

NHS FINANCE CAREER STORIES





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INTRODUCTION

Never has a career in the NHS been more high profile, with the NHS front and centre in the response to the pandemic. However, knowledge of a finance career within the NHS is limited, which is why we at One NHS Finance want to promote the variety of roles available and spread awareness of what a career in NHS finance has to offer. We want to attract new and diverse talent at all levels.

Finance is part of everything the NHS does and we aim to create better awareness on the integral strategic role of finance to the delivery of patient care. We want our NHS to be the employer of choice for a career in finance.



OPPORTUNITIES

There are a number of different opportunities and ways to join an NHS Finance team. Find them all here.



PROGRAMMES & EVENTS

Find out more about our latest events and programmes. Simply add to your calendar and tune in to the live stream.



RESOURCES

To help you understand a bit more about the NHS, working in an NHS finance team and the different roles and entry routes.

VISIT THE NHS FINANCE CAREERS WEBSITE TODAY

[FINANCECAREERS.NHS.UK](https://financecareers.nhs.uk)



'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.'

Jasvinder Landa

Divisional Finance and Information Manager – Capital Projects and Improvement, University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust.

CAREER STORIES

There are many different routes in to a career in NHS Finance. Have a read through the following stories from colleagues who have progressed through their finance roles and what opportunities they took to get to where they are today.

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NHS FINANCE APPRENTICESHIPS

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.

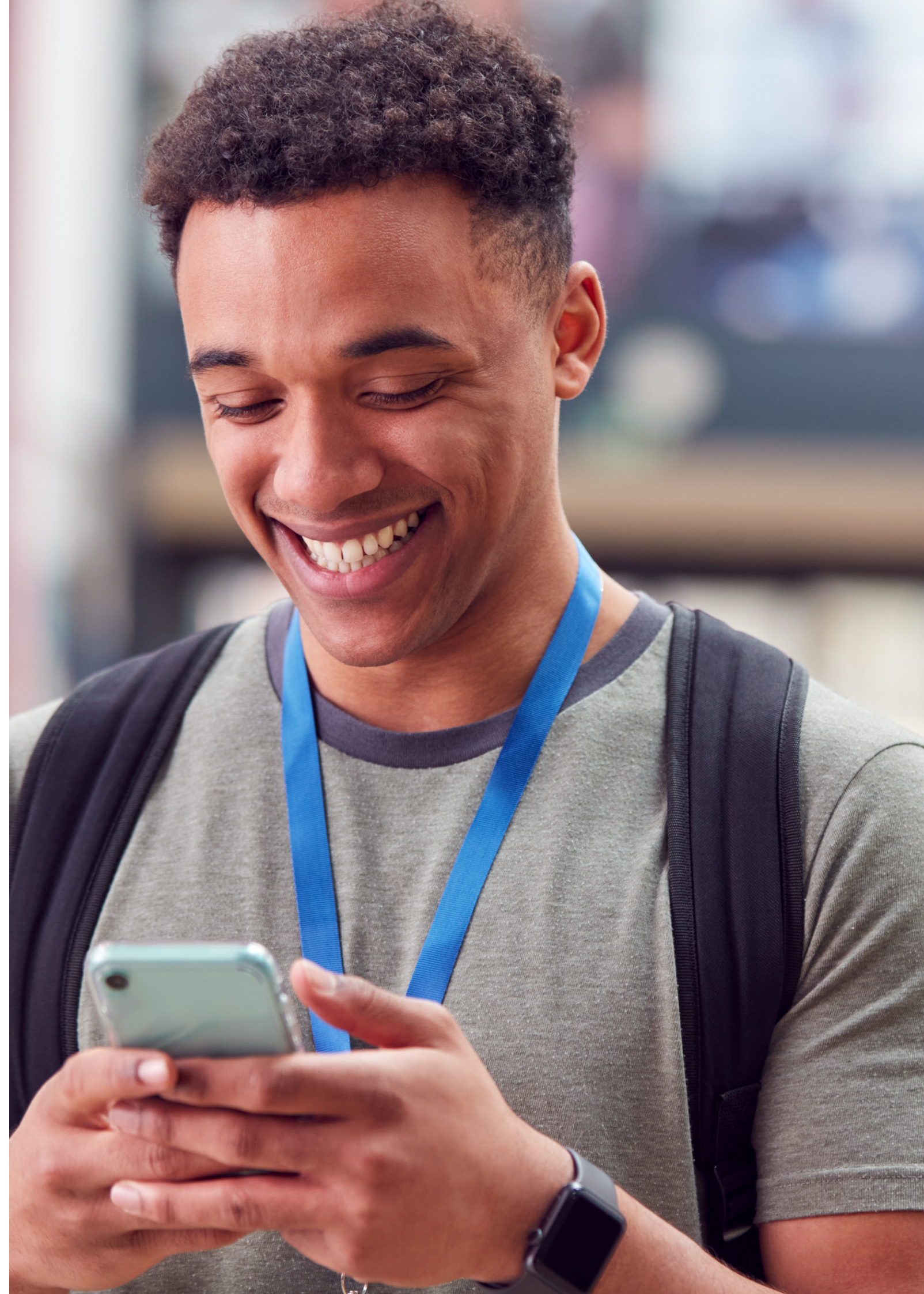
'I would change nothing about my career in the NHS to date. The NHS gives you wide range of opportunities, lots of different organisations and many different roles within finance. There are different routes for study and everyone is so helpful and friendly. It's a career for life.'

Favourite Book: The Secret

Favourite TV Show: Reality TV shows

Favourite Film: Pearl Harbour

Favourite Food: Fajitas



LUCY DUTTON
FINANCE APPRENTICE
STOCKPORT NHS FT



VIDEO INTERVIEW

Lucy talks us through her role as an apprentice in an NHS Finance department and why she would encourage others to apply for a finance apprenticeship.

Click the image below to watch the interview.



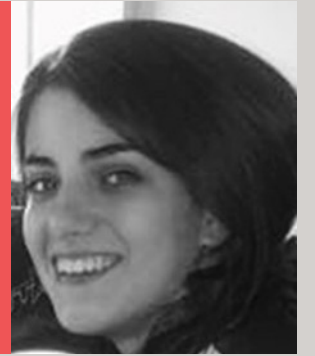
Favourite Book: Wonder

Favourite TV Show: Stranger Things

Favourite Film: The Parent Trap

Favourite Food: Nandos

JESSICA SCOTT
ASSISTANT BUSINESS ACCOUNTANT FOR UNPLANNED
CARE
WARRINGTON AND HALTON HOSPITALS NHS FT



NHS CAREER TO DATE

Leaving school, Jessica knew that she didn't want to go to university so decided to go to college and study graphic design. After six months Jess knew that this wasn't for her but was unsure about what she wanted to do career wise.

Having moved from the Lake District to Widnes, Cheshire Jess decided to apply for an apprenticeship at a private accountancy firm. Although she was not successful in getting the role it did help her to decide to do her AAT Access course. This is level 1 AAT, a qualification in accounting that teaches you the very basic knowledge of accountancy principles, whilst doing 200 hours of work experience. From there Jess heard about an apprenticeship with skills for health and her NHS career began.

Jess joined the finance cadets which happened to be the last cohort of this particular scheme, the apprenticeship was a year's placement at an NHS Trust whilst studying level 2 AAT. Jess started in procurement and then spent the rest of the year working in management accounts, costing, financial planning and financial services. The placement gave her the opportunity to understand the different areas of NHS finance and how they all link together. At the end of the year, Jess secured a job in management accounts and has stayed in management accounts every since. Jess feels very fortunate to have come across the apprenticeship in the NHS *'I always just thought a career in the NHS is just doctors and nurses, didn't realise finance was an option, you don't realise until you are in the NHS that is a lot more than just doctors and nurses'*.

Jess has enjoyed her experience so much that she has her sister coming to the hospital to do some work experience with the finance team this summer.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

When asked about career highlights Jess has 3 things that really stand out for her, firstly securing a permanent role at Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS FT following the apprenticeship. Secondly helping other members of the team progress in their careers; two assistants in the team gained promotion after 12 months of being in Jess' team. Thirdly, working on a bed reconfiguration project that was passed and signed off by the board. Jess gained a lot of knowledge from this particular project and it was so rewarding to see that this business case that she had been a part of make a positive difference to the overall care of patients.

TYPICAL DAY

When talking to finance professionals in the NHS about their typical days, one common theme always appears, there is no typical day. Whilst Jess' job role is so varied and can change every day the types of things she would usually do involve: meeting and advising budget holders, training them if they are new, helping with business cases, service level agreements, reconfigurations of wards.

BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

When asked about the benefits for working in an NHS finance department, Jess says it is all about helping people. *'When I first started I didn't make the link but now more and more I am seeing the roles we have in finance does help those patients on the wards. Helping those patients who could at the end of the day be your family friends or even yourself.'* When asked about the biggest challenges, for Jess it is trying to help everyone, which can be quite demanding. Working for the NHS in pandemic was also a challenge, things had to be turned around a lot quicker. However, they learnt so much about themselves and their teams and could really rely on each other, it brought the team even closer together.

There is a really supportive and encouraging culture at Jess' organisation, if you want to shadow a department or spend a day elsewhere to learn more, such development opportunities are encouraged. Jess has spent a day at Warrington CGG to try and understand a bit more about the commissioning side of NHS Finance.

WHAT NEXT?

So, what next for Jessica Scott? Whilst Jess is not sure what her next career move might be, what she is sure of is staying in the NHS. For those thinking of starting their career as an NHS finance apprentice like Jess did, Jess advises;

'If you are still unsure about joining the NHS on an apprenticeship ask someone who has done one, we are all happy to have a chat. The months I have spent in different departments really have given me useful knowledge for my career today. I knew I didn't want to go to university, so an apprenticeship was the right thing for me. Learning whilst you are doing your studies sets you up well for a good career in NHS finance.'

The final words of advice from Jess to those considering a NHS finance apprenticeship...
'Go for it!!!'

Favourite Film: Action movies or Marvel

Favourite Book: Anything that adds to learning

Favourite TV Show: Something that has been recommended by Eileen in work. Or Gardener's World, Saturday kitchen

Favourite Food: Anything cooked by grandma



03

NHS FINANCE GRADUATE SCHEME

ZAYBA YASIN

FINANCE MANAGEMENT GRADUATE TRAINEE

NHS CAREER TO DATE

Zayba Yasin is a trainee currently on the NHS National Finance Graduate Scheme. Having studied Economics and Geography at Leeds University, Zayba started to think about what to do after university and had always been interested in the NHS. Following some research around NHS graduate schemes Zayba narrowed it down to finance having always liked numbers, she didn't realise the scale of finance in the NHS and how big the finance community was. Following her application she took part in an assessment centre and was awarded a place on the scheme. For the 2019 cohort there were 262 trainees across the whole country.

Zayba started the scheme in September 2019 straight after graduating university and spent the first month doing orientation. Orientation is a four-week tour of the NHS where you get to spend time in lots of different areas of the NHS in different organisations. On day two of the job Zayba shadowed a surgeon and watched surgery (a leg amputation), she also spent a day with paramedics at the ambulance service, shadowed community nurses and spent time in a hospice. Orientation gave her the opportunity to see many different compartments of the NHS, meeting lots of different people and created an excitement to start work.

Following orientation Zayba started her first placement at Leeds Teaching Hospital NHS Trust in the Financial Accounting team. On the graduate scheme you get to do a couple of placements at different organisations in different teams to give you well rounded experience of NHS finance. When Zayba joined the financial accounting team she had no experience of accounting at all, this is not a requirement of the scheme, she was starting from scratch and everyone was welcoming and helpful.

Whilst on the scheme you study towards a CIPFA qualification which is a professional accounting qualification, you attend lectures during the week and go into work on other days, all at the same time as doing a post graduate certificate in healthcare leadership. There are a lot of things to manage and a lot of elements all going on at the same time, but the scheme is designed to do that. There are 109 competencies that you work towards signing off, and you need 90% of these to complete the scheme as well as passing the 12 exams.


After 12 months at Leeds Teaching Hospital, Zayba was supposed to move to the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for her second placement, but new opportunities arose due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Zayba took the opportunity to join the financial management team at Leeds Teaching Hospital working on the COVID-19 vaccination programme with supporting the set up of the Elland Road vaccination centre. This was a real highlight of the scheme so far, helping with the pandemic effort and something to be really proud of.

Following the two months with the financial management team at Leeds Teaching Hospital, Zayba moved to her second placement at Leeds CCG in the corporate finance team. Here she worked on various projects as well as helping out with year-end accounts.

As part of the NHS graduate scheme you are able to undertake a flexi placement for eight weeks which can be done anywhere, this doesn't have to be in the NHS but you do have to justify why you want to do it. Zayba decided to try something outside of finance and went back to Leeds Teaching Hospital into the trauma services team in a business manager role. This wasn't a work from home role like Zayba's previous placement, Zayba went in to Leeds General Infirmary everyday, worked with operational colleagues and saw the challenges they face everyday and during the pandemic. This placement really opened her eyes to the pressures of the frontline services but also highlighted how finance is vital to the day to day running of services and impacts on patient care. Whilst Zayba enjoyed the experience, it highlighted that finance is where she wanted to be.

WHAT NEXT?

Next for Zayba it was back to Leeds CCG working in finance resource integration, this was financial management work, working on the day-to-day management of the unit, talking with stakeholders, head of departments and clinicians.



Now Zayba is in the last couple of months of the scheme starting to think about what is next, she hopes this will be in the NHS in Leeds. She is open minded about whether her next career move is commissioner or provider but is certain that she wants to stay in the health service. Zayba would really recommend the scheme to all, it has the right work life balance, is an exciting place to work, always has so much going on and most importantly you are helping people.

HIGHLIGHTS AND CHALLENGES

When asked about the biggest challenges of the scheme, Zayba pointed out that attending lectures, studying for the qualification, healthcare leadership certificate as well as working is quite demanding. However, it is all very well organised and an investment in your future. You have a programme manager throughout your whole time on the scheme and a placement manager at each placement. There was so much support and the people make it very enjoyable.

The biggest highlight for Zayba so far has been the time spent on orientation, working with so many different teams, learning about different roles right across the NHS. Another highlight and biggest work achievement so far was working as part of the vaccination programme. She felt a bit of imposter syndrome to start with but quickly adapted and developed confidence during project which had a very fast turnaround.

BENEFITS

For Zayba making a direct impact on patient care is the most enjoyable thing about the scheme, it's so motivating to see the changes and the impact you are having on patients and services. Waking up everyday and enjoying the work you are doing. For anyone considering applying for the scheme, Zayba would say;

'definitely go for it, it is a challenge but it is so rewarding, you get to learn so much about the NHS not just finance, it leads to so many fantastic career opportunities.'

Favourite Film: Harry Potter

Favourite Book: Harry Potter

Favourite Food: Pizza

AMANDA GASTON
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF FINANCE
THE ROYAL ORTHOPAEDIC HOSPITAL
NHS FT



NHS CAREER TO DATE

Amanda is currently Deputy Director of Finance at the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital NHS FT, responsible for financial planning, performance, and improvement. Amanda's NHS career started 14 years ago when she joined the Financial Management Training Scheme in 2008. The scheme is a two-and-a-half-year programme that gives you a breadth of knowledge across different NHS organisations and exposes you to varying finance functions whilst studying an accountancy qualification.

Whilst on the scheme Amanda spent some time working with payroll team, cashiers, procurement, payments receivables, before moving onto financial accounts and helping to put together year end accounts where she got her first experience of auditors.

As part of the scheme Amanda undertook a flexi placement which gives trainees the opportunity to spend a couple of months outside the NHS with the view to bring back that learning to your future placements within the NHS. Her placement was spent with Walsall Housing Group, which is a housing association. *'This placement allowed me to understand the clear links between housing and health, which are incredibly strong and key to supporting our communities. I would highly recommend any opportunities to expand your knowledge and experience base especially where it will either stretch and develop you as a person or allow you to bring experiences back to your role in the NHS.'*

On completion of the scheme Amanda became a Chartered Management Accountant and went on to work in a number of roles in the financial management team in a local acute trust. Firstly, as financial management support for the urgent and acute medicine divisions for 2 years. Then an opportunity arose to work as the Head of Transformation for Service Improvement with the same trust which started as a 6 month post but extended to a 2 ½ years in that post.

Whilst this role was slightly outside of finance it exposed her to a lot of valuable experience which is still helpful in her career today but following this role Amanda found herself wanting to get back into mainstream finance. So, Amanda took an opportunity to join the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital as Assistant Director of Finance, then secured promotion to current role as Deputy Director of Finance about 18 months ago.

WHAT FIRST ATTRACTED YOU TO A CAREER IN NHS FINANCE? DID YOU PICK ACCOUNTANCY OR THE NHS FIRST?

Following school Amanda decided to do a degree in accountancy and whilst in her final year went to a careers fair where she came across the NHS graduate training scheme stall. On the stall Amanda came across someone who was currently on the finance scheme, who spoke of their love for the scheme, the network it gave you, the support it offered and the varying roles that you get exposed to. *'So for me accountancy came first, but love for NHS followed.'*

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Whilst working in financial management support Amanda worked on business case collaboratively with colleagues from operational and frontline roles to transform how acute medicine was provided across the trust. Working on this business case from conception through to transforming the pathway through to seeing the actual difference this made for patients was a real career highlight for Amanda.

Another highlight for Amanda is mentoring and supporting other finance professionals and seeing them achieve their potential and also being a programme manager on the graduate scheme that she was once a trainee on. *'Watching those around you flourish and achieve their potential is a fantastic feeling, and one that I will never grow tired of.'*

CAREER CHALLENGES

Working through covid has probably been the most challenging time in Amanda's career, covid brought with it a lot of uncertainty around financial planning, financial envelopes and funding.

Not only were there the challenges of work but at the same time you were dealing with the pandemic from personal perspective balancing working life with personal life at home with two young children.

However, despite its challenges it really made Amanda proud to work for NHS and NHS finance during that time. *‘The power of resilience and ability to adapt to support the NHS at a time that they needed it the most made me really proud.’*

TYPICAL DAY

Working in NHS finance is so varied it is difficult to describe a typical day but Amanda often spends time:

- Working collaboratively with operational and clinical colleagues as well as other support services.
- Working with a more outward focus across the Integrated Care System.
- Spending time on financial planning, short term financial plan or more focus around medium term plan at the moment.
- On the day-to-day financial management support and tasks that need to be done there such as approving the month end position and reviewing the financial forecast.
- Producing reports to service committees and working groups such as Finance and Performance committee.

CAREER LUCKY BREAKS AND SETBACKS

When looking back on her career to date the biggest career setback was when she went for a role in a different organisation and didn't get the job. At the time there was a lot of reflecting, wondering what she should have done differently, why she didn't get that role. *‘It was hard at the time to deal with rejection, looking back now it was absolutely the right thing, it just wasn't the right role for me at that point in my career.’*

Looking back Amanda believes that all her career moves have been lucky breaks, right roles have come up at the right time. *‘There has been no set career plan, always been right opportunity at the right time. Every time I have been ready the next role, the right role and the right opportunity has come up for me, working with the right people.’*

The Head of Service Improvement role came about as Amanda had already been working with that team in the management accounts role and felt really supported to go for that role. In turn Amanda feels that the role in Service Improvement spring boarded her to have the right skills to step into the right role at the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital.



MOST ENJOYABLE THING ABOUT CURRENT ROLE

‘Making a difference to patients’ is the most enjoyable thing about Amanda’s current role. There was one business case that Amanda worked on which involved a innovative technology to support spinal surgery. Working with the service lead in spinal and translating their vision of using this equipment to make a difference to our patients, that to seeing the new pieces of equipment been wheeled into the hospital, then hearing the difference that makes to patients is powerful. *‘One patient thought it was the end of the line for their treatment for their spinal condition but seeing how this new technology gave them a second chance and how it really changed their lives. I won’t grow old of seeing that in my career.’*

MOST CHALLENGING THING ABOUT CURRENT ROLE

Finance professionals can help, support and drive lots of initiatives in NHS organisations however there is not an endless supply of people with those skills and expertise so competing priorities can be hard. Amanda thinks the most challenging thing for her is being able to prioritise the many demands, *‘Saying no to people is definitely a hard one for me.’*

SKILLS NEEDED TO BECOME A FINANCE PROFESSIONAL IN THE NHS

‘Effective communication is always top of the list when I am asked what is needed to be a good finance professional’. Amanda explains that if you have the ability to be able to communicate to people you will be able to perform well in your role. You have to be able to hold a conversation with clinicians and colleagues, be able to translate the finance language and terminology so it is understandable for non-finance colleagues to make decisions.

‘When I first joined NHS, the thought of being sat across the table with an expert surgeon and hold a conversation about the finance agenda felt scary, but this confidence has developed over time, don’t be afraid to ask questions. Don’t be afraid to ask, what does this mean for patients? What is the procedure you are talking about?’

MENTORING

A part of the finance management graduate scheme having a mentor is actively encouraged and Amanda has had both formal and informal mentors throughout her career.

She has found there have been many benefits by having different mentors at different stages in her career, all who have brought with them different skills, experience and backgrounds. There have been some more formal mentors where Amanda has approached people and asked them for expertise and time. There have also been some more informal ones especially when moving on to new roles, keep relationships going and has seen lots of value in doing so.

‘Networking is one of the key tips for having a long and successful career in NHS. Always someone who had been through what you are going through to help you through guide through situations. I am also a mentor to others and I will look forward to offering that to others throughout my whole career.’

BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON CAREER

Amanda’s biggest influence on career so far was her Programme manager when she first started the training programme – Mark Axcell who is now Chief Executive Designate for the Black Country Integrated Care Board (ICB). Mark was the was most valuable line manager Amanda has had and really helped support her through the early years in her career. Mark was an amazing role model, everything he teaches he showcases, it taught Amanda the importance of role modelling, she learnt what it means to be an authentic leader. *‘Mark was inspiring, he always shows the value of doing what’s right for the patients and you see that in everything he does, he always puts patients first. He listens to the workforce and really cares about making a difference. He showed me that as an NHS finance professional you can really make a difference.’*

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

To be well rounded NHS professionals we shouldn’t just be focusing on technical skills we need also to develop the softer skills. In NHS Finance we are really lucky to have a fantastic network of people as well as access to courses and resources. In particular Amanda has found the HFMA network very helpful.

BALANCING WORK AND HOME LIFE

NHS finance goes through peaks and troughs, for example month end and year end and planning periods can be particularly busy.

‘My advice would be make sure it works for you and your home life. Make sure you reset after those busy periods and don’t be afraid to ask for more flexible working when it’s needed.’ Amanda works flexibly, she has two young children and makes sure she does the school pick up twice a week, as that’s important to her and is non-negotiable for her. Work life balance is a hard one to get right, but a really important one. Amanda has had some advice from mentors that have helped her through that challenge.

CAREER ASPIRATIONS

When asked what is next for Amanda, she will continue to take advantage of right opportunities at right time. Continue to support her organisation and ICS achieve its objectives. Other areas Amanda would like to make a difference is reducing Health inequalities and really make a difference to people’s lives. Amanda will continue to support other finance professionals achieve their potential, she really enjoys seeing colleagues flourish and reaching their potential. *‘As long as I am making a difference, that is the most important thing to me’*

ADVICE TO THOSE WANTING TO START OUT A CAREER IN NHS FINANCE

‘Do it, it is absolutely a career for life. We need good finance professional to make difference to our patients and communities.’

The graduate scheme gave Amanda the foundation for the career that she has today. The early experiences of orientation, the time spent in different departments and the academic support give you a well-rounded foundation for the future. Amanda is still in touch with many people from her days on the scheme which has given her a good network of people who will continue to help in her career, a network that offers support and guidance when needed. Those who don’t want to go down that route of the graduate scheme, don’t fear as there are so many opportunities available. We can match skill sets and experience to date with roles available, there are many roles across lots of different organisations. Whether that is acute trust or if you want to be in more strategic organisation, there are so many opportunities available. Get in touch as there are lots of people willing to talk to you about their careers and roles. So many different routes and it really is a fantastic career for life. *‘I never get bored of what I am doing, there is something always new and exciting on the horizon to get involved with.’*

Favourite Film: The Pursuit of Happiness

Favourite Book: The Notebook by Nicholas Sparks

Favourite TV Show: Friends

Favourite Food: Cake



04

CHANGE IN CAREER

BENNETH ANSONG AKUAMOAH
FINANCE OFFICER
LEEDS TEACHING HOSPITAL NHS TRUST



FROM CLINICAL SUPPORT WORKER TO NHS ACCOUNTANT

Benneth studied some accountancy at high school in Ghana and realised this was a passion of his and a career he would like to pursue in the future. When Benneth moved to Leeds he met a man in the community and told him that he wanted to pursue his education in order to become a qualified accountant. This man was studying ACCA and directed Benneth to BPP professional studies so he could enquire about studying with ACCA himself. However, when Benneth turned up he was told that this was the law building but luckily the security guard kindly directed him to BPP on Park Row where he gathered some information as to the fees and courses.

Benneth started his ACCA qualification in 2008, as he was paying the fees for himself, he started working for Leeds City Council as a caretaker at a sports hall to fund his studies. This job was through an agency and unfortunately when the credit crunch hit and the council had to make cutbacks, agency staff were the first to be made redundant.

Following this role Benneth spoke to some people who suggested he look into becoming a clinical support worker in a hospital. Having enquired about this Benneth realised that he would need some experience and joined 24/7 agency where he worked for two months at various organisations such as Autism UK. Following these two months Benneth applied for a job as a clinical support worker at Harrogate District Hospital. Whilst Benneth enjoyed the role he found the commute long, particularly as a family man. Having spent a year at Harrogate Benneth secured a role at the mental health hospital in Leeds where he worked as a clinical support worker for 8 years. During these 8 years Benneth was recognised as a good worker with lots of potential and was offered opportunities to be sponsored and study nursing, however he knew that accountancy was what he wanted to do. He had started his studies and wanted to see this through.

VOLUNTEERING

Just before the pandemic, Benneth did 3 months voluntary work in the finance team at Leeds and Yorkshire Partnership NHS FT to gain some experience whilst still working as a clinical support worker and continuing his studies.

In March 2022, Benneth secured a role at Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust as a Finance Officer and now only has 3 papers left to become a chartered accountant with ACCA.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Benneth is really enjoying his new role where colleagues have been very supportive and welcoming. Understandably he was anxious when he first started in the finance team from a clinical role, Benneth had the finance book knowledge but that is always very different to the practicalities. However, the reception he received from the team and their willingness to help Benneth made him feel right at home. Working in this role is the highlight of his career so far, it is what Benneth has been working towards for years and really shows the hard work and determination that he has to achieve his goals.

WHAT NEXT?

Benneth's focus now is to learn this role well and being a valued member of the team, he has a passion for accountancy and now the practical experience to go with it. Benneth has worked in the NHS for 13 years, it is where he plans to stay for the foreseeable future.

*'I drive to work full of joy in my heart. It is a dream come true, what I dreamt about many years ago has now come true.
 I see myself as a fulfilled person now.
 I remember the day they offered me the job I couldn't sleep.'*

Benneth is a real inspiration and shows us all that if you work hard enough and you have the dedication and determination you can reach your career goals.

Favourite Film: Water for Elephants

Favourite Book: Recipe and cook books

Favourite Food: Big British breakfast

Favourite TV Show: Football and the X factor

JASVINDER LANDA

**DIVISIONAL FINANCE AND INFORMATION MANAGER -
CAPITAL PROJECTS AND IMPROVEMENT
UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS OF DERBY & BURTON NHS FT
TRUST**

**CAREER TO DATE**

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.

APPRENTICESHIP AND CIMA

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.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

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.

TYPICAL DAY

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.

DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY

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 TV Show: Only Fools and Horses

Favourite Food: Any type of chicken



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



One NHS Finance brings together the Future-Focused Finance, National Finance Academy, and the Finance Innovation Forum programmes and networks to make sure that everyone working in NHS Finance has access to skills, knowledge, methods, and opportunities to influence and enhance patient services.

If you have any questions on any of the above or would like any further information, then please get in touch with the team at one.finance@nhs.net

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