

"I would never have imagined that my one-year apprenticeship could be a fundamental step to my career."

Lorenza started her career in the NHS as a level 2 apprentice in management accounts five and a half years ago and thinks it has been a great success for her.

Lorenza Ravallese

Assistant costing accountant

Employer or university

North Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust



How I got into the apprenticeship

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My career in the NHS began in 2012 where I started as a level 2 apprentice in management accounts.

It never occurred to me that I would be working in a hospital, especially in finance, even though it is a fundamental department in any organisation!

After my apprenticeship, I decided that university was not for me and chose to continue working at the trust. Five and a half years later, I am still here, and I couldn't be happier. I have loved every minute of it and am extremely proud of myself and my progress. I love telling people what I do and where it all began.

What I do

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No two days in costing are the same. My work consists of different tasks for various deadlines.

The role involves taking all the patient activity which has occurred during the financial year and attributing the cost using the final accounts to produce an average cost per type of patient stay. All trusts are required to submit this annual return to NHS Improvement (NHSI).

The data is collated to determine the tariff in two years' time. During the costing round we meet with lead clinicians, heads of departments, service managers etc to collect and revise the apportionment tables used.

The best bits and challenges

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The finance team were welcoming and supportive as soon as I joined. I remember a particular time when a manager (not my line manager) would stay past working hours once a week to go over anything I was unsure of or answer any questions I may have. It was this special brand of mentoring and encouragement that gave me the motivation and confidence needed to complete my work.

So much has happened throughout the year which I never anticipated. I've been given the opportunity to work towards an Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) qualification and completed it at the end of 2017; my role was made permanent within the management accounts team; I've been promoted; our team won a non-clinical team of the year award in 2016; and I've been accepted as a student at the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) so I can become a fully qualified accountant.

Life outside work

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I believe it is important to maintain a social life whilst working and studying as it helps to relieve stress. I take pleasure in finding new quirky restaurants to try out with friends.

I also love dancing – I am currently taking salsa lessons! But there are also days where I love to stay at home and lose myself in a good book.

Career plans and top tips for others

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For me the apprenticeship had been a great success. I have achieved more than I ever expected!

I would never have imagined that my one-year apprenticeship could be a fundamental step to my career. I cannot wait to see what the future has in store for me. I want to continue and progress within the costing team at the trust, as I truly love my job and the team.?

Apprenticeships are for those who have the willingness, vision and ambition to do well. An added advantage which I experienced was that other colleagues in the office notice your skills, so when a potential role does arise, you may be considered as your colleagues know your capabilities; whereas if I were to apply as an external applicant, I might not have been successful.

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