

**ABDUL KHALID**  
**HEAD OF BUSINESS PLANNING**  
**EAST CHESHIRE NHS TRUST**



### A BIT ABOUT ME AND CURRENT POSITION

I am a Mathematics graduate and CIMA qualified, ACMA CGMA member. I have worked in NHS finance from the age of 23, (soon after graduating) I am now 38, and have worked in 8 NHS Provider organisations across Acute and Mental Health. (7 trusts in the West Midlands)

I was born in central Birmingham (Small Heath) and lived there until I was 34, when I moved to the North-West of England and have settled here, married and a father of 2 young children.

I am currently working as East Cheshire NHS Trusts Head of Business Planning. My work consists of supporting the development and delivery of services (developments) at the Trust, bids, working alongside various colleagues in delivering large scale capital programmes alongside other projects and programmes, delivering (supporting) the Trusts annual plans, and supporting drive activity, performance, and productivity for the organisation. As-well representing the organisation in external regional planning and other various meetings. I also support the Cheshire and Merseyside region with its BAME development and other mentorship programmes and the Trusts FFF programme.

### CAREER PATH

I chose Mathematics for my A-Levels alongside Biology and Chemistry, by the end I disliked all things Science and enjoyed Mathematics, so chose that as my degree subject. By the end of the 4 years, more so my final year I realised I don't really like Mathematics so much outside of finance related modules. My dissertation subject area was chosen for me – Signal Processing, fun for potential engineers possibly, but not for me and was effectively the difference between a 2.1 (Hons) and 2.2. (Hons) This limited jobs I can apply for in Finance, as many organisations wanted 2.1+ (Hons) candidates.

A band 2 finance trainee role appeared at my local Hospital, disillusioned with the whole application process for graduate roles, I applied for this role and was successful. There was a range of (ages, experiences including school leavers and backgrounds) trainees recruited. The role allowed us to experience all departments in NHS Finance, rather across the trainees

based on preference, such that I worked in NHS Financial Management for 6 months and Information and Data Quality for 6 months, others across Financial Services, Income and Contracting and Clinical Coding. During that role, I realised I really enjoy NHS financial management and that led to my next 5/6 roles within NHS Financial management across corporate and clinical divisions in small DGH's to larger NHS Acute Trusts, as-well as specialist (Orthopaedic) Acute and Mental Health service providers.

My NHS Finance roles and (rough) time spent in each role is detailed below:

- Band 2 Finance Trainee (1 year)
- Band 4 Financial Management Assistant (2 years)
- Band 5 Management Accountant (1 year)
- Band 6 Deputy Finance & Business Manager, Mental Health (1 year)
- Band 6 Divisional Accountant (1 year)
- Band 7 Divisional Accountant and Band 8a Finance Business Partner (2+2 years)
- Band 8b Associate Director of Finance – Financial Delivery (1 year)
- Band 8b / Acting 8c Head of Business Planning (3+1 years)

All roles are within the Acute NHS sector unless stated.

As evident from my roles I have built a strong financial management skill-set, learning from different line managers, deputies and directors, also having strong operational and clinical management teams in my organisations whom I have worked closely with, supported in their duties and through shadowing operational staff, as-well as being on the operational OOH's on-call rota I have been able to gain a broader understanding of NHS practices and I feel added real value in all roles, and feel appreciated by my wider teams.

My last and current-role have been more focused on delivering Trust annual plans, (focusing on the activity and performance plans at East Cheshire NHS Trust, and the wider activity and financial plans prior to that) managing Trust bids, tenders, the business case process and delivering business cases, and the Trust cost-improvement programme, as-well as delivering Trust projects and programmes. In this (type of role) I feel I can add most value; as I am working right across the Trust and alongside community including primary care and ICB/NHSE colleagues, I personally enjoy the role(/s) more than my prior roles but it is largely due to my financial management background I feel I am a strong and valued individual in my current work/function.

## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

I have not focused on my Personal development, which may explain why post-graduation, other than my CIMA and Better Business Case practitioner certifications, I do not have any other recognised qualification. However, I did understand to progress I will have to experience a wide array of management styles and experience different organisations processes, something I ensured by not focusing on progressing within 1 organisation, hence having worked in 8 NHS organisations in 15 years. I would recommend that individuals new and/or in more junior NHS roles try to experience more than 1 organisation in the function they wish to develop in, it made a significant difference to the pace of my development, alongside additional training, qualifications (I have not been as good at) and shadowing and broadening one's experiences – so asking to be on the Trust on-call rota where appropriate.

## WORK-LIFE BALANCE

With the Trusts flexitime and hybrid working policy, and support provided to me by my manager, including sourcing additional support from other team members for some of my projects, I now have an acceptable work-life balance, so my recommendation to those struggling to balance work-life pressures; speak to your line managers initially.

## SUCCESSSES, REGRETS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I have led successful bids and support programme manage the implementation of an enhanced and expanded Endoscopy offering, an Elective Treatment Centre funded from the NHS TIF programme, a Community Diagnostic Centre in Congleton, as-well as supported expand and improve the Trusts ED offering and MR service as part of my current role at East Cheshire NHS Trust.

My main regret is that I have had numerous offers to be mentored and never progressed those offers, including from senior leaders in the NHS and from private sector consultancy partners. Although I am fairly comfortable in my success to date, I do often wonder how much more I could have progressed by now and I have seen other colleagues/friends with whom I have developed/worked with, that have received mentorship and gone on to achieve more senior roles than myself, so I would recommend to those serious in achieving a senior leadership role in the NHS to accept and actively seek an established, senior placed mentor.