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**REBECCA GRAVES**

Director, NRL

Following on from a landscape of global uncertainties in 2024, I hope 2025 brings political stability and economic growth.

More specifically and in the wake of upcoming employment cost increases, I hope we can support our clients in finding innovative and bespoke solutions that allow them to navigate the constantly evolving business environment, whilst attracting the very best talent for their business.



**PROF MARY MORRELL**

Head of Pears Cumbria School of Medicine

I am filled with hope and enthusiasm for 2025. This is when the first medical students will join the Pears Cumbria School of Medicine. The new school is a unique partnership between University of Cumbria and Imperial College London, with generous support from the Pears Foundation. It will train the next generation of NHS doctors in Cumbria for Cumbria.

It has been an incredible journey from inception to reality. The team that has brought the school to fruition are local Cumbrians, and people attached to the region. We are all working to create the best experience for our students.

Personally, I am especially delighted that the Pears Cumbria School of Medicine has been able to build partnerships with our local NHS and healthcare providers.

Together, I hope we can support the government's planned expansion of medical training, focusing on prevention of illness, community care and digital innovation.

We aim to prepare our students to navigate the rapidly evolving landscape of healthcare, while providing a great collaborative environment.

Above all I hope the students arriving in 2025 will become the future doctors for the Cumbria region when they graduate in 2029.



**GRAHAM LAMONT**

Chief executive, Lamont Pridmore

While the first Labour Budget was a shock to the business community, there are measures that entrepreneurs can take to manage the impacts, improve efficiency and grow their businesses. A recent survey of SMEs, by Intuit QuickBooks, the University of London and ACCA, revealed that those businesses who work with an accountant see a tangible financial benefit, increasing revenue by an average of 11.5%.

The business impacts of the increases in minimum wage and employers national insurance can be managed through the creation of bespoke financial action plans. This is particularly important for those in the retail, tourism, and food and drink sectors which are likely to be severely affected.

We are also supporting our clients by developing tax plans to help mitigate the impact of the Budget through the changes to Business Property Relief, Capital Gains Tax and Inheritance Tax. The farming community must also be supported to help the sector challenge the legislation on Agricultural Property Relief.

The professional advice provided by your accountant brings obvious financial management and business strategy advice but also offers cost, time and mental health benefits through the efficient management of your tax affairs, financial reporting and payroll management.

At Lamont Pridmore, we quantify the value we add to our clients' businesses which is, on average, more than three times the fees we charge. If you aren't already using the services of an accountant, then 2025 must be the year you start!