

Ciphr buys Shape Payroll

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HR and payroll software provider Ciphr (<https://www.ciphr.com>) has further strengthened its payroll business by acquiring Shape, a cloud-based payroll platform used by 1,500 UK businesses.

The deal marks a significant ramp-up in payroll-focused activities for the Reading-based, ECI-backed tech group, which already processes over £2 billion in payroll and BACS salary payments a year for its clients.

Since April, Ciphr has added over 20 new payroll customers, including payroll software, outsourced payroll and payroll bureau customers, and expanded its team of payroll experts.

Ciphr has also made several key appointments since last October, including Julie Lally, as MD of payroll; Daniel Turnbull as VP of customer operations; Andrew Stevens as chief technology officer; Jaspal Randhawa, as director of product (payroll, compliance and data platform); Eira Hammond, as payroll bureau and transformation director; and regulatory analyst Claire Warner FCIPP.

Joining forces with Shape – a robust and intuitive, API-led payroll solution – will build on this business growth. It will accelerate the development of Ciphr's market-leading payroll technology and help ensure that Ciphr can deliver an even better experience for its new and existing payroll customers and their people.

Shape's founders, husband and wife team Alex and Cheri Bartlett, and the rest of their team, will also join Ciphr from today.

Commenting on the announcement, Sion Lewis, CEO of Ciphr, says: "We're thrilled to welcome Alex and Cheri to the Ciphr team. Shape is a cutting-edge, API-first payroll solution that has a great reputation in the payroll sector. Shape's applications are extensive and well-suited to medium and large-sized organisations, like Ciphr's customers.

"We have great HR solutions, we are HR experts – it's what we do best – and we have more than 40 years' experience in the HR and payroll industry. Building out Ciphr's payroll business is a key focus for us this year, and part of our longer-term growth strategy. And Shape is a perfect fit to take our payroll tech to the next level.

"This acquisition will truly enhance our payroll proposition and help us to continue to support and empower the payroll professionals who use, and rely on, Ciphr's software and solutions."

Lewis adds: "We're delighted to welcome Shape customers to Ciphr. They can rest assured that they'll continue to benefit from the same dedicated service they've known, while Ciphr's additional resources mean we can continue to develop new, more functionality-rich features for our combined customer base. We also look forward to continuing to work with Shape's commercial partners to power their payroll products. I'm really excited about the opportunities ahead."

Julie Lally, MD of payroll at Ciph, says: "This is an exciting acquisition for Ciph. Shape is a pioneering payroll technology company that is renowned for its innovative, API-first payroll solution and commitment to payroll technology excellence. It has a proven track record of simplifying payroll operations, as it is implemented at pace and integrates with other systems with ease.

"Like Ciph, Shape is dedicated to revolutionising the way organisations manage their workforce. This acquisition underscores Ciph's commitment to innovation, customer satisfaction, and technological excellence, as we continue to empower businesses with the tools they need to thrive in an ever-evolving digital landscape."

It's business as usual for Shape's clients. They can expect a seamless transition, with continued product access and dedicated support.

Alex Bartlett, co-founder of Shape Payroll (<https://www.shapepayroll.com>), adds: "Cheri and I founded Shape with a vision to build the most flexible payroll software possible, allowing integration at any level via our Open API and backing that up with an intuitive user interface and fantastic customer support. We're immensely proud of what we have achieved over the last five years, and it has been a privilege to work with all the fantastic people we have met along the way. The relationships we have built, and the feedback we've received from our customers, has been amazing.

"We are both extremely excited about Shape becoming part of the Ciph Group and taking the next step in this journey. With the help of the amazing team at Ciph, we will be able to take our application to the next level. And being part of the Ciph brand will enable us to help customers we couldn't have reached before."

Stephen Roberts, partner at ECI, says: "We're delighted to welcome Alex and the Shape team into Ciph and therefore the ECI portfolio. It's another exciting development for Ciph, further strengthening its payroll proposition to customers. We look forward to working with Sion and the rest of the combined team to continue Ciph's organic and acquisitive growth journey."

Ciph (<https://www.ciph.com>) is the go-to HR software and solutions partner for medium and large organisations in the UK. Its integrated HR, payroll, learning and recruitment software, services and content provide invaluable insights to HR teams to inform their people strategy and grow and develop their organisations. Based in Reading, Ciph is on a mission to amplify the voice and value of HR through intelligent people data solutions that help HR be heard – in the boardroom and across the business.

More than 800 organisations use people management solutions from Ciph and its subsidiary Marshall E-Learning – a specialist diversity and inclusion learning provider that provides off-the-shelf content and bespoke courses. Ciph Group's customers include Volkswagen Group UK, Lifetime Training, Crisis UK, Bensons for Beds, Natural History Museum, the Met Office, Financial Conduct Authority, Takeda Pharmaceuticals, Barnardo's, Police Scotland, Greater London Authority, University of Oxford, University of Cambridge, and the Irish Universities Association.

For more information, please visit www.ciph.com (<https://www.ciph.com>).

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About Ciph

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Ciph Group is a privately held company backed by ECI Partners and headquartered in Reading. Over 200 employees work across the group, which includes Ciph (<https://www.ciph.com>) and Marshall E-Learning (<https://marshallelearning.com>) – a specialist diversity and inclusion learning provider.