Kevin Hughes

Engineering leader who builds teams and delivers platforms

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PROFILE

Hands-on engineering leader. Head of Development and head of the Glasgow office for a global online business, running platforms that handle 5M+ hits a day. Seven years with the business, promoted from Senior Developer through Solutions Architect. I lead ~20 engineers in multiple teams through tech leads, a principal engineer and an architect, and manage the workload of ~30 people including QA, business analysis and UI/UX; I own the technology budget and set architecture across .NET, event-driven messaging, real-time systems and Kubernetes.

My route here runs through operations management, BI and hands-on .NET development, so I understand the business, the data and the code, and can translate between all three. Most recently I have been putting AI into production, from real-time content moderation to AI-assisted support triage, and I led my teams' move to agentic AI development.

LEADERSHIP

- Grow people into bigger roles: I've promoted engineers at every level, from junior to mid through to engineering manager, principal engineer and architect.
- Hire for passion and potential over existing knowledge: I've hired around 30 people over the years, including most of the Glasgow office.
- Translate between technology and the business: explain complex issues to stakeholders and shareholders without the jargon, so decisions get made on the facts.
- Adopt early and bring the team with me: I led my department's move to agentic AI development, with shared conventions so everyone benefits.
- Lead by example and stay hands-on: alongside running the department I designed and wrote most of the live video rebuild's backend, and built the new store end to end myself.

EXPERIENCE

Global consumer platform Sep 2019 – Present

High-traffic consumer marketplace and live-streaming platform. Glasgow.

Head of Development (2024 – Present) · Solutions Architect (2020 – 2024) · Senior Developer (Sep 2019 – 2020)

Lead software development across the platform, which handles 5M+ hits a day, and run the Glasgow office.

- Department: ~20 engineers in multiple teams, led through tech leads, a principal engineer and an architect; ~30 including the QA, BA and UI/UX staff whose workload I manage.
- Position: Senior leader on site in Glasgow, with full autonomy over team, delivery and departmental budget. Peer to the heads of infrastructure and delivery.
- Run hiring, performance reviews and development for the department; hired around 30 people over the years, including most of the Glasgow office.
- Promoted people at every level: engineering manager to architect; seniors to engineering manager, principal engineer and tech lead; mid to senior; junior to mid.

Key achievements

- **Set up and run the Glasgow office.** Senior leader on site, responsible for premises, day-to-day operations and all people management. Own the office budget, alongside the department's technology budget.
- **AI helpdesk assistant.** Designed and led delivery of an AI support assistant for ~100k tickets a year. It triages each ticket, routes it to the right team and drafts a reply grounded in approved knowledge, citing its sources. Safety was designed in from the start: shadow mode before go-live, personal data masked before any model call, routing decided in code rather than by the model, and fail-closed guardrails that escalate to a person whenever it is unsure.
- **Turned around the live video streaming platform.** It had been in development for three years without reaching production; rewrote it in three months into a service now used by thousands of streamers and viewers every day, with deploys that happen mid-stream without anyone noticing.
- **Greenfield multi-provider payments platform with automatic failover.** Started and led it; in production since 2022, it puts a dozen providers (15+ provider flows) behind one routing API: card, bank transfer, crypto, vouchers, premium-rate SMS and calls, cash and pay-by-phone. Rules pick a provider by amount, currency and country, and if a provider rejects a payment as it starts, the next one is tried automatically. Every purchase on the platform goes through it.
- **Led the move to agentic AI development.** An early commercial adopter of Claude Code across the department: wrote the shared .NET style guide, a cross-repository rulebook for AI agents and a documentation-first project pattern. Every developer now uses it day to day.

- **Real-time AI moderation platform.** Led the build: it checks member messages, live chat, posted content and images in real time, before they are sent or published, using asynchronous workers and webhooks.
- **Marketplace store and end-to-end test suite.** Built our own marketplace store end to end, with a React front end and .NET backend, where verified third-party suppliers list and fulfil their own stock and members pay in platform credits, plus 92 Playwright tests covering 79 prioritised journeys that run after every dev deploy and fail the dev release stage on any broken journey.
- **Business-KPI service, monitoring and alerting.** Designed a lightweight service that turns product events from across the platform, including legacy pages, into Datadog dashboards with no metrics database, and led the set-up of live monitoring and anomaly alerts routed to Jira, Microsoft Teams and Slack.
- **Greenfield multi-provider notifications service.** Built it to send email and SMS, architected to extend to social media posting. Like the payments platform, each channel can be backed by different providers, and every message is rendered from Liquid templates, with a preview tool in the moderation suite showing exactly how each template will look.

Senior .NET Developer (Technical Lead), City Facilities Management Ltd Jun 2016 – Sep 2019
Facilities-management products for major retailers in the UK and US. Glasgow.

Technical lead and Scrum Master for an agile delivery squad.

- **Data migrations and the move to Azure PaaS.** Led the migrations for four product releases, consolidating databases to make the move possible.
- **Represented the company on site for the Walmart release.** Selected to spend three months in Florida, overseeing the release and transition.
- **Six customer releases across the UK and US.** For ASDA, Marks & Spencer, Southeastern Grocers, Ahold, Walmart and 7-Eleven.

MI Analyst, Barclays Wealth and Investment Management Aug 2015 – Jun 2016
Wealth and investment management division of Barclays. Glasgow.

Produced global credit risk reporting for senior management and the Financial Conduct Authority, and contributed to the bank's BCBS 239 risk-reporting programme.

Head of Business Intelligence, Creditfix Limited Jan 2014 – Jul 2015
Debt solutions provider. Glasgow.

Managed a team of data analysts and developers responsible for the group's data and reporting.

- **Ran the group's reporting platform.** Ran three SSRS reporting servers, including one on Azure, and built SSIS ETL pipelines.

Earlier career. Eight years of people and operations management, much of it alongside my degrees, before moving into technology. Systems Administrator, Expert Insolvency Claims (2013–2014) · Deputy Manager, William Hill (2011–2013) · Floor Manager, McDonald's (2004–2010).

SKILLS

Leadership: Leading multi-team engineering departments, Technical strategy and roadmap ownership, Hiring and team building, Performance reviews and people development, Explaining complex technology to stakeholders and shareholders, Technology budget ownership, Office set-up and site leadership, Major incident leadership
Technology: C#, .NET (up to .NET 10), React, Microservices, Event-driven architecture, Domain-driven design (DDD), Distributed systems, Azure (incl. AKS and PaaS), Kubernetes (AKS and bare metal), Cloudflare, SQL Server, Claude Code, Agentic workflows, LLM evaluation and guardrails, LLM-based moderation, Prompt engineering, Playwright end-to-end testing, Test harnesses and provider simulators, OpenTelemetry, KPI and event tracking with anomaly alerts, OAuth2 / OpenID Connect, Secure design, ethical hacking and penetration testing, Live and adaptive video streaming, Agile, Scrum

EDUCATION

MSc Ethical Hacking and Computer Security, Abertay University (2010–2012). Grade: 85%.
BSc Computer Games Technology, Abertay University (2004–2009).