



Empowering Transformation

Driving a unified HR strategy that supports collaboration, consistency, and scalable operations worldwide

James Fisher and Sons Plc

Founded in 1847 in Barrow-in-Furness, James Fisher and Sons plc began as a ship-owning business transporting haematite from the Cumbrian hills. As maritime technology evolved through the 19th century, the company transitioned from sail to steam vessels, demonstrating an early commitment to innovation and adaptation.

Growth and Incorporation

The company was incorporated as a public limited company in 1926 and listed on the London Stock Exchange in 1952. Over the following decades, James Fisher evolved from a traditional shipping operator into a diversified marine engineering and services organisation.

James Fisher and Sons plc
Pioneering Sustainably



Modern Operations

Today, James Fisher operates across three core market sectors — Energy, Maritime Transport, and Defence:

Energy: Delivering specialist services across oil & gas, nuclear, and renewable energy sectors.

Maritime Transport: Providing ship-to-ship transfer operations and coastal shipping solutions.

Defence: Supplying advanced support services for naval operations, including submarine rescue and underwater life-support systems.

Transformation and Strategy

In 2023, James Fisher launched a comprehensive transformation programme built around the “**One James Fisher**” ambition. This initiative is designed to **simplify, focus, unify, and enhance performance** across the Group.

The One James Fisher approach marks a shift from operating as a collection of semi-independent businesses to functioning as a single, cohesive organisation with shared priorities, a common operating model, and a unified culture. This alignment enables greater efficiency through economies of scale, shared resources, and consistent standards — all aimed at reducing costs, improving quality, and driving sustainable growth.

The Group now employs over 2,000 people and operates in more than 20 countries worldwide.

People & HR Transformation



Jennifer McRae,
Chief People Officer

As part of the Group's transformation and the launch of the One James Fisher ambition, Jennifer McRae was appointed as Chief People Officer in mid 2024 to lead the development and implementation of a global People strategy aligned with the company's new direction.

Jennifer's appointment reflected a proactive commitment to building a unified and globally connected People function capable of supporting the organisation's expanding international footprint and cultural transformation.

Soon after joining, Jennifer recognised that the existing HR systems and processes would need to evolve to effectively support this global ambition. To assist with this, Tugela People, a UK-based HR systems and services company, was engaged to help develop a

business case for modernising HR technology and processes. Through Tugela People's Associate Network, John Brownhill — an HR technology specialist with over 38 years of experience was appointed to deliver this work.

This initiative represents a key step in equipping James Fisher with the people infrastructure required to deliver the One James Fisher strategy — fostering collaboration, consistency, and scalability across its global workforce.

“Tugela People's expertise was pivotal in shaping a compelling business case that secured Executive and Board buy in and approval. Their disciplined and transparent approach to procurement enabled us to identify and select the optimal solution at exactly the right time for our organisation.



Strategic Review & Business Case Development

Following a strategic review of existing people strategies, processes, and systems with key stakeholders across the organisation, it became clear that this transformation project was critical to the future success of James Fisher.

Through this review, John identified the key business drivers and priorities that would enable HR to better support global operations and the One James Fisher ambition. Based on these findings, he recommended that the company invest in a Tier One global HR system capable of integrating data, standardising processes, and supporting scalability across all regions.

A comprehensive business case for system transformation was subsequently developed and presented to the Executive Team and the Board. The proposal clearly outlined the strategic

importance of the investment — not only in modernising HR technology, but also in enabling the broader cultural and operational objectives of the One James Fisher strategy.

The company responded positively, recognising both the necessity and long-term value of the investment. This endorsement led to the formal approval of the project spend, marking a significant milestone in James Fisher's journey toward creating a unified, technology-enabled global HR function.



“John Brownhill has demonstrated exceptional leadership and diligence in advancing James Fisher's HRIS transformation initiative. Throughout the project, John played a pivotal role in Vendor Evaluation and Selection, Compliance and Legal Oversight, Contract Negotiation and Project Coordination.

Tom Reid, Head of Supply Chain

Supplier Selection & Procurement Process

Following approval, John was tasked with leading the procurement phase of the project, working in close partnership with James Fisher's Supply Chain team.

John developed a structured procurement strategy with a clear timeline designed to enable the new system implementation to begin in October, allowing sufficient time to replace existing systems by June 2026. The supplier selection process commenced in late July, with contracts awarded on 30 September.

The evaluation process was both rigorous and transparent, incorporating multiple stages to ensure that the chosen partner met the organisation's strategic, functional, and operational requirements. This included:

“ John's work has laid a strong foundation for modernising our HR system, improving compliance, and driving operational excellence. His strategic foresight and meticulous execution have been instrumental in positioning James Fisher for future success.

Jennifer McRae,
Chief People Officer



A scored assessment of Invitation to Tender (ITT) responses



Scenario-based presentations to evaluate supplier capability and alignment with business needs



A detailed functional and implementation assessment to test solution fit and delivery capacity

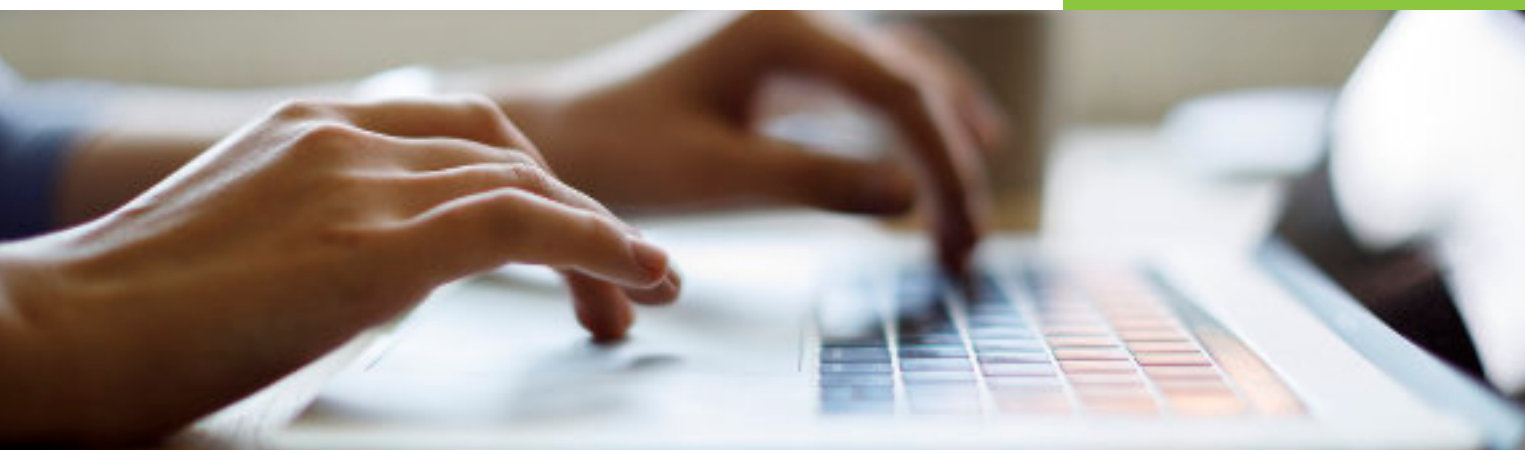


Due diligence activities, including reference checks



Contract negotiations

The process concluded with the formal award of contracts to the selected supplier. The thorough and disciplined approach to procurement ensured that the selected partner was best positioned to support the delivery of a global, integrated HR platform — one that underpins the One James Fisher ambition and supports the company's continued growth and transformation.



Contact Us

To find out more about [Tugela People's HR System Selection Consultancy Services](#) or to discuss your requirements, please contact us:

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