

DEAL DISPATCH - ISSUE 42

OUR CORPORATE FINANCE DIVISION'S REGULAR DEAL ROUND-UP

A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of two modern skyscrapers with glass facades. The buildings are set against a vibrant purple and pink sky, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The perspective creates a sense of height and scale.

LOCAL
KNOWLEDGE,
GLOBAL
EXPERTISE

Market overview

Last year PKF ranked as the 7th most active dealmaker in the UK, completing 139 deals worth £2.3bn. In the Midlands we completed 29 deals, including 5 cross-border deals, worth £346.8m. We were also shortlisted for 'SME Advisory Team of the Year', amongst others, at the Insider Midlands Dealmakers' Awards in September 2023.

This year's corporate finance activity has been more challenging than 2022, however, we recently completed 4 deals in 2 weeks showing that deal activity remains possible for good quality businesses.

The deals included:

- A private equity bolt-on acquisition;
- Two management buyouts; and
- A sale to an employee ownership trust.

We have ambitious plans to double the size of our team over the coming years in both the East and West Midlands demonstrating our commitment to the region and the opportunity we see here. I am pleased to announce the appointment of Callum Leslie to our East Midlands team, and we wish him every success in his career here. We hope to make more announcements soon.



David Crump,
Corporate Finance Director

Deal summary



Acquisition of Promove UK Ltd by Evac+Chair International

PKF advised the acquirer



Management Buyout of QEP-UK

PKF advised the Management Team



Sale of Griffiths Waite to an Employee Ownership Trust (EOT)

PKF advised the shareholders



Private equity bolt-on

Solihull-based Evac+Chair International has acquired ProMove UK Ltd in a deal supported by the Midlands division of PKF Corporate Finance.

As a manufacturer of emergency evacuation chairs, Evac+Chair International is a global leader in safe emergency evacuation for the mobility impaired. The acquisition of ProMove UK Ltd is the company's first since it secured significant investment from Swedish company builder Systematic Growth in a deal last year, also supported by PKF.

ProMove UK Ltd manufactures the ProMove Sling, a moving and handling sling device, which ensures that disabled or incapacitated individuals can be transferred from a wheelchair in a safe and dignified manner. The ProMove sling was designed by Dr Huw Thomas, who had limb girdle muscular dystrophy and initially designed the ProMove sling for his own use, mainly due to difficulties in transferring from his wheelchair at airports. The Company was established to support others in a similar situation.

The acquisition of ProMove increases Evac+Chair's product range and further establishes them as the global leader in solutions for mobility impaired people.

Darren Hodson and Josh Gurton of PKF Smith Cooper Corporate Finance delivered deal support to Evac+Chair International, with Adam Rollason, also of PKF, providing transactional tax support.

Gerard Wallace, Managing Director at Evac+Chair International, commented:

"The ProMove sling is a fantastic product which provides great support to mobility impaired people. We are excited to integrate the ProMove business into Evac. Darren and the team at PKF have supported us for a number of years and we can always rely on them to provide strong strategic advice and deal management."

Darren Hodson, Corporate Finance Partner at PKF Smith Cooper, commented: "We are thrilled to have been able to assist Evac+Chair International, a renowned Midlands-born company, in securing another milestone deal and to continue supporting the company's expansion plans through our ongoing relationship. With the clear synergies between the two companies, the acquisition of ProMove UK Ltd will undoubtedly strengthen Evac+Chair International's position as the company drives further expansion."



Management Buyout of QEP-UK

QEP-UK, the home of leading tiling, flooring and hardware home improvement brands such as QEP®, Roberts®, Vitrex®, Tile Rite®, Plasplugs®, Homelux®, XPS Foam™ and Kraus®, has been acquired in a management buyout with specialist support from PKF advisory, tax and corporate finance teams.

QEP-UK, headquartered in Burton on Trent, is a leading manufacturer and supplier of tiling, flooring and hardware tools and accessories, providing premium products to consumers, trade and retailers. Its brands cover both the “DIY” and trade sections of the tiling and flooring market and its products are sold in a number of home improvement stores, including B&Q, Wickes, Topps Tiles, Screwfix, Homebase and Travis Perkins, along with a wide reaching independent retailer network.

Darren Hodson and Josh Gurton provided deal support to the management team alongside the transactional tax team, led by Adam Rollason, who provided a full range of taxation advice, including personal, corporate and VAT.

Paul Boyce, CEO of QEP-UK commented: “PKF Smith Cooper were there from the inception of this deal to the end, providing strategic and technical advice throughout. Darren and Adam worked seamlessly alongside PKF SC’s range of tax specialists to ensure the transaction went as smooth as possible. We are excited about the future prospects of QEP-UK under our ownership.”

As a result of this transaction, the UK business is now owned by the Boyce Family Group. Paul and Sarah Boyce have been associated for many years with some of these industry leading brands. Paul has been a member of QEP’s group management team for the past 14 years, having most recently served on the US Board of Directors as CEO of International Operations.

The management team has acquired the UK business from US-listed QEP Inc and will continue to trade under the name QEP UK. The management team continues to be led by Paul Boyce as CEO. He has been supported in the transaction by FD Steven White and newly appointed COO Cam Gradwell.

Adam Rollason, Tax Partner at PKF Smith Cooper, commented: “I am delighted to have supported Paul and Cam on this transaction. I have no doubt that under its new ownership structure, QEP-UK will go from strength-to-strength over the next few years, and I wish them all the very best for the future.”



Sale of Griffiths Waite to an Employee Ownership Trust

Award-winning technology consultancy firm Griffiths Waite has been sold to an employee ownership trust (EOT) in a deal led by the transactions tax team at PKF Smith Cooper.

Griffiths Waite was co-founded by Mark Waite in 1994, starting out as an IT services provider, developing bespoke applications for its UK corporate client base. In recent years, the success of the business has allowed it to diversify its service offering, providing the platform for its evolution into the digital product development business that exists today.

The EOT concept was born out of a government-backed initiative, designed to promote employee ownership, by giving all employees a significant and meaningful indirect stake in the business, including a say in how it is run.

The PKF team was led by Tax Partner Adam Rollason, who provided tax structuring advice on the deal, and sell-side tax support to each of the selling shareholders.

Mark Waite commented: “Prioritising the needs of our employees, whilst securing the long-term future of the business, has always been of the utmost importance to me. I am incredibly proud of what we have been able to achieve over the past 30 years, but it is time to start looking ahead to the next chapter, and I believe that this transaction sets us up nicely for that.”

“The first-class advice and support we received from Adam and his team at PKF were instrumental in getting this transaction done, in fact, we have already recommended the team to others within the industry.”

Adam Rollason commented: “I was delighted to advise Mark and his fellow shareholders on this transaction. From the first meeting we had, it was clear to me that an EOT was the right option for all parties, and I am proud to be a small part of the transition to the new structure.”



New senior executive joins PKF corporate finance as Midlands division grows

Our award-winning PKF Corporate Finance team has hired a new senior executive, Callum Leslie, as we continue to fuel our ambitious expansion plans for growth through ongoing recruitment efforts.

We are growing the talented team behind our corporate finance services in order to expand our advisory and transaction service offerings. We are currently interviewing a number of high-calibre and ambitious professionals to join our Midlands team with the aim of doubling our advisory team numbers.

Callum Leslie worked in audit for five years at a top-10 UK accounting firm in the Midlands, starting his career as a school leaver in 2018. He was promoted twice and became an assistant manager, developing extensive experience in working with privately owned businesses in a range of sectors across the region. He qualified as a chartered accountant in 2022.

In his new role, Callum will support PKF Corporate Finance in helping Midlands business owners to buy, sell and grow their businesses.

Darren Hodson, Corporate Finance Partner at PKF Smith Cooper, commented:

“It is great to see our corporate finance division expanding, with the welcome addition of Callum to our team. His valuable experience in working with Midlands businesses will give him a solid foundation as he progresses in his career at PKF.”

“As our pipeline grows, we have career opportunities at all levels of the company for ambitious individuals looking to progress in corporate finance or, like Callum, make their first move into the industry. We would love to hear from talented individuals looking to be backed to deliver growth.”

Callum said: “I am delighted to have joined the team at PKF and look forward to the new challenges that lie ahead as I take this exciting side-step into corporate finance. I am really looking forward to working with our team to help our clients across the Midlands achieve their goals and business objectives.”

Contact our experts

As part of one of the Midlands' leading firms of multi-disciplinary accountants and business advisors, we mainly operate across key geographies in Derby, Nottingham and Birmingham, but UK-wide in our specialisms.

Highly-skilled and formally recognised, our specialist teams work alongside clients to gain a deep understanding of their business and objectives to deliver world class solutions meeting those objectives.

If you'd like further information regarding the contents of this document, or you'd like to find out more about how we can help you and your business, please get in touch with our team or visit us online.



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PKF UK & Ireland	139 deals completed in 2022	7th ranking in UK&I by deal volume	62 corporate finance professionals
 DEALMAKERS AWARDS 2022		 DEALMAKERS AWARDS 2023	
 DEALMAKERS AWARDS 2021		 SHORTLISTED	