

Helping SafeToNet Limited prosper

A client case study

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Smart advice for an award-winning smart-tech company

Every tech start-up has a vision that they are working towards. Whether it's a pre-revenue venture that's developing an MVP or a Series B with hockey stick growth, the mission is typically the same: to make the world a better place.

Making the world a better place is certainly the focus of UHY Ross Brooke client, SafeToNet Ltd. The pioneering cyber-safety company develops embeddable safeguarding solutions to keep children safer online. Using Artificial Intelligence and behavioural analytics to detect threats such as cyberbullying, sextortion, abuse and aggression, SafeToNet sells its software protection products to businesses including large telecom companies for their end customers, and also to parents through direct download.

Getting the basics right

SafeToNet was founded by Richard Pursey, Sharon Pursey, Georgina Pursey, Jack Pursey and Ted Hailey in October 2013. With an increasing number of apps, platforms and services available to children, their vision of an embeddable safeguarding solution was a very attractive proposition. But founding a tech start-up is hard. For SafeToNet, not only was the development of the software solution challenging, but the founders also had to ensure the business operated efficiently and was ready to scale-up swiftly.

Safeguarding children everywhere

Tech companies tend to go global very quickly, particularly where the delivery of a product is also digital. With a vision of safeguarding children everywhere, it came as no surprise that SafeToNet was quickly looking to expand its operations and raise capital to grow. The hurdle was being supported by the right people and having the right systems in place.

This is where our UHY Ross Brooke team, based in our Newbury office and led by partners Emily Ness and Phil Kinzett-Evans came in. The team were asked to produce an up-to-date set of accounts at short notice to help with fund raising, and they acted as a sounding board throughout this initial growth period, helping SafeToNet raise significant capital for future software development.

Rapid international expansion

With the capital in place, SafeToNet underwent rapid international expansion into new markets including Germany, US, Canada and, more recently, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago.

Being part of the UHY network has allowed our Newbury team to draw on local knowledge from other UHY member firms across these locations. In each country the legal and tax laws vary and can change often so Phil, Emily and the team stay very close to SafeToNet's development plans, introducing trusted global colleagues as relevant. This support has been invaluable, saving the SafeToNet directors many hours of searching and anxiety.

Ted Hailey, SafeToNet CFO, said of our UHY team "Their work and insights help us to expand, to control our overseas subsidiaries and acquire new businesses. We are currently considering an opportunity for expansion in Egypt, and we now have contacts in the UHY Cairo office to guide us."

Claiming and maximising tax reliefs

Following this initial phase of growth, the UHY team continued to produce the annual accounts and submit R&D tax claims on behalf of SafeToNet at the end of each tax year. We also applied for Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS) tax relief on SafeToNet's behalf, raising £20m in EIS eligible investment over several years.

In Ted Hailey's words "UHY Ross Brooke have been fantastic at producing our accounts so quickly whenever we need them. They have helped us out on many occasions since 2014, and we have never had any problems receiving our R&D tax credits back from HMRC promptly and in full. The team at UHY always have someone sensible to bounce an idea off, someone you trust to give an honest answer, and they are a firm of accountants who get things done quickly."

Since the start of our relationship in 2014, our UHY team have not only supported SafeToNet to claim over £2.5m in R&D tax credits and £20m in EIS tax relief but have also developed a genuine relationship as their trusted adviser.

A purpose led business

With family at the heart of the business, SafeToNet's vision is to create a world where children are inherently and automatically safe online. The company ethos is built around a belief that this protection should be a fundamental basic human right and, as a result, SafeToNet is rapidly becoming one of the world's most trusted safeguarding companies.

Since meeting our UHY team in 2014, SafeToNet has grown from a start-up with a handful of people sharing a single table, to employing over 250 people in four countries across two continents. Along the way, they have acquired three organisations and partnered with global companies including Samsung, the world's largest device manufacturer. They have also been promoted by the governments of the United Kingdom and Germany, including supporting the UK government during Covid-19 by providing one million free-for-life licences to safeguard children online.

The accolades for this fantastic business keep coming. In the last couple of months alone, the UK's leading media platform for entrepreneurs, Business Leader, highlighted SafeToNet and its CEO, Richard Pursey, as one of the Top AI companies and leaders in the UK and The Spectator named SafeToNet as a regional finalist for this year's "Economic Innovator of the Year Award".

The resilience and determination of the SafeToNet founders has seen a truly unique organisation flourish. At UHY we are proud to work with SafeToNet and very much look forward to supporting this fantastic company during the next exciting phase of their journey.

The next step

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[Read more about us on our website at uhy-uk.com.](https://www.uhy-uk.com)

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“I can't recommend UHY Ross Brooke highly enough. We have complete trust in you, and you support us with great professionalism and service. I would recommend you to any growing technology company which is looking to expand.”

Ted Hailey
CFO, SafeToNetFounder



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