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Aug 2022

## From PhD to employee

We are proud to support some of the UK's leading universities by providing consultancy and tech services from bespoke software to change management, but our paths intertwine in more ways than simply acting as supplier/client.

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As a business, we put people first and a huge part of that is to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge needed to be empowered within their roles. But sometimes, that starts even before they become a Waterstons employee.

"I initially joined Waterstons on a placement for my PhD research at Durham University," explains data scientist, Andrew Blance.

"The funding I received required me to work within a business to understand real life issues within industry, so I chose Waterstons due to its incredible reputation, and of course being on my doorstep!

"Coming into the business as an employee working on client projects supported my wider understanding of data, analytics and exactly what was being faced in the 'real world' (my focus was on clients in higher education and utilities), but it also helped me to understand the challenges faced within my academic home.

"After completing my PhD I returned to Waterstons as a full time, permanent employee using data to solve problems, understand processes and patterns, and develop efficiencies for our clients.

"The skills I learned from my PhD have been invaluable in my role and really informed how I work now – from how I approach problems to the theory behind them. It has also helped me to understand the challenges of our clients' stakeholders (e.g. students) having been in that position, so I can be proactive rather than simply reactive with clients.

"Without the strong link between a local business and a local university, this opportunity may never have happened, and I'm proud to be part of the tech revolution within the North East as well as developing the next generation of talent."

