

## SUMMER ELLIOTT

INTERNAL REPORTING ACCOUNTANT, PENNINE CARE NHS FT

### Apprenticeship and NHS Career to date

Following school Summer went to college and studied business studies and during these studies it was HR and Finance that interested her the most. This encouraged her to look at opportunities in finance following college. When Summer came across an NHS Apprenticeship in Finance she was surprised; *'when you think of the NHS, you think of clinical roles, I didn't realise you could do an apprenticeship in finance in the NHS'*. Summer seized the opportunity, applied and started the scheme through the Skills Development Network in October 2018.

Summer's first placement was for three months at NHS Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale Clinical Commissioning Group before moving on to Bolton NHS Foundation Trust in January 2019 as a Band 3 Activity Analyst in the income team. The great thing about doing a finance apprenticeship in the NHS is that you get to study for qualifications whilst also getting the experience on the job. Summer studied AAT on the apprenticeship and over the 15 months completed two level two exams and the whole of level three. Just before completing her AAT, Bolton went through a bit of a restructure which gave Summer the opportunity to move from the income team to the management accounts team as a Management Accounts Assistant on a Band 3 to 4 progression.

Following the completion of her portfolio, Summer secured the Band 4 role and then managed to secure a secondment as a Band 6 Management Accountant in June 2021. The great thing about working in NHS finance is that there are so many opportunities; *'my career has progressed at the same level/speed as my studies, I was concerned that I might still be Management Accounts Assistant once qualified but that is not the case.'* Following the end of the 7 month Secondment in January 2022 Summer got a Band 6 Internal Reporting Accountant role at Pennine Care NHS FT which remains her current role.

Following the completion of AAT in summer 2020, Summer then started studying with CIMA (Chartered Institute of Management Accountants) in September 2020 and is doing this as an apprentice. Currently she has completed the certificate level and the operational level and now is on the management level. When choosing what qualification to study next, Summer picked CIMA as she works in management accounts, and really enjoyed her management accounts roles.

### Highlights and lowlights

Summer has thoroughly enjoyed her career to date in the NHS, there has been a lot of support from colleagues in the NHS *'everyone pushed me to the next level, supported me through my studies and encouraged me in taking on the new roles'*.

When asked of any low lights in career to date, Summer has nothing negative to say about her career in the NHS thus far, *'every role I have gone for I have been successful in, my exams have been great, everyone I have worked with has been great.'* The apprenticeship also created a network of people who have turned into friends.

## **Working during the pandemic**

When asked about working for the NHS during the pandemic, Summer explained that it was a real eye opener, and changed to working from home. *'I supported procurement so learnt a lot about what they do and then also supported critical care to help them get anything they needed. I met so many different people and it was so interesting to learn about what they do.'*

## **Typical Day**

A typical day for Summer would involve meeting budget holders, responding to budget holder queries, costings, approving vacancies on TRAC, approving staff changes on ESR and contract changes to name just a few things. *'I often spend time speaking with network business partners and when it comes to month end, doing monthly adjustments, reviewing the position and variance analysis.'*

Summer's current role is in a Mental Health organisation which is very different to her previous organisations which were an acute trust and a commissioning organisation. This has given Summer a really good breadth of experience. *'It has been really interesting coming into a new organisation seeing different ways of working, every organisation is different, different ledger system, different reports etc that they use.'*

## **Key Skills**

Working in an NHS finance department is busy and requires certain key skills, for Summer these skills are being able to work within in a team and being able to communicate with your team especially with a lot of home working. *'You need to be able to manage your time and prioritise your work, it can be so busy in finance especially at month end, you need to make sure you are reliable and meet those deadlines.'*

## **Personal Development**

Summer didn't have a mentor when she was at Bolton NHS FT, but her line managers were so supportive it was like having a mentor. Now she has moved organisations she contacted the Finance Director at Bolton who is now her mentor and it has been great.

Summer has just joined the student forum as part of the Skills Development Network which has been great for her network. *'The opportunities for your development and growing your network in NHS finance are endless.'*

## **Biggest influence on career**

Summer's line managers at Bolton were so supportive, they really helped her grow knowledge and helped progress. Summer sees her biggest achievement to date as her career progression at Bolton where she secured that Band 6 secondment from a Band 4.

## **What next?**

It is great to hear that Summer wants to stay in the NHS. Over the next 5 years she aims to become a business partner and in the long term would like to become a Director of Finance, but for now she is concentrating on getting qualified with CIMA.

*'I would change nothing about my career in the NHS to date. The NHS gives you wide range of opportunities, lots of different organisations and many different roles within finance. There are different routes for study and everyone is so helpful and friendly. It's a career for life.'*

**Favourite book:** The Secret



**TV show:** Reality TV shows

**Film:** Pearl Harbour

**Food:** Fajitas