

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**First accountancy firm scoops prestigious payroll honour**

Armstrong Watson has become the first accountancy firm to be awarded 'Payroll Quality Partnership' (PQP) status from the Institute of Payroll Professionals (IPP).

To date, only five companies across the UK have received the recognition with 120 further companies working towards the award. To meet stringent IPP criteria, Armstrong Watson's commercial payroll bureau introduced a 'payroll competence framework' setting a number of agreed performance standards for its sixteen strong payroll team.

A training and development matrix has also been created which links all staff learning and development requirements to the IPP training courses and qualifications for all Payroll Bureau staff.

Armstrong Watson's payroll bureau services over 2,000 businesses throughout the UK in both private and public sector, producing over 30,000 payslips on a monthly basis.

Brian Stenhouse, payroll services director at Armstrong Watson, comments: "Being awarded a Payroll Quality Partnership from the IPP is a massive achievement for Armstrong Watson especially for Suzanne Gallagher, our group payroll services manager, who put in a lot of hard work to get the award entry off the ground.

"The measures we have put in place to achieve this award will not only benefit our team in terms of training but will allow us to use the skills we have gained to further service our clients.

"We are continually developing new service lines and improving existing procedures - with an emphasis on team development - and the recognition from the IPP is the first step in us building a 'centre of excellence' for payroll and related services."

Lindsay Melvin, chief executive of the IPP, says: "Armstrong Watson is a worthy recipient of the IPP's PQP accreditation due to the excellent payroll service it provides to clients.

“At the IPP we are constantly aiming to raise the profile of payroll as a profession, and it is very encouraging to see such proficient payroll services offered by the likes of Armstrong Watson. I would like to congratulate them on their outstanding achievement.”

**-ends-**

**Notes to Editors:**

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Armstrong Watson is a firm of accountants, business strategists and financial advisers.

We have a network of 17 offices throughout the north of England and south west Scotland, with 36 partners and over 360 team members in a variety of areas such as: Business Enterprise Services, Business & Personal Tax, VAT, Corporate Services, Corporate Finance, Payroll, Insolvency & Corporate Recovery, Agriculture, Financial Planning and Wealth Management.

Armstrong Watson is registered to carry out audit work by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales and is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority.

Armstrong Watson is ranked as the UK's 26<sup>th</sup> largest accountancy firm in Accountancy Age's top 50 accountancy firms. (2008)

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