

# "The best bit is feeling that I contribute in some small way to delivering successful healthcare services to patients."

Louise's initial temporary three-day role in the Estates department ended up lasting six months and included a job offer for a permanent position. She soon caught the 'property bug' and enrolled for a Master's degree in real estate surveying.

## Louise English

### Senior property manager

#### Employer or university

Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust

Louise English with building contractor

### How I got into the role

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I had decided to return to the north east after living and working in London without any real career path. Shortly after returning, I was offered a three-day temporary role with what was then a primary care trust, right on the cusp of its abolition.

At that time, I thought that 'estates was just for boys' so I did not give much thought to staying long-term. However, I found this role really enjoyable and, at the same time, the team allowed me to learn and develop. Six months later I was offered a permanent position. I soon caught the 'property bug' and began structuring my further education around property surveying.

I knew that to progress my career in the sector, I would have to become chartered. In January 2016, I enrolled for a Master's degree in real estate surveying as a

distance learner, working full time and studying in my spare time.

## **What I do**

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I am responsible for actively managing all property-related matters and transactions. This includes acquisition and disposal of leasehold and freehold property interests, negotiating leases and licences from both a landlord and tenant perspective, ensuring the estate is delivering maximum income, managing the estate in line with the departmental strategy, resolving landlord and tenant queries and disputes, and preparing business cases and options appraisals for property matters.

As well as that, I manage the estates and property records, including the administration of the electronic estates 'terrier'. This includes maintaining and updating records, producing reports for different purposes across the trust, and monitoring critical tenancy dates such as rent reviews, break dates and termination dates.

## **The best bits and challenges**

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Undoubtedly, the best bit is feeling that I contribute in some small way to delivering successful healthcare services to patients in our communities. I really enjoy my job; each day presents a new challenge and there is a lot of variety in the role.

As the trust's sole property officer, I play a key role in a significant number of property-related projects and strategic discussions and I feel valued for the contribution I make to them.

However, working for an NHS organisation poses its own challenges: there are a significant number of occupancy arrangements in place that don't support modern-day service delivery or provide value for money for the NHS. However, this is also what makes it challenging and keeps it interesting!

## **Life outside work**

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I live with my 'little madam' of a cat, Amira. I have a real passion for travelling. I vowed to myself a few years ago that each year I would visit somewhere new. So far this year, I have travelled to the west coast of America and trekked through Yosemite National Park. I have also absorbed the culture (and cakes!) of Vienna, Austria.

I have an interest in photography, if not the skill. I also run and go spinning regularly to keep fit.

## **Career plans and top tips for others**

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I will shortly be commencing my Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) training to qualify as a chartered surveyor. Five years ago, I had no idea my career would take this turn.

While I don't know what the future holds, I know I will make the most of all opportunities available to me.

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