

Stewart Mitchell

Stewart Mitchell, EVP and Site Head at our Deeside, Wales site, rejoined the Sterling team in 2021 to lead integration efforts at the facility. Here, we spoke with Stewart to discuss his role and his goals for the site.

Can you describe your background and current role at Sterling?

I attended university to study applied chemistry, with an additional focus on business. I then went on to earn my PhD in Organic Chemistry from Abertay University, where I focused specifically on synthetic organic chemistry.

From there, I held a variety of different chemistry focused roles, centred around technology transfers, process introduction, project management, operations, and people management and leadership. I first met Sterling's CEO, Kevin Cook, and other Sterling team members when the organisation was known as ChiRex, where I worked as a Senior Process Manager before moving to the United States to become a Site Operations Manager. I managed a site focused on early phase clinical manufacture and oversaw a team of about 60 people, before returning to the UK to continue as a Manufacturing Manager with the company.

I had my first experience in site leadership at Piramal Pharma Solutions. The site I led was focused on antibody drug conjugate clinical and commercial manufacture, and I was responsible for the site's continued growth and investment.

I then spent time in a variety of leadership roles, including an established microbiology products company outside of the pharmaceutical space. I then moved to a start up organisation before working with an organisation called CMAC, managing pharma technology partnerships and collaboration projects.

I reconnected with Kevin when Sterling acquired the Deeside site to take on the role of EVP and Site Head. This role appealed to me because of its parallels with the startup and restructure environments I've encountered before, including a focus on recruitment, system overhauls, capital investment, leadership and continued expansion. Today, I am responsible for driving the site's ongoing growth.

How has your background shaped your work at Deeside?

Throughout my career, I've learned that a experience takes you a long way and there's really no substitute for it.

The successes and challenges I have experienced during my time in a range of roles and companies has provided me with a cross functional perspective that serves me well in this role. I am used to working across departments with a wide range of expertise, and I know that collaboration makes all the difference, across functions and across sites. This has made me comfortable communicating with colleagues at all levels of the organisation.



Fast Facts

ROLE

Executive Vice President and Site Head, Deeside

JOINED STERLING

May 2021

EDUCATION

PhD in Organic Chemistry, Abertay University

SPECIALISATIONS

ADC development and manufacturing, drug substance manufacturing, GMP, process improvement, technology transfer

LINKEDIN

[Stewart Mitchell](#)

What are your short and long-term goals for the Deeside site?

In the near-term, we are focused specifically on expanding our technical services and analytical teams, as well as increasing our GMP manufacturing capability. Having secured our MIA (IMP) manufacturing license, we are continuously looking to grow this offering at the site.

We plan to expand our facilities at the Deeside site to add more manufacturing suites and labs to handle the greater volume and types of projects that are anticipated.

It is my goal to make sure we are bringing team members on board who share our core values and our passion for customer success.

How are you working towards achieving these strategic goals?

We have been heavily focused on the addition of GMP manufacturing capabilities and expanding our technical services laboratory in the immediate term, enabling us to support the increased business in development and GMP ADC manufacture. This required us to bring in additional expertise and ensure all of our systems and procedures were GMP-compliant. Since the acquisition, Sterling has invested several million pounds into the site for GMP manufacturing and additional research and development capabilities. Now that we have received our GMP license, we can support more customer projects as they prepare for clinical trials.

Recruitment has been another key priority. Our team at the site has nearly doubled in just 24 months, expanding from 31 to 54 employees. It is my goal to make sure we are bringing team members on board who share our core values and our passion for customer success. There is nothing more important than ensuring we have the right people on our team as we continue to grow and expand.

How have market trends impacted your growth strategy for the Deeside site?

The ADC sector is a rapidly growing one, with a substantially higher growth rate than other areas within the pharmaceutical industry. In fact, the ADC market is expected to grow at a rate of 16.4% through 2030.¹ With that comes a high level of

innovation and change. We are intently focused on delivering capabilities that respond to the evolving needs of our customers. Our implementation of GMP manufacturing is one example. As an increasing number of ADC candidates enter the clinical manufacturing phase, we will be able to support their needs with GMP manufacturing capabilities that reflect the same level of quality and partnership for which Sterling is known. I am very optimistic about the future growth of this site.

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Can you discuss integration across Sterling's sites?

A chief priority in integrating the Deeside site into the Sterling network was embracing the organisation's culture and values, which are an enormous source of differentiation for Sterling. Maintaining this strong differentiation requires new sites to embrace the way Sterling does business wholeheartedly, which was easy for the site since our values were already closely aligned.

In the day-to-day, our integration efforts are focused on fostering cross-site collaboration. We have been working closely with our Cary and Germantown sites on several projects, as they can support us with toxin-linker and linker payload synthesis. Due to the Germantown facility's strong high potency and containment capabilities, they are able to support us specifically with any highly potent syntheses.

I believe that Sterling really shines in integration and harmonisation. Despite having sites in different parts of the world, our commitment to our work, our people and our customers bring us together. Everyone feels they are part of One Sterling, where we aim to make sure that we are providing a seamless experience to customers when supporting their project across multiple sites. We achieve this through exceptional communication and transparency, with scientific partnership at its core.

1. Antibody Drug Conjugates Market Size. Grand View Research. Retrieved from <https://www.grandviewresearch.com/industry-analysis/antibody-drug-conjugates-market>