

Real-life story - Don Richards

Don derives huge satisfaction from helping to drive through major change at his trust. He also enjoys the fact that a management career in the NHS allows him to work with a unique variety of people.



Don Richards Director of finance and IT

Employer or university North West London Hospitals NHS Trust

Salary range Unknown

What I do

Financial management is so important to making the NHS work. It's not just about budgets and balance sheets - the financial agenda helps to shape the direction of an organisation. It helps us deliver our priorities, making sure resources in their widest sense - people and equipment as well as money - are in the right place at the right time.

That can be on a relatively small scale such as financing equipment, negotiating service contracts or a really big scale such as the two building projects I have worked on and completed in record time, in partnership with the private sector.

Get the finances right and patient care improves. I am especially proud of the part I played in establishing a diagnostic and treatment centre and then taking that experience on to finance the complete rebuilding of the remainder of our old Victorian hospital. This involved dealing with local partners and business as well as clinical colleagues. We put together a financial package that allowed us to create the new hospital and free up land for development that brought new jobs into the area.

My perspective

I enjoy the breadth of contact I have with others inside and outside the NHS. More than any other employer I can think of, the NHS staff reflects the whole cross-section of society and it is wonderful to interact with so many different types of people.

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How I got in

I joined the NHS through its finance management graduate training scheme [1], which provided structured training and led me to getting my Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy qualification.

Advice and tips

As a finance manager you need to be able to respond quickly and make decisions to help staff at the front line go about their business of delivering healthcare.

You also need to be able to work well with colleagues - other managers and clinicians. You need to inspire confidence in the people you work with but also get tough where necessary to make sure that plans run smoothly and money is directed to the right places. As finance director, important skills are the abilities to focus quickly on the core issue, negotiate and agree a consensus with fellow directors and communicate in a clear way that inspires and motivates others.

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/management/roles-management/finance-manager/real-life-story-don-richards>

Links

[1] <http://www.isthenhsforme.co.uk>