

REBECCA DONGA

HEAD OF MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS AND PLANNING

NORTH BRISTOL NHS TRUST

ABOUT ME

I'm Rebecca Donga, currently working as Head of Management Accounts and Planning in North Bristol NHS Trust. I moved down to the South West from Liverpool in 2017 to join the NHS Graduate Scheme. I had just graduated from my degree in Physics at the University of Liverpool where my original career goal was to become a Medical Physicist. During university, I realised this was no longer my passion and the NHS Graduate Scheme felt like the perfect opportunity to still work in healthcare but do something that more closely aligned to my skills! It was quite a scary move for me at first as I missed home so much, fast forward 7 years and I couldn't love Bristol life more!

MY ROLE

As Head of Management Accounts and Planning, I am part of the Financial Management team where my role is to lead a team of 30 individuals to cover a range of tasks, goals and objectives. This includes:

- Working with our key stakeholders and budget holders to enable them to understand the financial impact of any decisions
- Ensuring robust controls and governance structures are in place to provide value for money services
- Forecasting for the year ahead and planning for the next financial year
- Supporting divisions to make finance savings year on year
- Monthly reporting of income and expenditure used internally and externally

CAREER PATH/CAREER JOURNEY

I started my career as a Finance Graduate Trainee on the NHS Graduate Scheme. I would describe the scheme as an amazing 2.5 years of accelerated learning where I completed my chartered accountancy exams (CIPFA) and Healthcare Leadership PGC (Elizabeth Garrett Anderson) as well as trying to find my feet in the work place!

My first placement was spent in Gloucestershire Care Services for 12 months which was a great introduction to the NHS – they exposed me to so many different teams across the

organisation, both, clinical and corporate which provided me with some great foundations for my career to date. One of the great things about the NHS Graduate Scheme was the offer of a flexi-placement – a chance to work in an organisation of your choice for 2-3 months. I had always wanted to experience the ‘Big 4’ and was lucky enough to secure a placement at PwC where I worked on a project to find cost savings from a merger between two NHS organisations – it was interesting to see the NHS from a ‘consultancy’ lens - the fast paced environment and tight deadlines taught me a lot around prioritisation and management of workload.

My final placement on the scheme was at my current organisation – North Bristol NHS Trust where I joined in September 2018. As a graduate, I worked across most of the teams in Finance which is where I found that my passion lied mostly with working in Financial Management and that’s where I have worked since in a variety of roles:

- Starting off as the Divisional Finance Manager for Medicine which covered areas such as the Emergency Department, Care of the Elderly, Cardiology and Respiratory. It was a great role to gain an understanding of how the hospital works operationally and see first-hand the challenges being faced and helping the division manage their emergency activity within a tight budget.
- My second role was as Senior Divisional Finance Manager which sat centrally within the Financial Management team. This role was all about leading the team, helping them develop and giving them the right tools to succeed. It was a great role to practice and develop my finance knowledge at a higher level and also looking at finances from a Trust-wide perspective rather than being focussed on a division. As well as this, I was able to develop my leadership style through working through the opportunities and challenge that came up in the team
- My current role as Head of Management Accounts and planning felt like the natural next step from Senior Divisional Finance Manager. I’ve been in this role for around 9 months and really enjoying the varied workload and working with such a great team.

As I’ve worked in Financial Management for most of my career, I would like to branch out in the future by looking into contracting/costing roles or even putting myself out of my comfort zone by moving to a more technical role in Financial Services so we’ll see where the future takes me!

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

I love to go to Crossfit or running in my spare time – it’s my strategy for switching off and I would recommend it to anyone! I also love to spend as much of my annual leave as possible on holidays and like to have lots of social occasions booked in with friends!