

## Real-life story - Jo Baker

Jo was a chartered accountant when she joined the NHS and has developed her career in the primary care [1] sector



Jo Baker finance manager (contracting and costing)

**Employer or university** North Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust

**Salary range** Unknown

### How I got in

I am a chartered management accountant but my first NHS role was at North Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust where I was responsible for managing, reporting and forecasting the trust's income.

### How my career has developed

I then moved to North Essex PCT Cluster to work on redesigning mental health rehabilitation services. While I was there, an opportunity came up to pilot the key account manager role within NHS Mid Essex commissioning support unit, which was established to support GP commissioners ahead of the new commissioning system that began in April 2013. It sounded like my dream job – meeting people, developing our business and solving problems – and I liked the idea of helping to shape the role.

Working at NHS Mid Essex was a steep learning curve for me, but I learned quickly and understood the challenges facing GPs who have new responsibilities for commissioning (planning and purchasing) services for patients.

Ahead of the new commissioning system going live on 1 April 2013, I met with my customers once a week formally to talk about getting services up and running. The commissioning support unit approach was that we were working in partnership with our customers to ensure that all services were ready for 1 April and that we were clear about who was doing what.

In my commissioning role, I covered both North East Essex and Mid Essex clinical commissioning groups and I tried to spend time in my customers' offices so that I understood the day-to-day issues the teams are facing; it's where the key account manager role can really add value. I provided commissioning support for 18 services in all, ranging from medicines management and continuing healthcare through to finance and IT, so getting to grips with them all was a steep learning curve but fabulous experience.

The thing I liked best about the job was meeting our customers – hearing about how they are developing their CCGs to best serve their patients and thinking about how we can help them.

I'm passionate about developing and delivering the best services for patients.

## **What I do**

I've just started work as finance manager back at North Essex Partnership Trust and I'm looking forward to bringing back my knowledge of commissioning services, the CCG customers and the new ways of working to help develop this excellent business even further.

## **Best bits and challenges**

I'm passionate about developing and delivering the best services for patients and I believe the new healthcare landscape offers a great opportunity to develop new and better ways of delivering services and greater value for money. GP commissioners need to trust that we managers know our customers - GPs, patients, carers and stakeholders - understand their business, and are able to help them identify new areas for development.

---

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

### **Links**

[1] [https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Primary\\_care](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Primary_care)