritage university students & Explore BDO (Social Mobility), which focused on school students meeting our Social Mobility criteria. Students on both programmes completed our application process and have since been fast-tracked onto an assessment centre, for either our 2022 internship or apprenticeship programmes. We will be running both programmes again in August 2022.

We will also be taking part in the 10,000 Black Interns programme, a cross-industry initiative to transform the prospects of young black people across the UK. BDO has committed to nine (six week) internship placements in summer 2022. Our aim is to provide an enriching and impactful experience that will prepare young people for any career they decide to embark upon in the future. However, on completion, those who meet our Eic eligibility requirements will have the opportunity to be put forward for our relevant programmes.

For further information about our Eic programmes, please contact our Eic team: earlyincareer@bdo.co.uk

Our team has been kind enough to share their journeys as they build their career with us. Some have only been with us a short time, while others have shown how hard work has helped them fast track through to a senior position.

BDO
IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST

**EXPLORE MORE THAN BUSINESS
EXPLORE A WORLD OF IMPACT**

We're all about helping people and businesses succeed. So, if you're looking for somewhere you can be yourself and grow your career at the same time, BDO is the place for you.

On our graduate programme, you'll experience real responsibility and purpose from day one. Working with people who value your ideas and invest in your success, you'll be helping to solve complex client challenges while earning a respected qualification. And with exposure to a range of industries across the UK and beyond, you'll be able to start building a powerful network to maximise your personal and professional growth.

We accept any degree discipline – you won't need an accounting or finance degree to join us. Whether it's Audit, Tax, Advisory or Business Services & Outsourcing, we'll give you all you need to succeed.

Start your career today
bdoearlyincareer.co.uk

#lifeatbdo #BDOtraineesUK

**BE MORE THAN A TEAM
BE A FORCE FOR SUCCESS**

BDO
IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST

**FIND MORE THAN A CHANCE TO SHINE
FIND YOUR FUTURE**

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Start your career today
bdoearlyincareer.co.uk

BDO IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST

**HAVE MORE THAN A CAREER
HAVE A PASSION**

**FIND MORE THAN JUST YOUR VOICE
BE HEARD**

Apply Now: bdoearlyincareer.co.uk

IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST **BDO**

**SHARE MORE THAN YOUR IDEAS
SHARE YOUR PERSPECTIVES**

Apply Now: bdoearlyincareer.co.uk

IDEAS | PEOPLE | TRUST **BDO**

BUILDING A CAREER AT BDO



SAKIB ISA
Audit Director

AGE: 32

TIME AT BDO: 10 years

MAIN HOBBY: Eating out and spending time with the family

FAVOURITE SPORT: Football

SUPPORTER OF: Manchester United!

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR CAREER JOURNEY AT BDO SO FAR?

I joined as a fresh faced graduate trainee in the class of 2011! Having navigated through the ACA training programme alongside my intake, I qualified in 2014 and moved up to Assistant Manager in November 2015, Audit Manager in November 2016 and then Senior Manager in May 2018.

From September 2018, I took on the role of Department Senior Manager for the North West Audit team and helped support a fantastic period of growth and success alongside our Responsible Individual and manager group. I've had some great highlights including travel across Europe and the US, counting supercars on a stocktake and being part of a team winning our first £1m+ audit in the North West.

In January 2021, I moved up to Audit Director which is my current role. It's been a fantastic journey so far, no day has been the same and I've thoroughly enjoyed the variety and challenge along the way.

WHY DID YOU APPLY TO JOIN BDO?

What really came across during the graduate recruitment process for me was that BDO is truly people focused business. I really took away the friendly atmosphere in the team, the inclusive culture and how everyone operated with a smile on their face.

The other key differentiator for me is that our clients come in all shapes and sizes. Over the years, I've worked with multinational FTSE organisations one week and then a smaller entrepreneurial business the other. For me, that's led to better experience and more exposure earlier on in my career which has supported my development.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE BDO'S CULTURE?

It's at the heart of making BDO a fantastic place to work. We are all encouraged to be ourselves, to inspire others, to be collaborative, to be inclusive and support the wider team. It's an environment where you feel respected and valued.

WHY SHOULD SOMEONE JOIN BDO NORTH WEST?

Both Manchester and Liverpool are fantastic cities and we have excellent offices across both locations. For me, Manchester has a bit of everything. I have spent a lot of time in the city having gone to University there and now having worked here for 10 years I can honestly say (regardless of what you are into) it has everything - art and culture, dining out, music or football - there is something for everyone!

WHAT HAS BEEN THE BEST COURSE YOU HAVE COMPLETED WHILST AT BDO?

The one that sticks out is a business development course on winning work in the FTSE market. I had the privilege of going on the course with some of our most talented partners across the firm and had the opportunity to watch them present and understand their mindset when it comes to business development opportunities. A great learning experience and it has really helped develop my own confidence in this space.

DESCRIBE BDO IN ONE SENTENCE

A collaborative and inclusive environment where you can work with some of the best clients, alongside some of the best people in the North West.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST SURPRISE AT BDO?

A positive surprise has been the growth in the size of the team over the years since I've been at BDO. I started in a North West audit team of 40. We are now approaching 170 (and counting!)

BUILDING A CAREER AT BDO



LAURA HARPER

Associate Tax Director

AGE: 32

TIME AT BDO: 10 years

MAIN HOBBY: Weightlifting convert

FAVOURITE SPORT: (To watch) Rugby

SUPPORTER OF: Sales Sharks/Warrington Wolves

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR CAREER JOURNEY AT BDO SO FAR?

I joined BDO ten years ago on the graduate training programme. I spent three years as a corporate tax trainee juggling the world of work, professional qualifications and the endless social events...who knew Accountants weren't boring?!

My training contract was pretty varied and I gained good exposure to most taxes, although took a greater interest in working with our mid to large corporates, particularly in respect of Tax Risk and Governance. Gradually as I progressed through my career, I have specialised in Tax Assurance and Risk Management and have built a successful career in this area.

Having recently returned from maternity leave I am in the process of discovering a work life balance and hope to prove that you can have a successful career and be a Mummy at the same time.

WHY DID YOU APPLY TO JOIN BDO?

Studying Religious Studies and Philosophy at university I had no idea what I was going to do as a career. Although this didn't phase me, my parents pushed me to line up some work experience as they hoped I would finally find the career for me and I would finally give the bank of Mum and Dad a break.

As a result, I spent the Summer of my second year at university doing work experience at a law firm, PR agency and BDO. I spent two weeks at BDO and by the end of it I already felt like part of the BDO family and returned as a tax trainee following university.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE BDO'S CULTURE?

Open and inclusive, enabling empowerment.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE BEST COURSE YOU HAVE COMPLETED WHILST AT BDO?

I attended a Personal Effectiveness course as an Assistant Manager and I believe a lot of the skills learnt during this course has been impactful on my career. This course helped me gain an insight into my personality type and the impact that this may have on others who I work with.

It helped me identify ways to improve my own performance but also gave me tips on how best to work with those with differing personality types. Everyone is unique, but we can all work together, and by making some subtle changes this can improve experience for everyone.

DESCRIBE BDO IN ONE SENTENCE

A great business made up of incredible people from all walks of life coming together to provide a first-class service for our clients.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST SURPRISE AT BDO?

When I joined BDO I think there were about 30 people in the Manchester Tax Department, and this has more than doubled to over 80 people, yet it still feels just as well connected, and people focused as it did when I joined.

BUILDING A CAREER AT BDO



CORAL CAMERON

Accounts & Financial Reporting Manager

AGE: 28

TIME AT BDO: Three and a half years

MAIN HOBBY: Singer/stage performer

FAVOURITE SPORT: Swimming when it's on

SUPPORTER OF: A positive mental attitude!

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR CAREER JOURNEY AT BDO SO FAR?

Joined BDO shortly after returning from maternity leave wanting more of a work-life balance and being able to achieve some career progression whilst also being a full-time single mother.

I joined in June 2018 as a senior in the accounts and financial reporting team and was shortly promoted to supervisor in November 2018 and then later progressed towards assistant manager in May 2021 and shortly after promoted to manager in November 2021.

I have focussed on growing our Not for Profit base here in the Manchester Financial Reporting team. I have also been heavily involved in the Manchester CSR team and loved every minute.

WHY DID YOU APPLY TO JOIN BDO?

Because I wanted to remain in practice but away from audit, I had heard many positive things about BDO so when the role popped up, I felt like it was made for me!

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE BDO'S CULTURE?

Just so supportive, in providing help when you need it, supporting you through your career goals/ambitions and collaborative too. All teams are just great at linking with each other and it really does help create a great place to work.

WHY SHOULD SOMEONE JOIN BDO NORTH WEST?

For the office party? No kidding, we have just had a cracking office refurb that we can all enjoy and it's a great atmosphere to work in where all teams are well-connected.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE BEST COURSE YOU HAVE COMPLETED WHILST AT BDO?

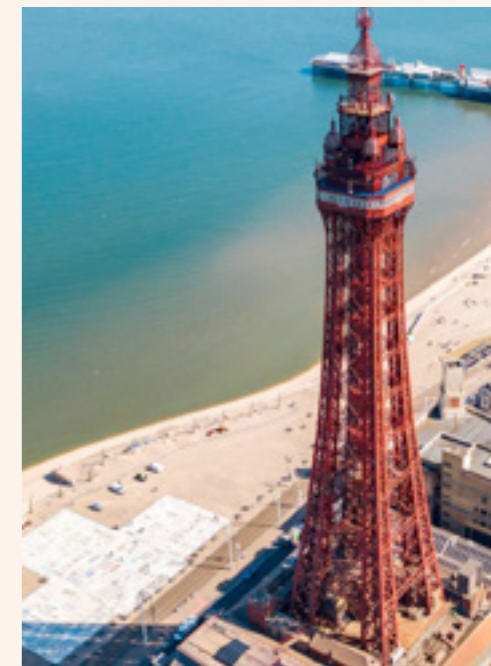
I attended the CPD course which gave me some really amazing pointers and guidance to what it takes to be a great people manager.

DESCRIBE BDO IN ONE SENTENCE

BDO is a BRILLIANTLY DIVERSE ORGANISATION

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST SURPRISE AT BDO?

Being a large practice with a large number of staff but still feeling like the firm holds many of the characteristics of a smaller firm with its support and there has never been the feeling of being "a fish in a tank."



BUILDING A CAREER AT BDO



SHARINA NAVANI

Tax Associate

AGE: 25

TIME AT BDO: Two years

MAIN HOBBY: Trying new food

FAVOURITE SPORT: Volleyball

SUPPORTER OF: I'm assuming this is in relation to football... in which case my dad would want me to say FC Barcelona!

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR CAREER JOURNEY AT BDO SO FAR?

I joined BDO after finishing a masters in Law. I joined as a junior tax associate and am currently in the second year of my training contract. The training contract has provided me with a structured approach when it comes to building my technical knowledge (through studies and exams), as well as real day to day work experience. The combination of both these things has helped me progress in my role.

WHY DID YOU APPLY TO JOIN BDO?

I applied to join BDO because I was drawn to the firm's expertise around tax. Through further research, I also found that the firm was well known for its unifying and collaborative culture which is really important to me.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE BDO'S CULTURE?

I would describe BDO's culture as very 'open door policy' and positive. Everyone, from the other junior members to the most senior members of the department are approachable and willing to help. As someone who is still new to the profession and the industry, I find that sometimes it can be quite daunting when you are responsible for important work – which is why being able to just ask questions and approach the people you work with is such a positive aspect of the culture here.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE BEST COURSE YOU HAVE COMPLETED WHILST AT BDO?

Not sure if this counts as a course but the Tolley's tax training we have is excellent. It highlights all the key relevant issues across different areas of tax (areas I would not know about otherwise) and helps me understand what some of the more senior people do. It's also always good to have someone explain what the government are actually doing and how this affects us/our clients!



DESCRIBE BDO IN ONE SENTENCE

Great teams and a positive working environment.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST SURPRISE AT BDO?

The variety of work – I believe like many people, I did not think there could be so many different aspects to tax, let alone the variety of work that comes with it. It is so much more than just crunching numbers and reminding clients to pay their taxes.

There is a vast amount of advisory work to get involved with, and you learn about so many ways in which we can help our clients and add value to their businesses.

BUILDING A CAREER AT BDO



LUCY EDWARDS

Business Restructuring Executive

AGE: 27

TIME AT BDO: Four years

MAIN HOBBY: All things food related

FAVOURITE SPORT: Running

SUPPORTER OF: Manchester United

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR CAREER JOURNEY AT BDO SO FAR?

I started life at BDO as a PA & Research Assistant in the M&A team. Following a year in this role, I moved to the Business Restructuring team as a graduate and began studying towards my ACA qualification.

Three years later I have just qualified as an ACA chartered Accountant. Since joining the BR team, I have had the opportunity to be part of a wide range of projects including insolvency, advisory and accelerated mergers and acquisitions projects.

Most recently, I have become an ESG champion for the BR team, to explore the ESG opportunities for the firm, internally and externally.

WHY DID YOU APPLY TO JOIN BDO?

I applied to join BDO as it is a firm with lots of opportunities for graduates.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE BDO'S CULTURE?

BDO is wellbeing focused, with a 'one firm' mentality. The firm is flexible and supportive of your career.

WHY SHOULD SOMEONE JOIN BDO NORTH WEST?

BDO North West is a large regional office where you still recognise most faces! There's plenty of Northern friendliness whilst working in an office in a fantastic location.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE BEST COURSE YOU HAVE COMPLETED WHILST AT BDO?

The best course I have completed within the firm was a Networking Masterclass. My role within BR often includes meeting other professionals within the restructuring market. The course allowed me to learn the theory behind some of these skills, practice them with other colleagues within the firm to allow me to network more effectively.

DESCRIBE BDO IN ONE SENTENCE

A forward thinking, flexible and friendly place to work.



BUILDING A CAREER AT BDO



CHRIS CUMBER

M&A Assistant Director

AGE: 35

TIME AT BDO: Four years

MAIN HOBBY: Golf/fishing

FAVOURITE SPORT: Football

SUPPORTER OF: Newcastle United

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR CAREER JOURNEY AT BDO SO FAR?

I have been with BDO for just over 4 years; having joined from a smaller regional business and before this working for PKF before the merger with BDO. Joining as a Senior Manager in Corporate Finance team, I've been supported to become an Assistant Director and hopefully in the near future will progress to Director.

WHY DID YOU APPLY TO JOIN BDO?

I applied to join BDO when the opportunity arose to join the M&A team, where the key attractions were represented by a strong and diverse team with a clear focus and desire to grow our corporate finance practice across the North West.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE BDO'S CULTURE?

Real. A lot of organisations talk a good game about having a positive and inclusive culture, but at BDO it is real. It is something which is experienced amongst colleagues, in interactions with clients and is widely accepted in the professional community.

WHY SHOULD SOMEONE JOIN BDO NORTH WEST?:

BDO North West is at the forefront of one of the fastest growing most interesting economic hubs outside of London. We have an abundance of amazing people with significant levels of expertise that enables you to make a real difference to clients but also an exciting environment to learn, develop and explore new opportunities for personal development.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE BEST COURSE YOU HAVE COMPLETED WHILST AT BDO?

We were provided with an excellent opportunity to do some 'sales' training delivered by a fantastic outside speaker. The course was fantastic in educating us on what 'sales' meant for us and how to make this pertinent to our customers – something which similar courses at other firms had never managed to achieve.

DESCRIBE BDO IN ONE SENTENCE

An exciting place to work, where we have been successful in bringing together like minded people with a very clear focus on being the very best in our own areas of expertise and providing excellent support to our clients.



BUILDING A CAREER AT BDO



JAMES FIELDHOUSE
M&A Managing Director

AGE: 39

TIME AT BDO: 18 years

MAIN HOBBY: Being an Uber driver to my kids!

FAVOURITE SPORT: Football

SUPPORTER OF: Manchester United

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR CAREER JOURNEY AT BDO SO FAR?

Joined as a graduate 18+ years ago. Trained in audit, undertook an international secondment to Sydney, joined the corporate finance team and have progressed through the firm ever since. Enjoyable time spent advising clients across multiple sectors, with live music festivals being a particular favourite (given I seemed to miss the rush of football club audits!).

Key to staying has been the varied experience, chance to build a career but mostly the people (both in terms of work colleagues and clients). Also captaining the UK's only European football victory in Munich alongside multiple national/ domestic wins has to be part of my career highlights to date!!

WHY DID YOU APPLY TO JOIN BDO?

Through my older brother I actually knew (and liked) various people who worked at the firm so after two lots of working experience in the Summer mid University there was only one choice for me.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE BDO'S CULTURE?

Inclusive and open/transparent – one where you can be yourself and one where you're encouraged to have an opinion and share it.

WHY SHOULD SOMEONE JOIN BDO NORTH WEST?

The only option as a local Manchester lad!

WHAT HAS BEEN THE BEST COURSE YOU HAVE COMPLETED WHILST AT BDO?

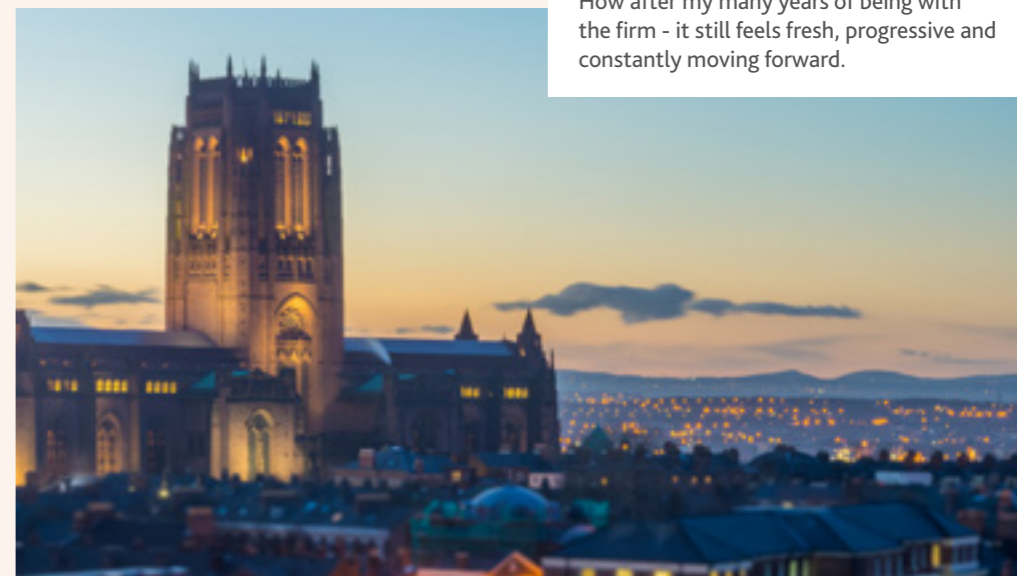
To be honest the best ones now are the ones that constantly being created e.g. abundance of content that has been created for those wanting to build their careers or have an interest in private equity.

DESCRIBE BDO IN ONE SENTENCE

An enjoyable place to work where you can build a career.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST SURPRISE AT BDO?

How after my many years of being with the firm - it still feels fresh, progressive and constantly moving forward.



BUILDING A CAREER AT BDO



ROB OLIVER
Accounts & Financial Reporting Manager

AGE: 40
TIME AT BDO: 10 years
MAIN HOBBY: Heath & fitness
FAVOURITE SPORT: Windsurfing
SUPPORTER OF: Liverpool FC

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR CAREER JOURNEY AT BDO SO FAR?

Having worked for 8 years, post graduating, as a Civil and Structural Engineer I decided a career change was in order and I joined an audit training contract in 2012 just at the time that my wife and I decided to start growing our family. The motivation for my career change was a general lack of interest in physics and the opportunity to learn a whole new set of skills.

After qualifying as a Chartered Accountant in 2015, I progressed through to Audit Assistant Manager and then Audit Manager over the course of the next couple of years giving me the opportunity to work with lots of interesting clients and develop a particular interest in charities.

In 2019, I took the opportunity to take on the role of Manager of the Accounts and Financial Reporting team across the north of England, managing a team that specialise in the preparation of complex accounts and advisory work. This role has given me exposure to a whole range of technical accounting issues which I'd not encountered previously.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE BDO'S CULTURE?

Working in BSO, we have a culture that is supportive of individual needs, provides opportunity for development and positively encourages people with ideas to run with them.

WHY SHOULD SOMEONE JOIN BDO NORTH WEST?

To join a successful firm with a team of highly competent individuals working in an environment which supports and nurtures development and individuality.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE BEST COURSE YOU HAVE COMPLETED WHILST AT BDO?

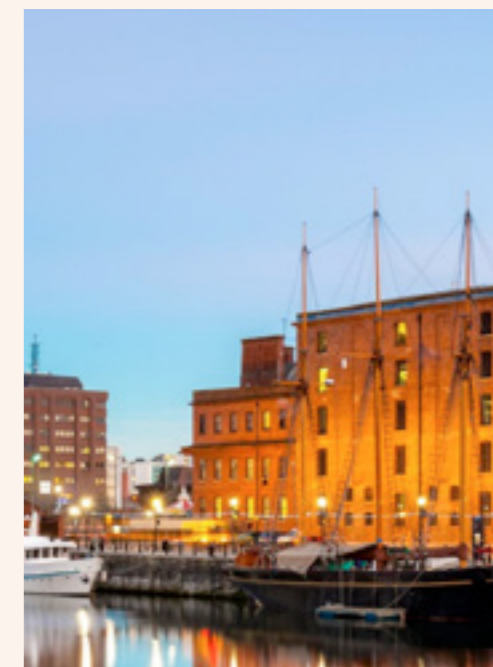
I really enjoy the quarterly financial reporting updates – especially since the format has been updated. Learning about new developments in financial reporting is really important to my role and the quality of the training is excellent. The mix of videos, practical examples and test of knowledge questions really delivers on high quality content without taking a huge amount of time to complete.

DESCRIBE BDO IN ONE SENTENCE

A responsible firm that is going places.

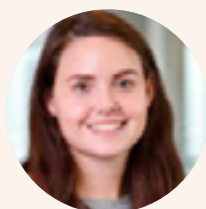
WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST SURPRISE AT BDO?

Being promoted to Audit Manager within two years of completing my training contract.



BUILDING A CAREER AT BDO

MOVING TO THE UK TO MAKE IT HAPPEN



LIZE TURNER

Audit Assistant Manager

AGE: 28

TIME AT BDO: 2 years

WHERE ARE YOU ORIGINALLY FROM?

South Africa

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT BDO AND APPLY?

In my final year of articles (what we call our training contract in SA), I received a call from a recruiter asking if I would be interested in an opportunity working for BDO in the UK. I jumped at the chance as I've heard very positive things about BDO from acquaintances who completed their training contracts with BDO. One specific comment was that BDO value their employees and that a work-life balance is important to the firm.

WHAT HAS YOUR CAREER JOURNEY BEEN LIKE TO DATE?

I studied Chartered Accountancy at the North West University in South Africa (fellow South Africans will know this as "Potch", which is short for the "Potchefstroom campus").

In South Africa the requirements to become a Chartered Accountant are that you first need to obtain a degree in accountancy and after this you need to complete a "CTA year" (CTA stands for Certificate in the Theory of Accounting and is in essence a Bachelors of Honours degree in accounting). This was by far the most challenging year of my professional journey to date! In 2017, I started my training contract with a "Big 4" firm in Johannesburg, South Africa, the duration of a training contract is 3 year in SA and during this time you need to pass 2 qualifying exams set by SAICA. I completed my training contract at the end of 2019. I joined BDO in January 2020 as an Audit Senior and enjoyed a lovely 2.5 months touring the UK before the first COVID lockdown. I was promoted to Assistant Manager in May 2021.

HOW IS IT SETTLING IN THE UK/ MANCHESTER?

The first couple of months in the UK was wonderful, I enjoyed a great work-life balance, toured various towns over the weekends and enjoyed the commute on the train to clients very much (for those who don't know, South Africa does not really have a developed public transport system, so you need to drive everywhere).

The lockdown definitely made settling in the UK harder as I did not have a lot of opportunity to get to know my colleagues and not being able to travel back to South Africa to see my family for almost two years has been really hard. But I really enjoyed visiting South Africa again at the end of November! Ever since the last lockdown has ended, settling-in has been much easier and I have loved meeting other BDO personnel in person.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT LIVING IN THE NORTH WEST?

I like that it is not as busy as London – the countryside is very accessible and you don't need to travel far to find a place for a quick hike on a weekend.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE WORKING IN THE UK TO AT HOME?

The biggest difference for me was FRS102 – in South Africa companies can only apply IFRS or IFRS for SMEs, so I needed to do a bit of studying on FRS102 (luckily Workday has really great training sessions which summarises the main differences between the standards which has been a great help).

HOW HAS BDO SUPPORTED YOU WITH YOUR MOVE?

BDO provided a good instruction packet with a lot of useful links and helpful information – for example opening a UK bank account, providing accommodation for a month, etc. BDO has also now implemented the buddy system, and I have received a lot of positive feedback on this.

WHAT EXPERIENCES HAVE YOU HAD SO FAR?

I have worked on clients across a broad range of industries which have provided valuable experience. I have also had the opportunity to be a buddy and counselling manager to new employees which has been great as it allowed me to meet and interact with new employees. I have seen most of the UK by now, and was surprised at the beauty and tranquillity of the countryside. All of this has been valuable experiences and I think it made me a more well-rounded person.

BUILDING A CAREER AT BDO

MOVING TO THE UK TO MAKE IT HAPPEN



SAMUEL ESENE

Audit Assistant Manager

AGE: 35

TIME AT BDO: 2 years

WHERE ARE YOU ORIGINALLY FROM?

Africa, Nigeria

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT BDO AND APPLY?

Online Search

WHAT HAS YOUR CAREER JOURNEY BEEN LIKE TO DATE?

I joined as a Senior and was recently promoted to Assistant Manager after a year and 3 months of joining the firm.

HOW IS IT SETTLING IN THE UK/ MANCHESTER?

At first it was not easy due to change in environment, climate and challenges with accommodation. But with the help of friends and colleagues, I was able to settle in well.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT LIVING IN THE NORTH WEST?

As a Manchester United fan, I have always wanted to live in Manchester. Also, the fact that I have a community of people from Nigeria here who I associate with makes it a favourable place to live.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE WORKING IN THE UK TO AT HOME?

Working in the UK has given me the opportunity of audit multinational clients, being able to take part in audits of clients from different industries.

WHAT EXPERIENCES HAVE YOU HAD SO FAR?

Having international/Overseas experience, auditing multinational clients and clients from various industries. I have gained knowledge of the UK GAAP and also improved in my team engagement and management skills?



BUILDING A CAREER AT BDO

MOVING TO THE UK TO MAKE IT HAPPEN



RIDA SHAHZAD

Audit Assistant Manager

AGE: 28

TIME AT BDO: 2 years

WHERE ARE YOU ORIGINALLY FROM?

Born in Pakistan, raised in Oman.

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT BDO AND APPLY?

From professional acquaintances in Oman.

HOW IS IT SETTLING IN THE UK/ MANCHESTER?

I hail from Pakistan, but have lived in Oman all my life; which naturally meant moving to Manchester was altogether an intense sport because the coldest I had seen all my life was 18°C only. Moreover, settling in became more challenging as COVID hit soon after I moved to the UK.

However, the Firm and colleague have been very supportive throughout with allowing me ample time to familiarise myself with work, relocation, attending clients on site, remote working policies and also allowing me to work from overseas in 2020.



WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT LIVING IN THE NORTH WEST?

Everything, apart from the weather! To name a few, I enjoy how culturally diverse the region is, it's accessibility to north and south of UK making short trips doable throughout the country, availability of halal food, fair amount of activities throughout the year to attend to.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE WORKING IN THE UK TO AT HOME?

The role in essence is quite comparable to Middle East, where I have come from. However, audit scrutiny is definitely higher in the UK due to which the audit documentation is more sophisticated. Also, as technology is changing the way business is conducted, the data analytics plays a more advanced role in audit in UK.

HOW HAS BDO SUPPORTED YOU WITH YOUR MOVE?

BDO HR and relocation teams were very helpful, booked a hotel for first month in UK which allowed me ample time to get familiarised with the city and sort out my accommodation.

The team was very helpful with allocating a buddy who has had similar experience as mine to assist in settling down process.

Initial two weeks trainings were provided to help familiarise with BDO Audit methodology as well as APT NG.

WHAT EXPERIENCES HAVE YOU HAD SO FAR?

I have been involved on subjects other than core audit work, like reverse mentoring on BAME with Ed Dwan where I have actively conducted three reverse sessions to convey the views and concerns of minority ethnicities.

The BAME sessions also highlighted the challenges faced by new joiners in the firm, in particular the joiners from abroad, which led to Ed setting up a separate session with HR Manager, Department Senior Managers, BAME leaders in Manchester office and support staff to bring the issues in light and to plan policies to address them.

We further conducted an output session and agreed to implement new processes to make this an even more positive experience.

BUILDING A CAREER AT BDO



JULIEN RYE
Audit Partner

TIME AT BDO: **34 years!**

WHY HAVE YOU STAYED AT BDO FOR SO MANY YEARS?

I joined the firm on 3 September 1984 with 5 other trainees (3 of whom are still good friends and I have regular contact with). We were an Associate office of Stoy Hayward (the predecessor name of our firm which became BDO) and our Manchester and Liverpool office became part of the national partnership in 2002. I am also still in regular contact with the 3 founding partners. At the time I joined the then Manchester office had less than 40 staff but we were closely affiliated with the London office of Stoy Hayward and my first audit was for a major fruit supplier to Tesco, including East Kent Packers which was brilliant for me - my Grandad was a fruit farmer in Kent.

After I qualified I spent time in each of the other department's including insolvency, tax and corporate finance. It was great experience learning some vital commercial skills and understanding the different pressures in each department. I don't miss the early hours completion of M&A deals that the lawyers seemed to love!

Having experienced these services, I had a better understanding of how we could offer great services to our clients and how to become a trusted adviser rather than just rolling out a once a year service. I am a people person and I have always really enjoyed the interaction and close relationships with our staff and with clients and this has given me the utmost satisfaction.

The main reason I have stayed in audit is I love the variety of our role, no two days are the same and we are dealing with lots of different issues involving clients in a multitude of sectors all with unique challenges albeit many with common characteristics. I was lucky enough to become a partner at the age of 31 and prior to this I had been promoted regularly and I have always enjoyed a challenging and stimulating environment that has always encouraged you to give of your best and achieve your potential.

This has all been achieved with fantastic support from those above. Prior to making partner I asked one of the audit partners, Brent Wilkinson, in my appraisal, what I needed to do to get the promotion. His advice was quite simple, stop upsetting the tax partner!

I learnt a very valuable lesson on how to interact with our colleagues and ensure we were operating effectively together, the key to which is good communication.

The other main reason I have stayed is that even though I have been a partner for over 26 years you never stop learning.

We are part of a learning organisation where as well as the ever changing technical standards of accounting and auditing we want to ensure the quality of our work is paramount and that we have a culture that ensures that we focus on creating a great environment where people can thrive, one where we are all being supported and one where we actually enjoy going to work with the right level of work/life balance.

Our Firm has always strived to ensure our clients and staff succeed by providing exceptional service delivered by highly motivated, enthusiastic people. This is the key to success and I genuinely believe that has always been what we are trying to achieve and that we are a genuinely caring organisation.

It is an honour and a privilege for me to work for the firm and I have thoroughly enjoyed my time and so if you ask me if I would have done anything different my answer would have to be... yes! I have experienced this career so of course I would do something different. I did enjoy working on the fruit farm.



JULIE SPENCER
Credit Controller

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE MOST ABOUT BDO?

Working with so many interesting people over the years, the way they care about their staff and BDO's vision.

INTERNATIONAL WORK

THE RIGHT TEAMS IN THE RIGHT LOCATIONS

INTERNATIONAL

Being part of an international network provides our teams with fantastic career opportunities but also the chance to work with some fantastic clients.

As the 5th largest accountants and business adviser in the UK and globally, we also advise fast growing entrepreneurial minded businesses who want to grow they need an adviser who has the right team, in the right locations to help them when they need it.

We have over 70 clients with an international footprint. Many of these businesses have overseas parent companies which require an element of annual reporting, and many of these local businesses have overseas operations.

In the last five years, Audit teams from the North West have travelled to complete various fieldwork assignments to countries including;

- ▶ South Korea
- ▶ Australia
- ▶ Amsterdam, Netherlands
- ▶ Italy
- ▶ Spain
- ▶ France
- ▶ Philadelphia, USA
- ▶ Pittsburgh, USA
- ▶ San Diego, USA

WE DELIVER WORK GLOBALLY



We have also welcomed team members to the North West from across the globe, from countries including:

- ▶ San Francisco, USA
- ▶ Washington, USA
- ▶ New York, USA
- ▶ Connecticut, USA
- ▶ Houston, USA
- ▶ Africa
- ▶ Australia
- ▶ Hong Kong
- ▶ India
- ▶ Pakistan
- ▶ South Africa
- ▶ Belarus
- ▶ Germany
- ▶ Malaysia
- ▶ Malawi
- ▶ Spain
- ▶ Thailand



BDO INTERNATIONAL

US\$11.8 billion 2020/2021 REVENUE¹

A YEAR ON YEAR INCREASE OF **10.8%**

167 Countries **1,720** Offices
97,000 Staff

1. At constant exchange rate.

MORE THAN ACCOUNTING MACHINES

NORTH WEST CULTURE REPORT

OUR SUPPORTIVE CULTURE

AT BDO OUR PEOPLE COME TOP OF OUR LIST OF PRIORITIES



WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE MOST ABOUT BDO?



I really appreciate the stance BDO has taken to continue to allow people to work from home and book into the office when necessary, without taking a more prescriptive approach. After 18 months working from home, I have seen family and friends really struggle with having to return to work 5 days a week, so I am grateful that a mix of the two is being incorporated as it gives us the opportunity to return to work from the office at our own pace.



I really appreciate the drive to ensure mental health is being promoted across all of BDO's communications. The talks and meetings they have set up with professionals, along with medical benefits to reflect this, have had a really positive impact on me over the last year.

BDO have always been amazing whenever I have needed additional support regarding my mental health, and I'm proud to work for a company that prioritises mental health.

KATIE EDWARDS

Audit Trainee



WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE MOST ABOUT BDO?



OSEMEGBE IRABOR

Audit Senior

I think the people are fantastic. The people within the firm made it easier for me to settle in. Everyone is happy to help out, we can have serious conversations without having to feel tense and I like that the leaders are very approachable.



ZOE FASSAM

Senior Tax Associate

Wellbeing isn't just a corporate buzzword or phrase thrown around with no real intention behind it – but actively promoted and modelled across in the firm, especially within the partner/head group.

This has a real impact when things get stressful because you know the person on the other end cares about you rather than seeing you as another cog in the machine. This is not the case in a lot of accountancy firms and it really does make all the difference for the day-to-day job.



NICOLA BOTTLEY

Associate Director, Tax

Integrity - people do what they say they are going to do and are transparent and straight talking - especially career wise, you know where you are and what you've got to do.

People - what a truly fantastic and lovely bunch we've got (throughout BDO not just North West) but being a Manc, North West is the best obviously, great collaboration and genuinely fabulous people to work with every day, it really matters and makes a big difference.



ROB BROWN

Senior, BDS

Flexibility – the firm was willing to accommodate my request to work flexibly, allowing me to work four days a week.



LAWRENCE MCGINLEY

Director, Forensics

The flexibility and trust from partners to plan and prioritise my time to get the work done to suit both the client's needs and my own.



WAYNE DUTTON

Director, Tax

It's the ability to be yourself and to work with people who want to do the right thing.



LUCY PATTON

Audit Trainee

I like the flexibility and the ability to manage your own time, even when I was at the junior levels. Also, the people make BDO. You can approach anyone, at any level, and know that they will be willing to help.



SHAHBAZ FAROOQUI

Audit Assistant Manager

I like the culture and work environment of BDO. Partners, managers and peers are always ready to help or listen which shows everyone care for each other. BDO encourages an open door policy to promote honest and open communication.

WORK. LIFE. BALANCE.

Work life balance is certainly a buzzword used by many organisations in recent years but more so with the challenges thrown at us in the pandemic.

The traditional 9am-5pm with busy commutes has been completely re-evaluated. Our time is precious and how we spend our time to support our overall wellbeing has never been so important.

Let's face it no one wants to spend every day sitting in traffic!

In our PULSE survey (internal employee survey) 81% said their productivity had improved or stayed the same while working from home, and 60% described an improved work/life balance.



JULIET HANKEY
Manager, Tax

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE MOST ABOUT BDO?

The willingness of people to help each other. The ability to manage your own time/work and not be micro-managed.

WORKABLE

Simply put, WORKABLE is our response to the changed world we all find ourselves in. It is our agile working framework made up of guidance, policies and support to help you work in the most productive way possible. It focuses on your health and wellbeing, your work/life balance and delivering the best possible work for your clients.

FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

We have a formal flexible working policy for those who need a more defined working pattern. This may involve a different working pattern such as defined start and finish times to support personal commitments, part-time working, job share and more. We are supportive of flexible working requests that meet both yours and business needs and we regularly grant requests on both a temporary or permanent basis to support work and personal commitments.

OUR LITERATURE



WORKABLE

MAKING WORK WORK FOR EVERYONE

In consultation with our employees, the partners of BDO in the North West and nationally have made some changes around the way we work. We support a culture of flexibility and choice.

Our employees have the opportunity to work wherever and whenever – whilst considering the needs of our clients, teams, firm and them as an individual. Our open culture, and the dedication of our People Managers means there are short lines of communication to discuss your career and what is important to you both in and out of work. We feel this creates the right environment for a successful career and enables you to bring your best self to work.

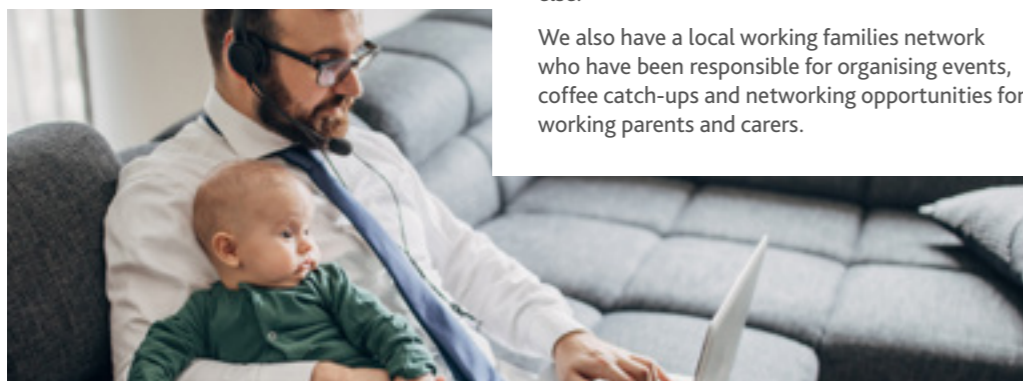


LIFE EVENTS AND BDO POLICIES

WORKING FAMILIES AND CARERS

As individuals we take on lots of different roles in our personal and professional lives. We spend a lot of time at work and so it's important to feel able to share our experiences with our colleagues. We know that when our people are able to truly be themselves they will do their best work.

In the North West we have held a range of events to support Working Families and those with caring responsibilities, we have done this through coffee mornings, promoting our family friendly policies and we arranged a trip to see 'The Snowman' for over 50 colleagues and their children.



MATERNITY/PATERNITY/ADOPTION/PARENTAL LEAVE/FERTILITY

We have excellent family friendly policies which go above and beyond the statutory requirements to provide time and financial support for those thinking about starting a family.

We understand the importance of both parents taking an active role in their child's upbringing which is why our Shared Parental Leave policy mirrors both our Adoption and Maternity policy.

We provide some paid dependant leave to deal with emergency situations, whether this is to support childcare or if you are a carer for someone else.

We also have a local working families network who have been responsible for organising events, coffee catch-ups and networking opportunities for working parents and carers.



GRAHAM ELLIS
Audit Partner

For all new dads out there, a great idea would be to look at BDO's shared parental leave policy – two weeks paid paternity leave and the opportunity to take up to 16 weeks shared parental leave at full pay to enjoy some time out with your family.

As two recent dads, Matt Whitehouse and myself took advantage of this in recent years – both of us are at senior levels within the North West and were able to move roles and responsibilities around to ensure some much needed time off.

Matt chose to take a straight 5 weeks off whereas I worked half weeks using keeping in touch days over a period of 3 months. The policy is flexible to suit your needs as well as the firm's, but Matt and myself are excellent examples as how to make it work for you and your family."



TAKING TIME OUT

We recognise our people have busy lives both in and outside work, as a Firm we support this by offering alternative ways of working that enable individuals to balance their working life with other priorities.

Individuals may need to take time out (from two months up to one year) to balance caring responsibilities, charity work, leisure activities, travel and other interests.

As an employee, you can also request unpaid leave for up to one month if the need arises.

MENOPAUSE

As an organisation we have done a lot of work to support people going through the different stages of menopause to ensure they are fully supported in the workplace. In the North West we have a group who meet in a regular basis to offer moral support and guidance to each other to support them on their journey.



WELLBEING

HOW DO WE LOOK AFTER WELLBEING AT BDO?

We all want to take care of our wellbeing...

Looking after ourselves, our family, friends and colleagues is at the heart of our thinking. Ultimately, we all want to look out for each other and set all of us up for ongoing success.



We have a suite of wellbeing initiatives, tools and training available to all employees and People Managers. We are proud to announce that we have achieved **Gold status in the 2021 Mind Workplace Wellbeing Index**.

THE 5 WAYS OF WELLBEING

Our wellbeing strategy is based on the

Five Ways of Wellbeing: Take Notice, Connect, Give, Be Active and Learn together. As you read through our culture report you may recognise our wellbeing strategy weaved into everything we do. It's in our mentoring programme, it's part of the events we organise, it's supporting in the local community and our charity work and it's equipping our People Managers to have good quality conversations with our employees to truly help them bring their best selves to work to name just a few.



...and from their first days with us our North West employees all have access to:



24/7 EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

We have our 24/7 Employee Assistance Helpline, as well as other wellbeing helplines and points-of-contact.



A ONE-STOP SHOP

We have a dedicated Wellbeing section of our intranet, sharing a wealth of personal stories, tips and resources that people could access at all times.

- ▶ The recent overhaul of our Wellbeing intranet resulted in a **540% engagement increase** in the first week alone.
- ▶ In COVID-19, we saw a **136% year-on-year increase in engagement** with our Wellbeing-related resources and **2,700% increase in active users** in our Wellbeing Yammer group, as well as a **464% increase in posted messages**.



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDERS

We have trained more Mental Health First Aiders, who could act as first response for colleagues with immediate concerns or needs.

We now have more than **60 trained Mental Health First Aiders** at BDO.



AN INTERACTIVE, CLEAR FRAMEWORK

We use Mind's Five Ways of Wellbeing to help people navigate towards the material that best suited their current need, and to understand how all the support they receive fitted together.

More than **3,000 views of our new framework** in the first month.



LOCAL WELLBEING CHAMPIONS

We have more than 80 Wellbeing Champions – people in every team who work with their local partners and HR Managers to keep Wellbeing part of team conversations and run local challenges and events.



SUPPORT FROM EXPERTS

Our thanks go to a number of psychologists and business academics with whom we have worked on materials, resources and webinars. In particular, to Cognacity and London Business School for creating a bespoke series of 'Succeeding through Change' webinars, launched in summer 2021.

MENTORING

THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTORING

MENTORING CAN TAKE DIFFERENT FORMS BUT WE HAVE NOW MADE IT EASIER TO FIND OUT WHAT'S AVAILABLE AND HOW TO SIGN UP AS EITHER A MENTEE OR A MENTOR. WE OFFER ►



DAN BOWER

RAS Director

WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE MOST ABOUT BDO?

The thing that sets BDO apart is the freedom to be yourself.

The Dan you get in work is the real me; no performance, no pretence; no pressure to be someone I'm not... I have full permission to be who I really am...

ONE-TO-ONE MENTORING

The traditional one-to-one mentoring model, a mentor and a mentee agree to enter a professional relationship to help the mentee develop, improve and achieve.

MENTORING CIRCLES

Quite simply, a mentoring circle is where a number of colleagues (mentees), meet together to discuss a topic of interest with a mentor who has experience or expertise in the subject. The fantastic thing about a mentoring circle is that not only do participants benefit from the expertise of the mentor, they also learn from their peers and build their network more broadly with the other mentoring circle participants.

REVERSE MENTORING

Reverse mentoring pairs junior colleagues with senior leaders to mentor them on various topics of strategic and cultural relevance.

EXTERNAL AND DIVERSITY & INCLUSION MENTORING

There may be times when it is beneficial or appropriate for colleagues to look outside of BDO to find a mentor that is best suited to their career objectives.

EXAMPLES OF MENTORING

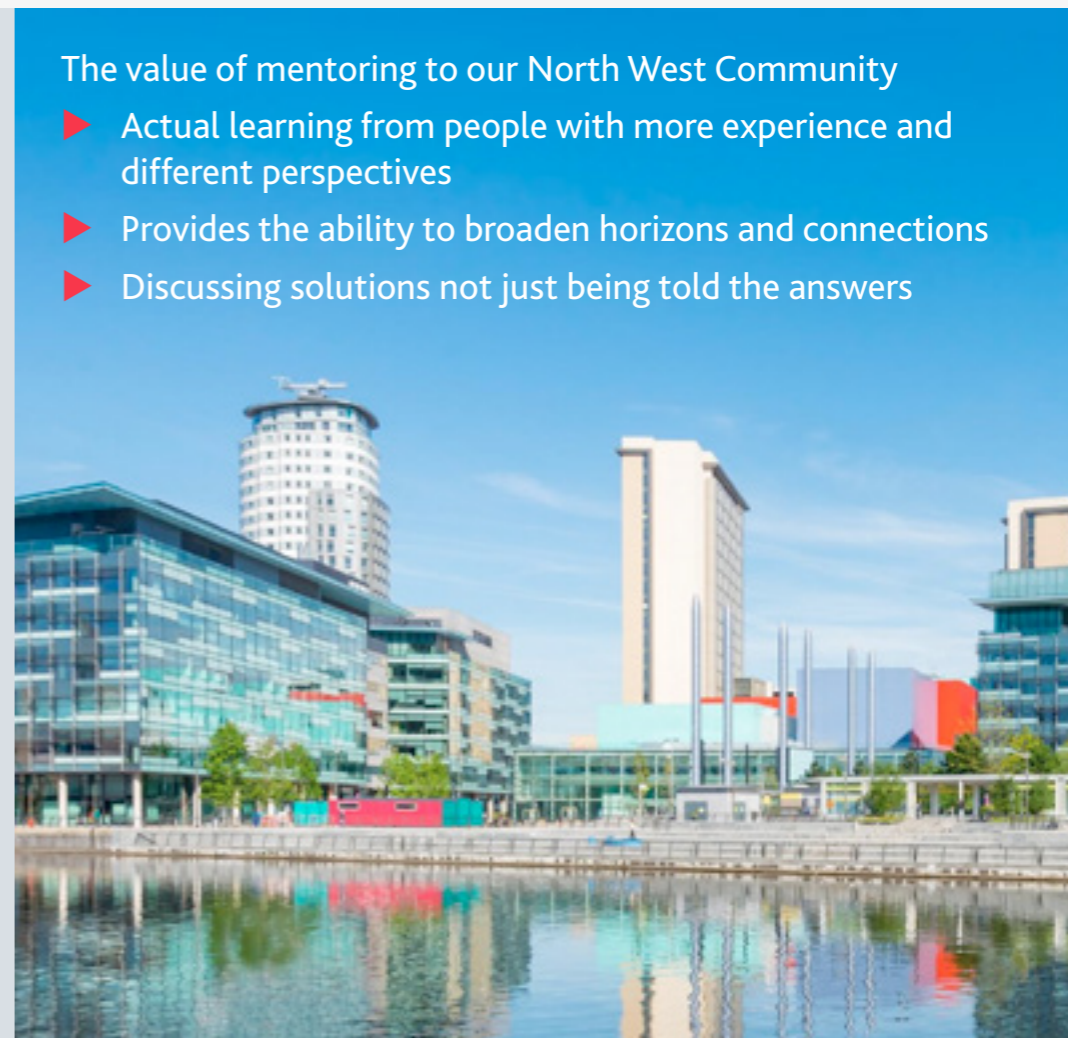
The 30% Club is a global campaign led by business chairs and CEOs, originally taking action to increase gender diversity on boards and senior management teams. This year it has also increased its focus to ethnicity. It was established in the United Kingdom in 2010 with the aim of achieving a minimum of 30% female representation on the boards of FTSE 100 companies.

BAME NETWORK

BAME is our Black, Asian, and minority ethnic network that was formed in June 2018 with the aim of addressing the issues some minority groups may face in the working world. In response to the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020, there were circa 20 Listening Events held by local teams across the firm. These provided a space for our black colleagues to – bravely - talk, reflect and share experiences, as well as for others to listen and build more understanding on how to make BDO a more inclusive place. One of the common themes of these Listening Events was mentoring.

The value of mentoring to our North West Community

- Actual learning from people with more experience and different perspectives
- Provides the ability to broaden horizons and connections
- Discussing solutions not just being told the answers



MENTORING

SOME REAL WORLD EXAMPLES



RIDA SHAHZAD
Audit Assistant Manager

In December 2020, I completed a reverse mentoring programme with Ed Dwan, the Lead for the North West, on BDOs initiative to supporting Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups (BAME).

The purpose of these sessions were to educate and add knowledge to those who aren't within the BAME group to acknowledge the issues some minority groups may face in the working world and also highlight the success stories.

Although initially daunted by the prospect of mentoring someone as senior as Ed, I found the opportunity exciting and inspiring. I definitely knew the responsibility I was carrying to bridge the gap and ensure I can fully explain the underrepresented concerns.

As an outcome of these sessions, the struggles faced by new joiners from overseas were also highlighted, which received an affirmative response from Ed leading to initiating separate sessions with HR Manager, Department Senior Managers, BAME leaders in Manchester office and support staff to bring the issues in light and plans to address them.

We further conducted an output session and agreed to implement new processes to resolve the concerns such as ensuring the starter packs were more inclusive of the settling in guidelines and help forums to ensure the new joiners can find assistance for not just their job roles and responsibilities but for other pressing matters like accommodation, GP registration, bank accounts opening process, NI registration etc.

I was genuinely impressed that North West leaders were ready and prepared to listen to a diverse and junior view and take action on it.

I would strongly encourage everybody to take the opportunity to reverse mentor, because you can't affect change if you don't get involved. The learning, experience and opportunities gained are second to none.



ROSHNI PATEL
Tax Associate Director

I took part in the 30% Club cross-company mentoring programme in the 2020/21 cohort.

Having never participated in any sort of mentoring programme before, I was a bit sceptical about what I would get out of it and how helpful a mentor would actually be

I'm glad to say I shouldn't have worried! It was great to be able to have regular honest conversations with my mentor, who drew from his very different experiences to provide really useful and practical advice.

He definitely challenged my way of thinking and genuinely wanted to provide career and personal support.

The various events the 30% Club organised throughout the year were also really interesting and thought provoking, arranging for guest speakers such as Olympic performance psychologists and life coaches to share their stories and views.

Although the 30% Club is specifically aimed at gender balance/ ethnic diversity, I would definitely recommend a formal mentoring programme to anyone.



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (ED&I)

BEING TRUE TO YOURSELF

Encouraged to be yourself: we value you as an individual and want you to realise your aspirations. We know that if you bring your 'real' self to work you are far more likely to be successful. You have a voice and your opinion counts. On the right we have summarised BDO's Be Yourself strategy which includes the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda.

BDO as a whole host of networks nationally so local communities can feel supported, share experiences and encourage everyone to be themselves. In the North West we are in the fortunate position that we have good representation across many groups which has helped to build our inclusive and collaborative culture.



**HAMID
GHAFOOR**

RACE AT WORK CHARTER

We are fortunate to have the lead figure for the BDO Race at Work Charter based in the North West. He regularly brings insights and raises the awareness of prejudices that need to be called out.



**LISA
QUARIN**

BLEND

BLEND is our lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) network. Our network's objective is to help all of you to live your professional life as you.



**EMELIA
HARDING**



**MUHAMMAD
SHARIF**

BAME

BAME is our Black, Asian, and minority ethnic network and was formed to be an informative, interactive group, which highlights the many successes but also the issues some minority groups may face in the working world. BAME's primary aim is to unify the culture within BDOs 'BUILD'.



**ELISABETH
CARR**

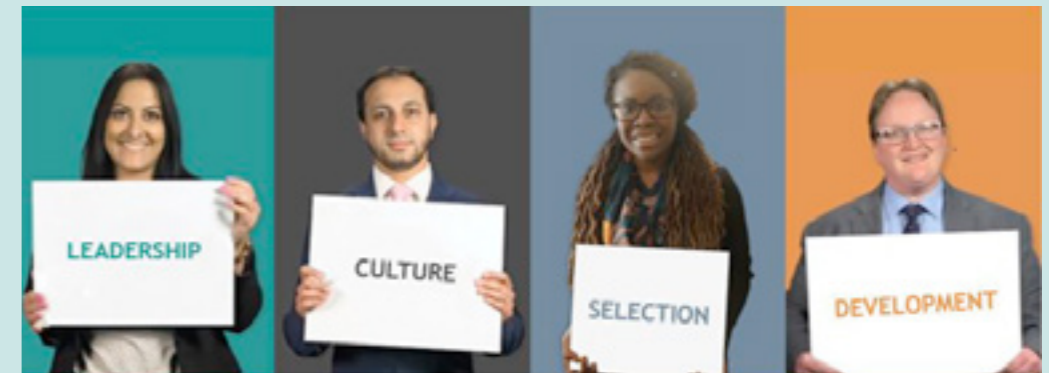
INSPIRE

Inspire is our local community which has been organised to support women on their career journey at BDO. The events and skills-based learning workshops are arranged to give the tools for women to be successful and secure leadership positions and improving BDO's gender balance.



OUR 'BE YOURSELF' STRATEGY

If we aspire to build a culture where everyone can be themselves, we need to ensure that people feel they belong and are included at every point of their career at BDO. Our Be Yourself strategy is founded on our Core Purpose – helping you succeed – and allows us to check that at four levels: Leadership, Culture, Selection, and Development.



Leaders who are open-minded, listen to your voice and are actively taking steps to support, role-model, champion and sponsor the development of diverse talent in their teams.

An inclusive culture where we are transparent about our progress, our success and our areas of new and continued focus. Looking beyond our firm, working with our professional bodies, and peers to drive systemic change in our profession.

An employer brand that appeals to quality, diverse candidates, who broaden the firm's horizons and add to our diversity of thinking. Achieved through an inclusive selection process, which leaves all candidates with a first-class experience regardless of outcome.

A career that is based upon equality; access to inclusive, fair opportunities, underpinned by robust data-informed processes and with support available through a mentoring and coaching environment.

UNDERPINNED BY OUR CORE PURPOSE, VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

RACE AT WORK CHARTER



HAMID GHAFOOR

BAME Network partner sponsor, leader of BDO's Risk Advisory Services and Not For Profit teams in the North, and Liverpool FC fan



I said last year that 2020 needed to go down in history as a turning point to sustainable, systemic change in racial justice – in society, for individuals and in the workplace. How we continue to respond in the next few years is key. It is neither easy nor quick to solve – but we know that racism will not disappear and true equality will not be achieved without consistent, intentional action.

In Autumn 2020, BDO published its Race Action Plan which used the Business in the Community's Race at Work Charter as its framework. The plan detailed how we can increase BAME representation, and particularly senior representation, and drive sustainable, long-term change.

In 2021 we addressed the actions and at the start of 2022 launched our new action plan. Our key ambition by 2026, is to have the number of partners who identify themselves as BAME to have increased from 4% to 10%, with 10% of those partners identifying themselves as being of black heritage.

Our Listening Programme told us that our Black colleagues gave a lower-than-average score when answering if people from different backgrounds can be themselves and thrive at BDO. 94% of Black African men are proud to work for BDO; far higher than other communities. But BAME and particularly Black women were less engaged than their male colleagues in most categories. This reminds us that we still have a long way to go and that we need to remain committed to delivering our Race Action Plan in a very individual way.

The last 12 months have brought race conversations to the fore; both in the community and the workplace.

The importance of these conversations is recognised in BDO's Race Action Plan, where one specific action is 'to provide support to our colleagues on how to talk about race'.

Our thinking is brought to life with the regular insights given by our BAME community. The insights of various BAME members of the prejudice they suffered in their lives to date is insightful and brings together the thinking of how we want our culture to be at BDO North West.



Issues such as racism have to be called out for what it is.

How well we are doing, our efforts to make society better and to see any form of progression on certain fronts such as race or gender, we have to call something out when we see it happen. It's as simple as that. I am delighted with the support for the Race at Work Charter and the feedback I and members of the BAME network team have received following our workshops, webinars and articles last year.

A NETWORK OF NETWORKS

As many of us reflect on what 'belonging' and 'community' mean to us in a COVID-19 world, we thank our Network groups for creating a place for our local communities, in which we can provide support, promote inclusivity and encourage all of us to be ourselves.

We aim for our Networks to be well-represented groups, with access to strong and prominent role models. We embrace individuality along with collaborative working; Being Collaborative is critical between our Networks. We believe that 'difference' is what makes us great and what strengthens our team, which is why we foster an inclusive culture at BDO that encourages people to be themselves.

BAME NETWORK



MUHAMMAD SHARIF
North BAME Vice Chair

I have been in this role since 2020 and have been working extremely hard to create and maintain a diversity friendly environment within the Manchester office, which is one of the most diverse offices in the country.

One of my favourite achievements to date has been leading the reverse mentoring initiative where Ed Dwan, our North West Lead Partner, agreed to be in our first senior partner involved in the local pilot.



I also had the daunting task of mentoring BDO's head of audit, Scott Knight, as part of the national pilot which was a fantastic experience.

I have also been involved in local listening events, ensuring any concerns are put into actions and sharing ideas nationally where relevant.

Last year, I also started to lead local initiatives like wear red day to show racism a red card and raising funds for anti-racism charities.

It's been a terrific experience and the response and support from our team has been so good.

The North BAME group support our BAME colleagues and other BAME groups within BDO to provide a safe space for colleagues to engage and support them to be themselves. This includes:

- ▶ Ensuring diversity remains a core priority for senior leaders per the Race at Work action plan
- ▶ Working with the U Board and Diversity and Inclusion Manager for approval of budgets, event, and plans
- ▶ Lobbying strong ethnic diversity policies, ensuring that all workers enjoy equal opportunities at all stages of the employment cycle, including access to employment, training, promotion and retirement
- ▶ Raising awareness on the right to a workplace free from racial discrimination and in supporting their coworkers through advocacy when they issue complaints
- ▶ Promote events, activities and communications to educate and support colleagues within BDO.

We communicate and promote BAME issues regularly on Yammer to create engagement and education with BDO colleagues.

PROMOTING AND CREATING A DIVERSITY FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

We try to create a diversity friendly environment by supporting and promoting other networks through Yammer and email. This will include working through collaboration on events and activities. For instance, North BAME Chair Rachel Agorom Lloyd is involved with BDO's Black Lives Matter (BLM) Consulting group and a BAME Network panel event with guest speakers Chantelle Lunt and Dr Marvin Iroegbu in the Summer of 2021.

The reverse mentoring pilot was launched in November 2020 through the North BAME Group and is still being run. The pilot involves partners of the firm being mentored by more junior colleagues with BAME background. The pilot has grown from the North BAME group to also include other offices. The most recent participant of the pilot being our managing director Paul Eagland. We will be feeding back the success of the pilot in May 2021.

We also display ally-ship promoting zero tolerance for Racism, Islamophobia, Anti-Semitism, Sexism, Homophobia, Biphobia & Transphobia.



INSPIRE NETWORK



ELISABETH CARR
North West Aspire Lead



The last 12 months has been a successful one for the women in the North West. With the support of the firm and the BDO Inspire initiatives a number of our women have achieved well deserved promotions and taken on exciting new roles

Our Inspire North West network was established three years ago and is closely aligned with the national BDO Inspire women's network.

The purpose of BDO Inspire is to support women in their journey and career progression at BDO, through skills-based learning working towards improving gender balance in leadership positions. As part of BUILD's Unifying Culture, BDO Inspire is seeking to drive through initiatives supporting the role of women in BDO: we now have a set target for female partners as part of the Women in Finance charter. Whilst BDO Inspire is predominantly a women's network, we encourage participation from all genders.

Our objectives are to:

- ▶ Develop an internal network of connections - Providing the opportunity for women to form connections in addition to those formed doing their specific role. This includes connections between teams, grades and office locations
- ▶ Build skills - Developing skills for women to succeed within their teams and in leadership at BDO

- ▶ Improve visibility, internally and outside of BDO - Providing a channel to inform people of the many ongoing initiatives at BDO relevant to the Inspire purpose. This includes internal visibility for staff, as well as external visibility to demonstrate to the market that we are making commitments such as the Women in Finance Charter.

Over the last three years we have held a varied programme of events, covering: training & development, networking, social, and external/ business development. Events over the last year include: 'Choose to Challenge' event to celebrate International Women's Day (both Paul Eagland and Ed Dwan took part taking photos of themselves raising their hand to challenge and call out inequality); Q&A event with Alexandra Fogal, Business Development Director at Barclays; and Helen Knowles took part in a Q&A session with Wendy Walton on gender balance. These events have helped women in the North West to build their networks and develop key skills to support them with their career development.

We are in the process of planning an exciting range of events for 2022 – both virtual and in person (as regulations permit); covering both internal (for BDO staff) and external (client) events.



BLEND NETWORK



BLEND North exists to be a local point of contact and engagement for our Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds offices.

Our purpose as a group is to ensure that there is a safe and visible space for LGBT+ colleagues. Our main goal is to make sure that everyone feels welcome in our offices and feel like they can be themselves at work, whatever that means for them. After all, 'be yourself' is at the heart of what working at BDO is all about.

BLEND is our lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT+) network. The network was formed with the support of the Inclusion Steering Group, with a specific focus on matters of sexual and gender identity. The name "BLEND", recognises that BDO, and indeed the world, are not homogenous environments, and that society is made up of a blend of countless intersecting identities. "BLEND" signifies that we strive to employ, support and nurture a diverse workforce.

Over 40% of 18 – 25 years olds surveyed, reported going back into the closet when they started their first job and 76% of LGBT+ employees surveyed reported that they have hidden their sexual orientation or gender identity at work, at least once. This is precisely what your BLEND network is here to eradicate.



ENABLED NETWORK



For a number of years now the firm has supported a whole range of networks which have been established by interested parties to drive forward change in specific areas and to provide support to like-minded colleagues or to those going through similar experiences.

Many of these are National groups of which the North West has become an affiliate. We have a number of very successful networks in the region with a lot of active members/supporters/leaders across our two offices and including the shared service centre.

I am delighted to say that one of our newest additions to the Networks was driven in part by one of our very own people in the North West, Hannah Richards. Whilst Hannah has now left the firm to pursue an entirely different and exciting opportunity, her legacy is the development of The Enabled Network alongside Adam Spires, a partner in the Southampton Public Sector Audit team.

The Enabled Network supports employees who identify as having a disability or long term health condition, or their carers, to network across the firm and build relationships with people who share similar experiences. The network also seeks to educate the firm on disability related specific matters.

As a carer for my elderly mum and therefore fully understanding the challenges of being a support for someone with a disability, I was only too willing to volunteer to be the U Board partner sponsor for this group. The energy and enthusiasm of the team has been phenomenal and their drive and determination has led to the creation of a vibrant and informed community.

A number of events and knowledge sharing webinars are planned for the coming year, but for now the community shares knowledge, information and support on their Yammer page. Go ahead, take a look...

OUR CULTURE OUTSIDE WORK

THE WAYS WE WORK TOGETHER DON'T STOP AT 5:30PM



SPORT, CHARITY AND CITIZENSHIP



When we ask our team about what they like about working for BDO North West, whether they are an apprentice, graduate or even an experienced hire, many would say it is our people. As well as working together, with open lines of communication from the partners, there is a clear 'out of office' culture where friends are made, socials are arranged and there is a real desire to support our community along the way.

In recent years there have been a whole array of events organised from our organised department activity days and socials at Chester Races through to our participation in corporate events where we have teams representing BDO locally.

We have entered teams in the Manchester 10k, Manchester Professionals Cricket league as well as BDO's very own Global Football tournament but no one would have imagined that a firm of accountants would have won the Halle Workplace Choir competition in 2019.

Our culture and supportive mind set also encourages us to support the local community as well. BDO has a Citizenship 5+5 policy where you have up to ten CSR days to support local charities.

Five days are activity based such as fundraising and volunteering where the other five days are to be used for more strategic based activities such as coaching, mentoring, and specific skillset workshops.

We want our people to feel part of something and work where they feel valued, supported and above all to be themselves.



HELPING OTHERS



We're a people-powered business. We know this is where we can make the most positive impact: we are experts in developing vital business and financial skills across thousands of our employees

5+5

NICOLA LALLY

Director of Communications, mentor for the Taylor Bennett Foundation and Schitt's Creek fan

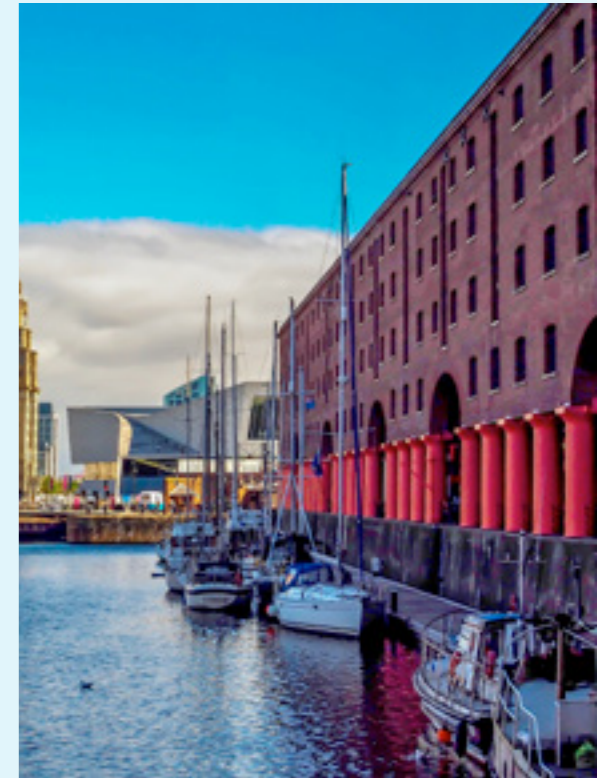
We have Citizenship champions in every business unit. Their role is to communicate our national programmes, stimulate local ideas and initiatives and determine what's going to work best for their group. It's not a 'one size fits all' approach.

Our approach is deliberately open. It recognises that we're not all the same. There are things we need to do as a firm to maximise our positive impact on the world around us, but if we enable our people to make a difference at the same time then our impact will be far greater.

Therefore, we're saying citizenship is whatever it means to you – it could be environmental responsibility or charity fundraising. We're determined to be a responsible business, but in a way that truly reflects our people.

OUR CITIZENSHIP STRATEGY IS CALLED '5+5':

- ▶ 'My Action 5' – you'll have 5 days for all your brilliant action-oriented activity, for example fundraising, local volunteering, team-giving days
- ▶ 'My Strategic 5' – you'll have 5 days where you can use your professional skillsets, for example, working with our Track series of companies to solve a societal issue or visiting schools to help with CV writing or interview preparation. We'll be able to co-ordinate a number of different activities and links into organisations that make it easier for you to take part – and also ensure any independence or quality risks are considered beforehand.



HELPING OTHERS

WHO ARE SALFORD FOUNDATION?

Salford Foundation is a charity providing opportunities for young people and adults to create better futures. The charity has been helping people in Salford, Greater Manchester and the North West for over 30 years.



THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN BDO AND SALFORD FOUNDATION

Salford Foundation's relationship with BDO has been on-going for a number of years now.

The partnership started when the Business Education Partnership (BEP) team at Salford Foundation made a 'cold contact' with BDO, seeking employee volunteers for some of the activities in schools. A few volunteers came forward and the initial events were very successful.

Staff went back to the office and talked to colleagues about the impact of their volunteering and the work of Salford Foundation more generally. A senior manager became interested and a meeting was held with the Foundation's CEO. This led to the senior manager becoming a trustee of the Foundation and joining the Board.

Since then, the relationship between the two organisations has become more strategic, with BDO contributing significant time resource to many of the Foundation's programmes.

A senior manager from BDO always sits on the Foundation's Board and ordinarily chairs the Audit and Risk Sub-committee.

HOW MANY BDO EMPLOYEES HAVE VOLUNTEERED AND WHAT HAS BEEN THE SOCIAL IMPACT

Around 60 BDO North West employees have been involved in the various Salford Foundation projects to date (if not more). Some of the events and projects that staff have been involved with to date are:

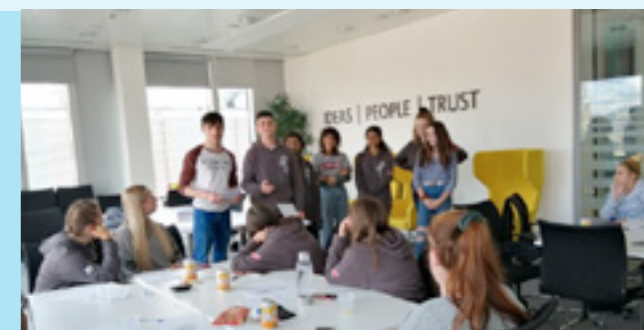
- ▶ The National Citizen Service (NCS) which ordinarily takes place in the summer (pre-pandemic world) when Salford Foundation organise a 4-week personal development programme for young people across the country. The students participate in various activities including visiting businesses to learn new skills. As part of this, BDO assist in delivering finance workshops which teaches the students budgeting skills in a fun and educational way.
- ▶ The Business Education Partnership and Take Five, which involve events such as mock interviews and supporting students to develop enterprise and work related skills. BDO volunteers have assisted Salford Foundation with the Business Education Partnership since January 2017.

This project has supported around 900 students since its commencement.
- ▶ Inspired to Aspire mentoring programme which involves in school sessions and visiting the BDO office alongside their mentor so that students can experience what it is like to be in the workplace BDO has again been involved with this project since January 2017 and the mentors involved have supported around 200 young people to date.

FEEDBACK FROM THE PROJECTS

All of the individuals who have been involved in any of the Salford Foundation projects have commented on how well the projects have worked and how much they have enjoyed volunteering. All feedback from the projects has been really positive and people have really enjoyed the experience. Individuals have said that they have been able to learn new skills from the various projects, for example, presentational skills, interview skills/techniques etc.

As the post-pandemic way of life begins to evolve it appears that Salford Foundation are planning various new opportunities, most of which are virtual for the time being but this at least suggests that there are various ways we can continue to develop this partnership going forward.



HELPING OTHERS

SOME EXAMPLES OF WHERE WE HAVE SUPPORTED OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

BEE IN THE CITY

Over the Summer of 2018, Wild in Art and Manchester Council organised one of the largest public arts displays ever to take place in Manchester - Bee in the City. Its sole purpose was to bring communities together and raise funds for local charities.

BDO heavily supported the trail by doing various activities to raise funds for the charities. We also used it as a great team building exercise by being involved in the corporate walk. The local marketing team, with the help of our designers, also developed a BEE DO game which was downloadable when visitors visited our BEE. It was highly addictive!



The BEEDO Bee - being finished by artist Caroline Dowsett.



Fundraising on the bee trail



The BEEDO bee in all its glory in Spinningfields



WOOD STREET MISSION CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Last December, we decided to support an important campaign to help families in Manchester and Salford – the Wood Street Mission Christmas Appeal.

The Wood Street Mission asked for gifts and toys so families who struggle to make ends meet and who have had a particular tough year, could still provide toys and gifts for their children.

We really wanted to support the appeal and provided over £500 worth of presents to the Wood Street Mission Christmas shop so families could visit and choose presents for their children to open on Christmas morning.

Grace Hanson, Tax Assistant Manager, led our fundraising activities and organised the collection and delivery of all the toys and gifts to the Wood Street Mission. We hoped this bit of support went some way to help local families have a great Christmas together.



SPORT

FOOTBALL

Our football calendar revolves around BDO's national football tournament, which is held in early August every year with the host city rotating each year.

The event is held over a 2 day weekend in early August with evening social events included. Our North West teams have enjoyed consistent successes over many years: one of our men's team have reached at least the semi-finals in each of the last 7 years, winning 4 times; our women's team has won their tournament twice with a number of semi final appearances in the same period.



Success in BDO's national tournament earns a team the chance to represent BDO UK in BDO's European tournament held each year in rotating host cities. Our best result in recent years has been our women's team reaching the final in 2017. Our men's team are a historic winner of the tournament, but like 90's/00's English team, they have been consistently beaten on penalties in quarter-finals in recent years.

In January/February, our football calendar starts in earnest where we take part in the Manchester Professionals Football League against a variety of other companies and professional services firms across the city. Success has been moderate, playing in the winter snow, hail, wind and rain is clearly not to our team's liking!

As part of BDO's wellbeing initiative, recently we also started a fortnightly 7aside (mixed gender) session for anyone of any ability to play to pad out the rest of the footballing calendar.



Whilst most of our football games are short sided, however we have been known to stretch to the odd 11aside friendly against a select Man City Finance XI and a team of mixed professionals, Lawds.



SPORT

MANCHESTER 10K

For many years, BDO has been an enthusiastic supporter of the Great Manchester Run, a tradition which started with the legacy PKF line of the Firm. In normal times, the event is held on a Sunday in late May.

The Great Manchester Run is one of the big days in the city's calendar – 40,000 runners, tens of thousands of spectators, live TV coverage on BBC, a vibrant atmosphere in the city – a day for everyone. We generally have a team of 35 to 45 participants, and it is an event for everyone, whatever their motivation – as a fitness challenge, as a first running event, or something to train for to achieve a good time.

Most importantly, to take part together as BDO in a mass participation event to support the city... and then meet up for food and drink afterwards.

There is a corporate team challenge, attracting hundreds of teams from a variety of companies in the city. On occasions, we have had Top 3 for both our Men's and Women's teams.

A welcome additional feature in the last couple of years has been the Family Run, which has enabled the children of staff to run with their parents in a special family event.

Part of the event is to link in with our CSR programme for each year, and raise funds for that year's charities. Over the years, we have supported a number of local charities including The Christie Hospital, Alzheimer's UK, The Mustard Tree and The Seashell Trust.



BEFORE



AFTER



The Manchester 10k is a big part of our Corporate Social Responsibility calendar and we have enjoyed participating in the event for many many years. Everyone in the Manchester and Liverpool offices is encouraged to join in – it's a great event, a great day and helps raises funds for local charities

STEPHEN HOLDEN

Tax Manager and chief organiser for the Manchester 10k

SPORT

CRICKET

Over a number of years BDO have taken part in the Manchester Professionals Cricket League against a variety of other companies and professional services firms across the city.

The team has actually found some moderate success winning the plate competition a couple of times in the past on finals day at Timperley CC (2012 and 2019). The team is always keen to welcome enthusiastic cricketers of any age or quality to enjoy an evening's T20 style game at one of the grounds across Manchester where games are hosted.

The selection policy isn't overly strict as over the years the team has incorporated many BDO players as well as some alumni and clients along the way. At the end of each season the league

also hosts a charity dinner which BDO have historically supported and attracts some good guest names. The 2019 edition included David Gower as the guest speaker.

The Manchester weather has at times made organising the games a hobby fraught with danger from rainstorms, hailstorms, and probably snow at times, but that has dampened the spirits of those involved looking to enjoy the game.

Special mention must go to our superstar mystery spinner, Hamid Ghafoor, who has consistently bamboozled oppositions with his eclectic brand of bowling which never ceases to amaze.



GOLF

Better to be lucky than good... The infamous words exclaimed by Mark Colman, stood on the 3rd tee at Mere, immediately before hitting his tee shot behind a tree, then taking out a sand wedge, chipping the ball against the tree and somehow running it up to the hole for the easiest tap in par you're ever likely to see.



Each year various teams around the North West office are invited to take part in golf days put on by our clients and our network of intermediaries – the highlight of the year being Nichols Plc's annual charity golf day at the Championship golf course at Mere Country Club.

The Nichols audit team as you'd imagine usually dominate the attendees from BDO, however somehow Steve Roberts and Stuart Wood have always managed to work themselves an invite. Stuart at least is rotating on as audit partner in 2022, however Graham Ellis who rotated off the job 3 years ago still gets the invites and I'm sure will remain a mainstay of the team.

Being an audit client you'd assume the BDO team would gracefully aim to appear mid table when the results are read out after the post tournament barbeque.. when the team won the trophy in 2018, having also picked up closest to the pin (Stuart..) and longest drive (Steve..) you'd be left wondering if Nichols ever regretted signing us up to the audit.

For anyone thinking they fancy getting involved in such days, don't think you need to be any good – Graham can barely even play. Although if there's a pre round bacon sandwich, the sun's shining, there's a drinks/snacks cart, and a post round hot dog I think he'd turn up even if you hadn't invited him.



CHOIR

The Halle Workplace Choir Competition in 2019 was our chance to do something really different. We had no prerequisite for people to sing, we just wanted people from across the office, from all ages and abilities, to join in and have a good time.

Our competition was tough and included (to name but a few) PWC, BAE Systems, DLA Piper, the Nightingale Choir at Wythenshawe Hospital. PWC were two time winners – so the challenge was on!

We were assigned a choral master by the Halle, Mr Matthew Roughley or, as we like to call him, the nicest guy in the world! We arranged our five rehearsal dates and before we knew it, the first date was upon us...

The response to the choir was excellent and we had 28 members at the first rehearsal – an impressive start! You could feel the nerves in the room, but once Matthew had sorted us in to Sopranos / Altos / Tenors and talked through the songs we would be singing, the tension eased and the fun started!

Our chosen songs were Blackbird by the Beatles which was accompanied by Matthew on the piano and I Saw Three Ships, which was acapella!

We were taught all sorts of techniques such as “imagine you are bouncing on a trampoline” to get the Ding Dong on I Saw Three Ships to be crisp and clear... and our amazing warm up of “Chicca Chicca Jar, Chicca Chicca Jar, Chicca Chicca Jar Jar Jar Jar Jar” – repeat at a higher key each time until only dogs can hear the sound you are making!

Our confidence was growing and the buzz between all of us was amazing – we’d see each other in the kitchen or in the lift and where previously it had just been a “Hi” or a smile, we now had something in common and would talk animatedly about the choir! I now knew people right across the office in most departments, rather than just the department I worked in.

Before we knew it, the big day was upon us... all 28 of us walked across Manchester to Halle St Peter’s, the venue for the competition. We had a warm up session with Matthew and in my opinion, we’d never sounded better!

We took our seats and the competition began. With each choir that sang, we’d look at each other with a frown and a “they were amazing”... We were never going to win this thing and then it was our turn....

We shuffled up to the stage in our matching black outfits with red flowers for the ladies, red ties for the men – looking very smart and feeling extremely nervous. We sang Blackbird first and I smiled the whole way through – the nerves were turning to enjoyment. Matthew’s tips and tricks were paying off and I could hear how good we sounded. Next was our acapella, I Saw Three Ships – we nailed it!

The judges went off to deliberate, we all sat around nervously waiting for the big announcement and then took our seats as they returned to the room. The head judge gave out several other awards to other choirs and we were still in the running... and then he said:

“I’m delighted to give this prize to a choir that is simply, a great choir... the winner of the Halle Workplace Choir Competition 2019 is the choir from BDO!”

Cue screaming, shocked faces, amazement, tears of joy – an utterly brilliant feeling! Everybody agreed that it was one of the best things we’d ever done! The feeling of all of us coming together to do such a wonderful thing, our gratitude to BDO for allowing us to take the time out of our busy days to rehearse and attend the competition, our pride at having won!


The camaraderie on the day and the feelings it evoked in all of us will, I’m sure, stay with us for a lifetime! Thanks BDO!



TALENTS

As well as having talented bunch of accountants and advisers, we also have a team who are successful outside work with a wide range of interests. Here's a selection....

- Adam McLoughlin:** White Collar Boxing
- Anshu Khandelwal:** Dancing
- Ben Kershaw:** Pigeon Shooting
- Cece Mowczan:** Former GB Rowing
- Dan Bower:** Songwriting
- Helena Cartmell:** Music
- Waleed Malik:** Music
- Alan Higham:** Constructed a Pergola
- Paul Groom:** Trying to get the highest value Tesco meal deal!
- Tom Greeves:** Bronze medal in Korfbal at British University Championships
- David Hopkins:** Cricket – once likened to Ian Botham...



MORE
THAN AN
ACCOUNTING
MACHINE

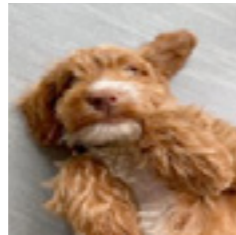


OUR PETS

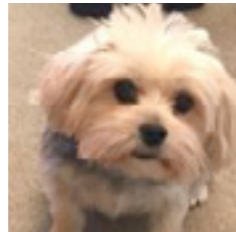
They say a dog is a man's (should say person's) best friend. Well at BDO in the North West we can vouch for that as it is clear that many of our team are dog lovers.



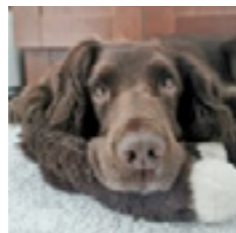
Many have documented that the pandemic helped them fulfil their desire to purchase a dog and some have even made unscheduled appearances and played starring roles on Team videos! Here are just a few of the snaps our editorial team were sent – its hard not to say aww!



Stuart Wood
NAME: HOLLY WOOD
Breed: Cockapoo
Age: 18 months



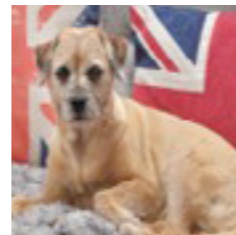
Tara Johnson
NAME: FERGI
Age: Nearly 8



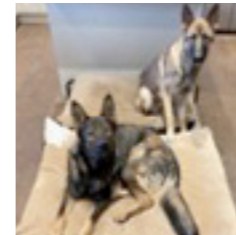
Alisha Parry
NAME: DEXTER
Age: 8



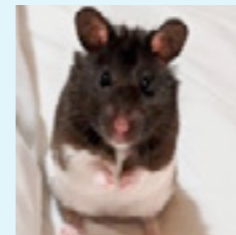
Ian Bingham
NAME: ROSIE
Age: She was 20 in Sept!
The fun fact about Rosie is that she was a present for our daughter on her 7th birthday and Rosie has now lived with us for longer than either of our children did



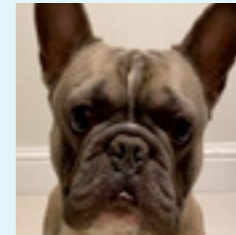
Julie Spencer
NAME: MOLLY
(her pedigree name is Santa's Delight)
Age: nearly 10
Molly is friendly, affectionate and fearless. I could have not asked for a better companion



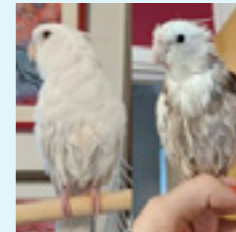
Emily Howard
NAMES: FREDDIE – AGE 2 RUE – 9 MONTHS
Freddie's favourite hobby is chasing cats and stealing all of Reu's toys – Reu in turn compensates by destroying every bed we give him



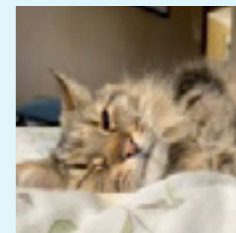
Lucy Patton
NAME: HAM SOLO
born December 2019 and named after a famous Star Wars character. When I went to Pets at Home to buy him, he was initially called 'Chonkers' because he was about three times the size of any other hammy. He's still a little greedy guts!



Phil Ward
NAME: WINSTON
Age: 2 years in March 22
A big and butch French Bulldog

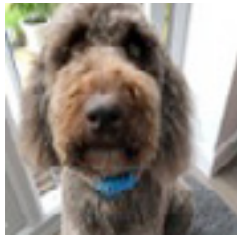


Emelie Harding
LEFT TO RIGHT: BOBBY - 2.5 NIMH - 1.5
They're both cockatiels



Nikki Bell
NAME: BUCKET
Age: 8
Fun fact: Sleeps under my desk in an old Amazon box while I work

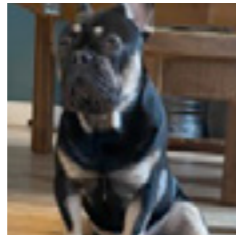
OUR PETS



Nicola Bottley

NAME: SCOOBERT DOODLE

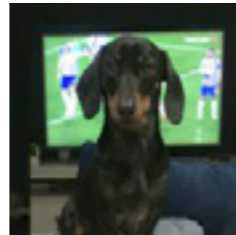
Age: 9



Estelle Moore

NAME: FRANCO

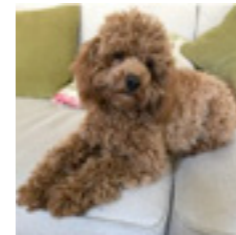
Age: 21 months



Vince Walker

NAME: OTIS

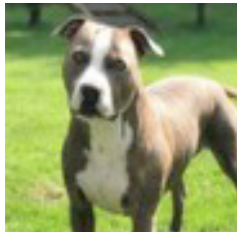
Age: 1



Laura Harper

NAME: RUBY

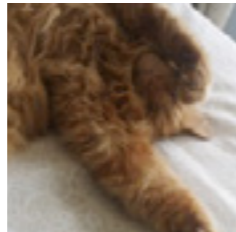
Age: 3



Andrea Gough

NAME: ARCHIE

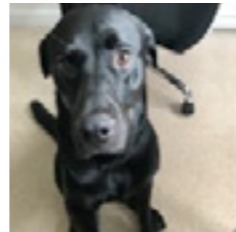
He looks fierce but has the softest nature and he so needy always wanting to be sat beside you and cuddled



Estelle Moore

NAME: JASPER

Age: 14



Helen Berry

NAME: OSCAR

Age: 17 months

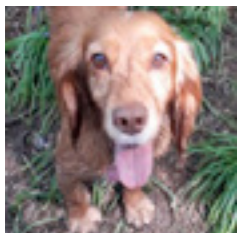
Not so much a funny fact but he has clearly become our favourite child, but now at least I have an answer when one of my children (aged 15 and 13) ask who the favourite is – most definitely Oscar!



Lucy Sauvage

NAME: OSCAR

Age: 19 months

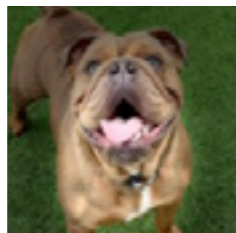


Juliet Hankey

NAME: ROXY

Age: 8

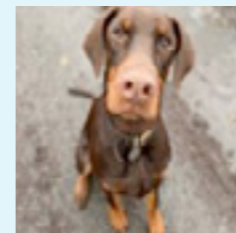
Squawks like a parrot when excited – squirrel chasing



Lucy Sauvage

NAME: FLOYD

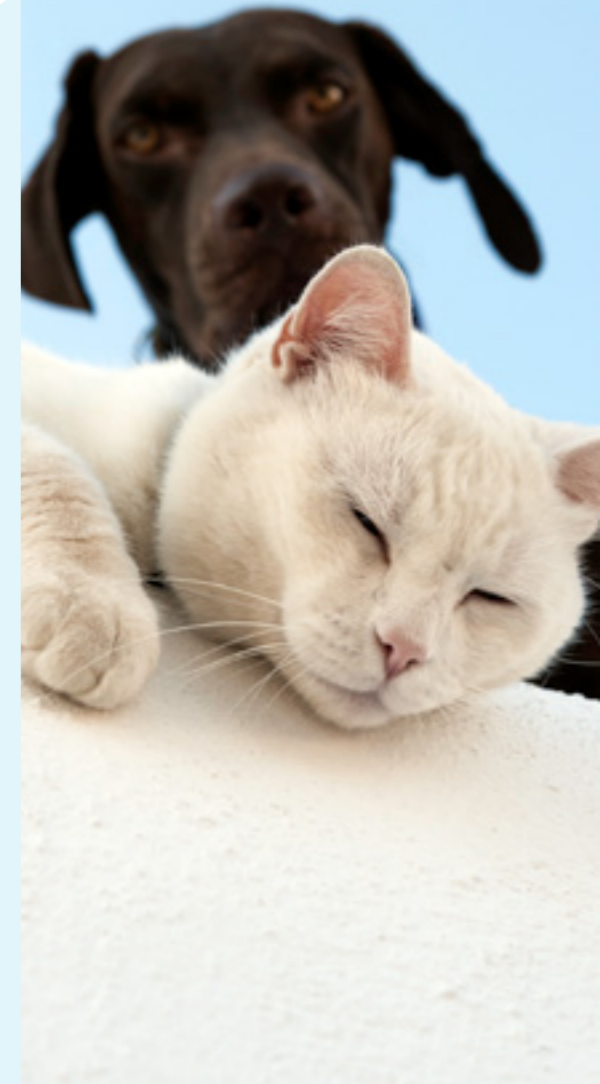
Age: 17 months



Andrew Fullard

NAME: ZAP

Age: 18 months



IF I WASN'T AN ACCOUNTANT...

Stereotyped view of accountants and not being particular interesting or exciting. Well contrast that with what our team of accountants would recognise what their alternate career would be:



Andrea Draper – Forensic Anthropologist



Joey Hetherington – Actor



Richard Hogg – Bin Man



Alix Gledhill – Fashion Designer



Vishal Reddy - Video Game Tester



Craig Aspinall – Weatherman



James Beswick – Professional Poker Player



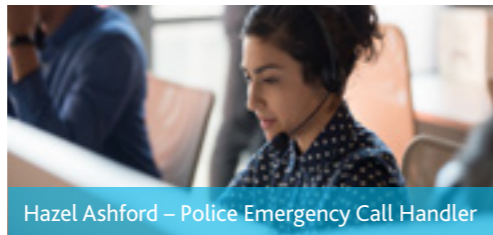
Hamid Ghafoor – Sky Sports Pundit



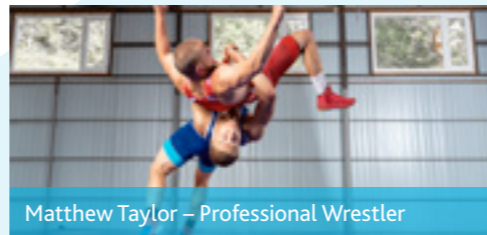
Helen Berry – Doctor



Tara Johnson – Charity fundraiser



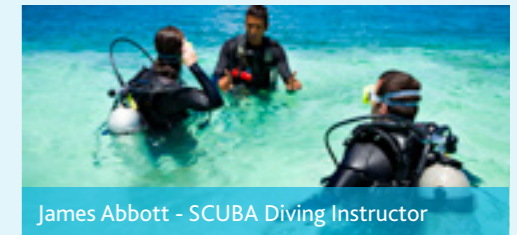
Hazel Ashford – Police Emergency Call Handler



Matthew Taylor – Professional Wrestler



Elisabeth Carr – Architect



James Abbott - SCUBA Diving Instructor

CONCLUSION

FROM ED DWAN, MANAGING PARTNER BDO NORTH WEST



WHEN I REFLECT BACK ON THE LAST SIX YEARS, I CAN RECALL NUMEROUS SUCCESS STORIES FOR BDO IN THE NORTH WEST.

In the market we have been prolific, winning on average around 60% of the formal tenders we engage with. As a consequence, we are now auditors or advisors to some of the most successful businesses headquartered in the North West, some of whom also have a significant global footprint.

This growth has enabled many of our people to achieve their career aspirations too, such that two thirds of our current Partner team have either been internally promoted or attracted from other firms in that time.

This growth story has been recognised in the local press and media, where BDO received more positive coverage than our competitor firms during 2021 (21%). We have also played a leading

role in the community, one of the highlights being a sponsor of Bee in the City (with our replica Bee decorated by local artist Caroline Dowsett sat proudly in our reception as a permanent reminder).

We've enjoyed our downtime too, whether it be sports and social events or one-off activities such as the afternoon we tried our hand at poetry under the expert guidance of local poet Tony Walsh (probably best known for his 'This is the Place' poem performed in response to the Manchester Arena bombing). Hundreds of accountants writing love poetry, now there's a first (and one of the most engaged sessions I've ever been involved in).

As for the future, well in these current times it is difficult to predict with any certainty but we remain ambitious, as do our clients/ targets and we have a fantastic team. If having read this report it sounds like the kind of place you would enjoy working why not get in touch?

OUR UNIFYING CULTURE

Our strategy specifically includes fostering a Unifying Culture, where you are:

- ▶ Encouraged to be yourself: we value you as an individual and want you to realise your aspirations. We know that if you bring your 'real' self to work you are far more likely to be successful. You have a voice and your opinion counts
- ▶ Inspired and challenged: few firms offer the same breadth and quality of work at all stages of your career. Your personal career plans are designed to inspire and challenge; we enable you to shape your career according to your strengths, skills and personality
- ▶ Collaborative: sharing and applying knowledge and ideas remains one of the most powerful things an organisation can do, it provides a competitive advantage. We are moving towards a culture of innovation to ensure that everyone has a chance to contribute their ideas and share knowledge with colleagues
- ▶ Successful: each of us has our own definition of success, we want to help you define, achieve and celebrate yours. In doing so, we will ultimately contribute to the overall success of the firm.

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