

Travel agency takes flight after employees' talent recognised

An Edinburgh-based venue is highlighting its diverse workforce as part of Scottish Careers Week, after one employee helped spark the founding of a new division of the business.

With a wide portfolio of businesses including a luxury hotel and city centre cafe, [Surgeons Quarter](#), the commercial arm of The Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh (RCSEd), launched its own travel agency assisted by the skillset of one of its employees.



Justin Mackenzie began his career with Surgeons Quarter as a receptionist in its flagship hotel, Ten Hill Place Hotel, and worked his way up to Guest Services Manager before spearheading the opening of the organisation's travel agency, SQ Travel after highlighting his previous experience in the sector.

Surgeons Quarter claims to provide unparalleled hospitality, as well as inspiring its employees to make a positive difference in and outside of the workplace.

TEN HILL PLACE HOTEL

 SURGEONS QUARTER

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As well as being a Living Wage Employer, it is the first hospitality venue to be a Living Pension Employer, with Surgeons Quarter placing a strong focus on the satisfaction and well-being of its workforce.

Justin said: "Working with people has always been something I love, and Surgeons Quarter recognised my skill set. I didn't think when I started as a receptionist at Ten Hill Place Hotel, I would end up as a manager of a brand-new travel agency.

"In one of our regular team meetings, we were discussing our careers and what we are interested in. I mentioned that I previously worked at a travel agency when I left school and really enjoyed it. It was always something I considered getting back into.

"They recognised this and two days later I sat down with our Managing Director Scott Mitchell who asked me if I was interested in being part of the setup of a new venture they were considering, which was SQ Travel.

"We are now growing our team at SQ Travel, it's an exciting time and knowing I have played such a big part in the formation of the agency is very rewarding."

Hailing from the Northeast of England, Justin began his career at Hays Travel as a Travel Consultant, seeing the business double in size. Although, always having a keen interest in travel, Justin's career took him to the hospitality sector across the UK and Spain.

Justin added: "I admire Surgeons Quarter's ethos around all profits being invested back into funding research for surgeons, which drew me into the job originally. It makes everything feel very rewarding knowing I am helping to contribute to such a worthy cause.

"Scottish Careers week is a great time to highlight the many

different career paths out there. I would encourage people to consider a career in hospitality, you never know where it will take you!”

Initially set out to streamline travel for surgeons, and now arranging travel and holidays for all, SQ Travel was founded in 2020 and is affiliated with Hays Travel Independence Group.

[Scottish Careers week](#), delivered by Skills Development Scotland, showcases the job opportunities across Scotland in a week of events and celebrations from 13-17 November.

Scott Mitchell, Managing Director of Surgeons Quarter said: “Our staff are the centre of everything we do. We always aim to showcase their strengths and provide them with a platform so they can thrive in their career.



“Justin was the perfect person to be the driving force behind

setting up and pushing forward SQ Travel, he had experience, passion and was eager to get the business started. We wouldn't be here today without him.

"We take great pride in the passion our employees have for the work they do and services they deliver. We know that a career in hospitality can be challenging, which is why we're committed to doing everything we can to support our people."

Surgeons Quarter employs around 200 people across its venues, the majority of which hold operations-based in person roles.

Surgeons Quarter promotes, sells and manages all commercial activities held within the RCSEd campus. It includes facilities for conferences, meetings, private events, parties, weddings and its own four-star hotel Ten Hill Place as well as [Café 1505](#) and SQ Travel.

Profits from the Surgeons Quarter portfolio go towards the advancement of surgery and the improvement of patient outcomes worldwide.

<https://www.sqtravel.co.uk/>

<https://www.surgeonsquarter.com/>