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Thinking about changing career? Have a read of Jaz's story about changing career at 37; his hard work and determination to succeed has led him to become a qualified accountant in the NHS where his career is going from strength to strength.

Jaz left school in 1991 with very little qualifications as he concentrated on working rather than focusing on his GCSEs. Jaz's work life started in retail, which he worked in from 1991-1996, and from there he became a taxi driver like his father had been and his brothers. For 14 years from 1996-2010 Jaz was driving taxis until he got a six-month ban, one of the hazards of the job. Being banned from driving was quite a difficult time for Jaz, he had four children and taxiing was his livelihood, but he decided to use this time to retrain and think about changing career. When looking at some home-learning courses, he came across AAT (Association of Accounting Technicians) and bought all of the books to teach himself, however he soon realised that this would be quite difficult to do alone. Having spoken to a friend who is an accountant, Jaz was advised to send the books back and head to college to be taught. Jaz took this advice, managed to get his money back for the books and enrolled into college for free.

Jaz completed his Level 2 AAT and then got his taxi badge back, which meant that whilst studying for his Level 3 he was also able to work as a taxi driver in the evenings. On completion of Level 3 Jaz started applying for jobs in finance. At this stage Jaz was 37 and as he had no experience working in finance he found it difficult to get the job opportunities. Not one to give up, Jaz decided to write out to organisations to get some work experience and Sherwood Forest Hospital replied offering two-weeks work experience in Accounts Payable, which he took up.

Following this work experience Jaz decided to apply for jobs, but again wasn't getting much response so decided to apply for an apprenticeship. Jaz got accepted onto the second apprenticeship he applied for; this was at a college in Nottinghamshire. It was a good role as he went in at management accounts level and was studying Level 4 AAT, however as an apprentice he was only paid minimum wage which was not enough to support a family of four children so Jaz continued taxi driving in the evenings to provide for his family. As his apprenticeship was coming to an end, Jaz was aware that no permanent opportunities were available, and so started applying for other roles and managed to secure a job at G4S in their finance department. This however was an 80-mile round trip every day, but the same week he started at G4S he was invited to an interview at NHS Nottingham CCG and started there in September 2014.

Whilst working as a Band 4 at the CCG, Jaz's manager encouraged him to do his professional qualification. Jaz decided to go with CIMA in early 2015. Jaz completed his qualification in four years. He failed some exams along the way, and there were times where he felt like giving up, but he persevered. Having sadly lost his father at the age of 7, Jaz went out to work from a young age which is why he didn't really pay much attention to his education at the time, so it was a really proud day when he managed to get his CIMA qualification in 2019.

Once Jaz became qualified things moved rapidly for his career. He progressed from a Band 5 at the CCG to a Band 6 role at Arden and GEM CSU in February 2020. Then, in February 2021 he took on a Band 7 role at University Hospitals Derby and Burton (UHDB) and less than a year later in November 2021 he was promoted to a Band 8a

where he is now working as a Capital Accountant. Jaz has now worked in a CCG, CSU and an acute trust giving him a range of experience.

Jaz's career highlights to date include achieving his current Band 8a role in an acute trust. He has progressed really quickly from a Band 4 to a Band 8A and worked really hard to do so. It was only 2 years into his NHS career that he gave up his work as taxi driver. *'I always wanted to get a role in the trust because I felt that you had more opportunities and there's better chance of progression.'*

When asked whether the NHS was always the organisation of choice, Jaz says the NHS chose him. At the end of his apprenticeship, he was applying for any finance roles and the NHS is where he secured his role and where he has stayed ever since. *'I really enjoy working in the NHS because you do feel like you make a difference, not in the same way as a doctor or a nurse but the role you do does make a difference to the patients. The NHS is one massive team, if we don't do our bit in finance the NHS couldn't run.'* Working in capital, Jaz's helped procure large pieces of equipment, for example MRI scanners and CT scanners which are then used to provide patients with the highest quality of service and care.

What does a typical day look like for a capital accountant? There are no two days the same *'we do our month end and the usual reporting but loads of different things come up which is what makes it so interesting. I enjoy everything about my current role and there's nothing that I dislike about it'*. Jaz now works with many different people across the ICS and is involved in many different projects. He has also taken part in the National Finance Academy's Career Progressors course which has been a great way to build his network, *'I always look to do courses whenever I can which I feel can help me improve, sometimes I feel I've got catching up to do because some people have been working in finance for years but now I realise that I can bring a fresh and different perspective.'* Jaz has been through some tough times but has brought life experience to his role and has never given up, his determination to succeed is an inspiration to all.

When asked if there is anything he would do differently in his career, Jaz shared that he would have liked to have changed career earlier but his circumstances didn't allow for this, however his story shows us all that it is never too late to try something new. Although it may not have felt like it at the time, Jaz explains that the driving ban was a blessing in disguise as he is now thriving in a Band 8a role and there are more opportunities to progress *'what doesn't kill you makes you stronger and made me more determined to succeed.'*

So, what would Jaz say to someone who was considering a career in NHS finance? *'I would definitely recommend working for an NHS organisation, I think the job itself is rewarding and interesting, you might get financially rewarded better in other sectors but the job you do for the NHS gives you a real sense of pride because feel like you make a difference.'*

Favourite film Shawshank Redemption

Favourite Book: Peter Beardsley Autobiography

Favourite television show: Only Fools and Horses

Favourite Food: Any type of chicken