A member's view: Sayona Eyre

Briefings



05 January 2026

This month’s CIOT member spotlight is on Sayona Eyre, Vice President, Transactions Tax at Davidson Kempner.

How did you find out about a career in tax?

During my economics degree, I was drawn to how policy shapes real-world investment decisions. A summer internship in corporate tax at Deloitte showed me how technical analysis, structuring and commercial judgment combine to solve complex problems – and I haven’t looked back!

Why is the CIOT qualification important?

The CTA qualification equips you with technical depth and applied skills. It’s practical – the case study element mirrors real-world scenarios. It gives you the tools to navigate cross-border issues confidently and connects you to a community that keeps you current. Holding ACA and CTA has shown me how these credentials raise the bar for the profession.

Why did you pursue a career in tax?

No one grows up dreaming of tax! I fell into it by chance, but within a week of my Deloitte internship, I loved it. Tax is problem-solving under pressure, where the ‘right’ answer must also be practical. Transactions tax sits at the intersection of law, accounting and strategy; you’re close to the deal, unlocking value while managing risk. Moving in-house brought me even closer to commercial decision-making, which I find incredibly rewarding.

How would you describe yourself in three words?

Curious, pragmatic, personable.

Who has influenced you in your career so far?

Exceptional managers, mentors and family support have shaped my career. At Deloitte and DK, I’ve worked with leaders who have consistently modelled high standards. Senior female leaders, in particular, demonstrated what inclusive, performance driven leadership looks like. In 2020, I helped to establish the *Women in Financial Investors* programme at Deloitte and joined its inaugural cohort, where my male mentor challenged me to think bigger and showed me how true allyship can drive change. Finally, a piece of advice from my parents – ‘If you don’t take opportunities, someone else will’ – has stayed with me throughout my career. It was this mindset that gave me the confidence to take a secondment to DK, a decision that ultimately led to my permanent move.

What advice would you give to someone thinking of doing the CIOT qualification?

Spend more time reviewing the answers to the practice questions than the questions themselves – to understand the logic behind the answers. Build a strong peer group for accountability and discussion; debating concepts makes them stick!

What are your predictions for tax advisers and the tax industry in the future?

As AI and technology streamline routine tasks, the focus will shift to judgment-based work. Advisers and in-house tax teams will be relied on for nuanced interpretation, strategic planning, and risk management. The tax adviser of the future will provide strategic insight and informed judgment – not just technical advice.

What advice would you give to your future self?

Continue to make time to think and prioritise growth. Regularly review my five-year plan: are my actions moving me toward my goals? Advocate for myself, seek opportunities, build visibility and align efforts with my vision.

Tell me something about yourself that others may not know about you.

I volunteered for Special Olympics Great Britain – a charity encouraging sport for people with learning disabilities – for years, on the corporate fundraising side and also at the sporting events supporting the athletes. It’s a grounding reminder that behind transactions and structures are people – and that the impact we create truly matters.

If you would like to take part in a Member’s view, please contact: Melanie Dragu at mdragu@ciot.org.uk