

KATE SEEDHOUSE

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE MANAGER

NHS COVENTRY AND WARWICKSHIRE ICB

ABOUT ME

My name is Kate Seedhouse, and I am currently working as an Accounts Payable Manager within the Finance Team of NHS Coventry and Warwickshire ICB. I have worked for the NHS since the 90's and started my career as an office junior/secretary to the then Director of Finance within what was a Primary Care Trust.

While working as an office junior a colleague within finance went on maternity leave who worked in the Accounts Payable section, and so I stepped forward to take on her role within the department while she was on leave and soon realised after a week or two that I loved everything about the job role so much that I realised that was what I wanted to do within the NHS. Unfortunately, when the colleague returned to work there was no opportunity for me to stay on, in this particular department, and so I had to leave the NHS to undertake an Accounts Payable role which I did by moving to Warwick University, as I knew I didn't want to go back to general finance work. After working my way up to becoming a team leader at the University within Accounts Payable I eventually received a message from my old boss at the NHS stating there was an opportunity to return and apply for role within Accounts

Payable that had become available, but it was currently only a secondment role. I decided to take the plunge to go back to the NHS even though it was only a year long contract, and I was giving up a full-time role but thankfully the colleague who had undertaken the secondment to a different team stayed in that role which meant I could also. I have been within the Accounts Payable team since that day and I have worked my way up to manage a team and I can honestly say I love my job and all it entails.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

As I say, I love working in Accounts Payable. Although you have tasks which need to be undertaken daily, weekly and monthly no day is ever the same, with queries daily and at times quite challenging events where you need to resolve issues urgently it is demanding but rewarding.

Therefore, my career path was in no way planned, it just happened and I am glad it happened in this way. I am still friends with both my colleague who went on maternity leave and also the colleague who went on secondment to enable me to return to the NHS so thanks to them.

Accounts Payable impacts into many financial areas within the finance team and therefore it ensures that I have a good all round knowledge of other areas within finance which I think is what I like most. Therefore I pride myself on being someone that can solve and answer numerous financial questions in our team and I can provide support to the whole team which has helped me develop my numerous skills over the many years.

WORKING DURING THE PANDEMIC

Working through the pandemic was tough, at the time I worked for a CSU so we had to continue to provide a service and give our support to the ICB whilst completely changing the way we worked. Luckily, we had Microsoft teams and without this it would have made things very difficult indeed but adapting a new working regime and ensuring we communicated even more on a daily basis to keep updated was a huge upheaval in change for us as a team. Ensuring we delivered to time scales while everyone pulling together to adapt to new challenges that we had never encountered was hard. Everybody was extremely busy and in Accounts Payable we were faced with a huge amount of purchase orders for PPE which were urgent to transact and we had to ensure our providers who were struggling with financial pressures were paid quickly and efficiently. We unfortunately also had to be aware of an even more increased attempt of fraudulent activity which was being presented to us as people and organisations took advantage of our ever growing time pressures at the time. We did it though and we got through it all together by adapting quickly and efficiently and communicating with one another.

As a team manager with everyone working from home we also had to adapt to ensuring colleagues had everything they needed physically and mentally to continue to work from home efficiently. We still work from home for the majority of the time and this has meant we have permanently adapted to ensuring staff wellbeing and that we adapt in a way to support some colleagues more than others.

REFLECTION

Working for many years within the NHS and having to adapt to the many organisational changes of PCT, CSU, CCGs and ICBs has been difficult but also exciting and rewarding. It has been tough at times with the many system changes and updates which in turn mean adapting new processes and training colleagues while ensuring I keep on top of my management skills and knowledge has been challenging at many levels but a good support team and management helps and we certainly have this within our ICB and in particular finance team.

WHAT'S NEXT

The implementation of the new ISFE 2 system is our next challenge. This is going to be a huge change in implementing a whole new system and with everyone learning how to do things right from the start whilst ensuring our time constraints. I am looking forward to being part of the testing team for accounts payable processing and being a change champion. We need to ensure we obtain the most from it and be able to set up new processes and adapt. I am looking forward to developing new skills and knowledge so I can inform colleagues how best to use the system to undertake tasks. It will be extremely challenging to change but we will grow and learn together to make it work.

ADDITIONAL INFO

Many people may not be aware, but I run with 2 others a Pan-disability football club foundation for children who use walker frames from conditions such as cerebral palsy to help them feel inclusive and enjoy football. The joy it gives children and their parents in watching them be the same as their idols is very rewarding and we arrange tournaments yearly at St Georges Park where I can also be spotted dressing up as our mascot Seedy the badger and attempting the latest dance craze with kids.

Favourite food – Duck

Favourite TV, film – Anything true crime

Favourite pastime – Gardening