

# NHS FINANCE CAREER STORIES

SUCCESSFUL MOVES BETWEEN NHS SECTORS



# CAREER STORY Q&A

## MARTIN CAMPBELL SMITH

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, LEEDS TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS TRUST



### WHO YOU ARE, YOUR CURRENT ROLE AND QUALIFICATIONS?

Martin Campbell Smith, Associate Director of Finance at Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust, Chartered Accountant, Chartered Internal Auditor, MBA.

### A BRIEF CAREER PATH TO DATE

I started at Arthur Andersen in Edinburgh after university, I was made redundant in 2001 so I joined NHS Lothian in Internal Audit, managing the team and service, also managing provision of the service to NHS Borders. I joined South London CSU in 2013 and through mergers and changes became Director of Financial Services latterly at North East London Commissioning Support Unit. As this post was deleted, I joined Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust in 2021.

### WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THE NHS? DID YOU PICK ACCOUNTANCY FIRST OR THE NHS? DID YOU JUST FALL INTO IT?

I chose the NHS as I was attracted to working there and to use the skills I had developed. Myself and a colleague joined the internal audit team after the demise of Arthur Andersen. I really enjoyed working in Internal Audit and it gave me a great understanding of the operation of the NHS. I then wanted to return to accountancy and to my wider family in London so I joined South London CSU.

### HOW HAVE YOU FOUND MOVING FROM DIFFERENT ORGANISATIONS IN THE NHS? AND PARTICULARLY HOW HAVE YOU FOUND MOVING FROM DIFFERENT TYPES OF NHS ORGANISATIONS? E.G. COMMISSIONER TO PROVIDER ETC.

I have found it relatively easy to move, though there is a steep learning curve around the specifics in different organisations. However, the actual accountancy remains the same, it may be the different reporting tools or systems that you need to use or be familiar with.



### WAS IT WHAT YOU EXPECTED? WHAT WOULD HAVE MADE THE TRANSITION BETTER FOR YOU?

Largely, it has been as expected. The teams I have had the privilege to work with have been supportive in helping to make the transition by explaining and guiding me through areas that I have not known. What could have been better is clearer guidance or more accessible literature on some aspects. An example would be moving into a Trust and coming across PFI schemes for the first time.

### WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

The biggest challenge is growing the network of contacts, but that is the same to some extent in any new role. I have been fortunate enough to join teams that have been welcoming and supportive. I have also kept in touch with colleagues from previous roles which also help with the transition, but you do need to make new contacts and establish the network to help succeed in a new role especially where there is a transition between different types of organisation.

### WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU OFFER TO THOSE LOOKING TO MOVE FROM COMMISSIONING TO PROVIDER/ DIFFERENT TYPES OF PROVIDER ETC. (WHICHEVER IS APPLICABLE)?

My advice is do the research and due diligence. Be prepared to learn and make the effort to. While accountancy is accountancy, there are slightly different nuances that you need to be aware of and become familiar with.

### WHAT ROLE HAVE YOU ENJOYED MOST WORKING IN NHS FINANCE AND WHY?

I really enjoyed working in Internal Audit when I first worked in the NHS. I enjoyed going round the whole organisation and just learning how it worked from dental and GP practices, to HR and payroll, and the management of A&E and operating theatres as some examples. I am naturally curious and found it fascinating. I enjoyed then helping to develop solutions with colleagues where issues were found. The time spent in internal audit has proved a great foundation for me as I have developed my career in finance as it helps bring everything back to the patient and their care. It isn't just a number.

### WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT IN THE NHS?

I enjoyed helping develop the Finance team in the CSU and developing solutions and service offers to provide support to the CCGs. Overseeing the provision of Financial Services from the CSU to 36 CCGs at one point was a success.

### WHERE NEXT?

I have joined the National Finance Leaders Talent Pool recently as I look to make the next step to Director level.

### ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WHICH MIGHT BE HELPFUL FOR OTHERS.

Enjoy what you do and understand that whatever your role in Finance, it is an important part of helping to deliver care to our patients.

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