

## SAMUEL COOPER

### FINANCE MANAGEMENT TRAINEE AS PART OF THE HFMA FINANCE MANAGEMENT GRADUATE TRAINING SCHEME

### SHROPSHIRE COMMUNITY HEALTH TRUST

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

**Name:** Samuel Cooper

**Qualifications:** 1<sup>st</sup> Class Honours Accounting & Finance degree from Sheffield Hallam University

ACCA Part Qualified: Including Level 4, Level 6, Level 7 SBR and AA exams passed

**Current Role:** Finance Management Trainee as part of the HFMA Finance Management Graduate Training Scheme

#### CAREER PATH

My first job was as a glass collector at a local pub. I then moved onto retail where I worked briefly before moving on to Nandos. I worked part time at Nandos from 2017 until 2021 alongside my studies for A levels (economics, maths, geography) and University. I wasn't always 100% sure what I wanted to do but I had a passion for numbers and economics so followed this by choosing to do Accounting and Finance at Sheffield Hallam University. In 2021 I landed my first job in finance as a Finance Assistant at a small startup health company after graduating with a first-class honours. This role was mainly based around purchase and sales ledger but also handled general finance queries and expenses.

I realised that this role wasn't something I wanted to do forever, and I wanted to develop as a person and as an accountant and broaden my horizons. I then started looking for graduate schemes which offered a range of different roles and capacities as well as support through professional accounting exams. I then come across the HFMA Finance Management Training Scheme which was a perfect match for what I was looking for as the NHS values really matched my own. I started applying for this in January and it was a very long process, only finding out in June that I had luckily been selected to be part of this scheme.

#### CURRENT ROLE

I started the scheme with Shropshire Telford and Wrekin ICB, where my role was in management accounts. This was something I thoroughly enjoyed and hope to do again in the future. This role included meeting with budget holders to discuss how best to manage their contract lines. It also involved a revamp of the allocations process, and this is

something that I looked after in my time there. As part of this role, it required accruals and prepayments as part of working papers in the month end process to ensure accurate accounts.

I am now currently with the Costing and Contracting team with Shropshire Community Health Trust. This involves reviewing contracts, attending contract review meetings and using technology to improve and automate processes.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Both the ICB and Shropshire Community Health Trust have been extremely supportive in my professional development. They have allowed me to attend BPP Taught and Revision phases towards my professional exams. I have also been able to attend conferences where I have networked and met new people from different organisations and become part of the HFMA East Midlands Committee. These people have given me some great advice about future career, the NHS and dealing with day-to-day work in general. I have also had the chance to attend a leadership course which gave me more confidence. I have been able to attend multiple excel trainings which has helped improve my use of this which I have passed on to others where I can and used to improve processes to improve efficiencies.

One thing that I think has massively helped me develop as a person and finance professional is that I have had the opportunity to work with and along side different teams. This includes but is not exclusive to a placement at SaTH where I worked with estates, charitable funds, purchasing team, receivables team and shadowed the CFO for a day. Seeing how different teams work and what drives them looking at different processes has given me a better idea of the bigger picture and how it all links in together. I have been able to borrow best practices from different teams as well as apply my own knowledge to these teams.

I would not have been able to do all of this without my mentor at the ICB and my first line manager Wendy Wood. Wendy has been extremely supportive and encouraged me to get involved in all sorts of different works which has given me more confidence dealing with senior managers, working with other teams and just in general in day-to-day work and life. Wendy has always been there for support whether it has been work or non-work related but always steered me in the right direction and given me many opportunities to develop myself. Wendy has inspired me to become a mentor myself to the next graduate who I have monthly catchups with and hope that I can offer some advice and support to make their journey as enjoyable as mine.

Another inspiration I have for my work and personal life is my Dad. Seeing his work ethic and career he has had inspired me to be the best I can be and get the most out of my career. He has given me some great advice over the years but the one that always sticks with me and is the way I try to live my life is **'to always give your all, no matter what you are doing'**. I carry this with me in my day to day life and always give my best in what I do.

## WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Outside of work I play for a Saturday and Sunday local football team as well as enjoying going to watch Liverpool. I enjoy team sports and socials as I always think it is more rewarding to achieve and work as a team. I go to the gym where I do group and also play sports including padel, tennis and badminton. Outside of sports I enjoy going to gigs listening to live music and going on walks. I believe I have a good work life balance and I think this is important not only for mental health but also to improve proficiency in the workplace.

## ON REFLECTION

I am aspiring to become a chartered accountant by passing my exams and completing my Practical Experience. Upon completing the grad scheme I want to become a management accountant at band 7. I then eventually want to become a Finance Business Partner. I want to continue contributing to the patients that use our NHS.