

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

NHS SUSSEX FINANCE PROFESSIONALS SHARE THEIR CAREER JOURNEYS

April 2025

The South East Regional Academy recently interviewed Alex Bradley (Senior Finance Manager) and Mark Edmonds (Management Accountant) from NHS Sussex about their career paths to finance roles within the NHS, and their views on the importance of engaging with young people to inspire the next generation of finance professionals.

Mark, a former primary school teacher, transitioned into finance, finding a role in the NHS that offered both meaning and the chance to help others. He emphasises the importance of communicating effectively and highlights the variety of roles within the NHS, beyond the clinical side. Edmonds also stressed that many teenagers are surprised to find out that there are so many other avenues other than being a doctor or nurse in the NHS.

Alex's route into NHS finance came through an apprenticeship, after a brief period in the family business. He stresses the value of an open mindset, continuous learning, and enjoying one's work. Bradley believes that it's important to show the varied opportunities within the NHS to young people, who may be unaware of the options available to them.

Both Mark and Alex spoke about their participation at a recent careers fair, the interest from the students and also the teachers in the opportunities in the NHS.



ALEX BRADLEY
SENIOR FINANCE MANAGER
NHS SUSSEX ICB

Q: Tell us about your journey into NHS finance.

Mark:

"I actually started out as a primary school teacher. I enjoyed inspiring and teaching young people, but after seven years, I realised I wanted something different. Maths had always been my favourite subject, so I started in an entry-level finance role with Sussex Police and eventually moved into NHS finance in 2021. It was a big change – I was in my mid-30s – but I've been fully supported by NHS Sussex to gain the qualifications I need."

Alex:

"My journey was very different. I left school after Year 11, struggled with college, and ended up working in my family's wardrobe business. But I knew I wanted more. An apprenticeship opportunity at Brighton and Hove Clinical Commissioning Group (now Integrated Care Board) came up, and that's where it all started. I completed my AAT, progressed to CIMA, and eventually became a chartered accountant. I've now been with NHS Sussex for over 10 years."

Q: What motivated you to attend the Uckfield College Careers Fair?

Mark:

"It's about giving back. I wish someone had shown me this path earlier. We met so many students who had no idea there was more to the NHS than doctors and nurses. Finance plays a crucial role in delivering patient care, and it's great to open their eyes to that."

Alex:

"I had the opportunity to join through an apprenticeship, and I want to make sure others know that path exists. We even had teachers asking about career changes, which shows just how little some people know about the options out there."

Q: What are some of the most valuable lessons you've learned through your NHS careers?

Alex:

"Having an open mindset and being curious has been key. You need to want to learn, understand the services you're supporting, and look beyond the numbers."

Mark:

"Communication is vital. Finance isn't just about numbers—it's about how you explain things, how you support decisions, and how you contribute to the bigger picture. Knowing your work supports care delivery gives real meaning to the job."

Q: What would you say is your proudest accomplishment?

Alex:

"Becoming chartered, but more than that, it was the journey to get there. I went from failing exams to passing 12 in a short time span—it was a big turnaround."

Mark:

"It's seeing the real-world impact of what we do. Working with teams that support hospices or children's services, and realising how our work connects to patient outcomes—it's deeply rewarding."

Q: Why is it important to be a careers ambassador?

Mark:

"It's about visibility. Many young people just don't know these roles exist. If we can plant that seed of curiosity, we're opening doors they might not have considered."

Alex:

"And it's about succession. We have an ageing workforce, and we need to bring in fresh talent."

MARK EDMONDS
MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANT
NHS SUSSEX ICB



We're not just inspiring others; we're securing the future of NHS finance."

Q: How do we make the NHS the employer of choice for young people?

Alex:

"By offering real opportunities and showing that the NHS values people from all backgrounds. Apprenticeships are a great way to start a career without debt, and the support within NHS Sussex has been excellent."

Mark:

"Good career guidance is key. Not everyone wants—or needs—to go to university. Personalised support helps people find paths that suit them and shows that the NHS has a place for everyone."

Both Alex and Mark highlighted the need to challenge assumptions about NHS careers, showcase diverse entry routes, and give young people real insight into the impact finance professionals have in supporting frontline services. Their passion and authenticity are exactly what make careers ambassadors so powerful.

Their visit to Uckfield College is already bearing fruit—with at least one student now lined up for work experience. If that's not proof of impact, what is?

Both Alex and Mark are clearly passionate about giving back and inspiring the next generation to consider a career in the NHS. They believe that by engaging with young people, they can spark an interest in NHS careers, provide valuable guidance, and help address future staffing needs within the organisation. They also believe that having people come in with fresh ideas is vital to the NHS and that the NHS needs to be attractive to younger generations.

Would you like to get involved? Email southeast.academy@nhs.net