

THE LEEDS TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS TRUST



The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust is the largest in the UK and includes the largest teaching hospital in Europe. It provides high quality acute hospital services for the population of Leeds and the surrounding area and acts as a regional centre for a number of specialist services such as cancer and cardiac surgery. In total they employ over 14,000 staff across eight sites, treating around one million patients a year with a budget of £730 million. The Trust is a CIMA Training Quality Partner.

Vision Statement... 'We will ensure The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust is a locally, nationally and internationally renowned centre of excellence for patient care, education and research. We will deliver this vision by ensuring we attract the best possible staff and invest in their development.'

Karen Barker CIMA student

I was born and bred in Leeds. In 1990 I started a degree in Maths at York University but after two years decided it wasn't for me. I then worked as an office manager for various betting companies and in a branch of the Yorkshire Bank. I suppose I was gradually edging towards a financial role and so in 2001 I saw a job advertised for an Accountancy Assistant at the Trust. I went for the role and was successful so I started supporting the pathology department as well as assisting in the production of financial reports, helping with budget setting and dealing with budget queries. Now I'm Assistant Finance Manager for obstetrics and gynaecology working alongside clinicians in financial planning, budgets and forecasting.

I had to start my CIMA qualification right from the beginning with no exemptions, so I've still got Paper P8 Financial Analysis, all three Strategic level exams and TOPCIMA to get through. With nine exams under my belt and five to go, on a good day, it feels like I'm on the home straight!

The interesting thing for me has been seeing the parallels between what I study and read in the text books and what my day job requires. CIMA makes you think about the business opportunities and risks involved in financial decision-making and also helps you learn the skills you need to get that across. For me, the key to being able to communicate with non-finance staff is being clear. As long as what you are saying is jargon-free and you understand the clinicians' needs and the pressured environments they operate in, then they can make the best decisions based on what you report.

In the NHS, there are real tensions between needing to balance the books and wanting to cut waiting lists and make improvements. There's always so much media attention about the NHS and multi-million pound deficits which can be bad for morale. But here at the Trust we try to emphasise the positive things we do.

Siobhan Brook CIMA student

I'm originally from Halifax and my route into CIMA wasn't exactly a well-trodden path. After studying A-levels in P.E., Economics and Maths I moved south and started a BSc in Equine Studies at Writtle College (part of the University of Essex). At that time it was horses and not numbers that seemed to interest me. When I graduated in 2001 I wasn't exactly sure where my passion for horses was going to lead in terms of a career. I was very strong in Economics and Maths and there was some finance in the business side of economics so I returned to Yorkshire and started an MSc in Accounting at Leeds Metropolitan University. About a year after I finished my MSc, I saw a job advertised in the local newspaper and so in December 2003 I started as Accountancy Assistant here at the Trust.

I was given the option of various accountancy qualifications to choose from and I decided that CIMA looked the most relevant and provided the broadest foundation on which I could build my career. I was exempt from all of the Certificate level and I've just found out that I successfully passed my fourth Managerial level exam, Paper P2. Just over a year ago I was promoted to Assistant Management Accountant and so now I work alongside clinicians in radiology as well as supporting the HR department.

My MSc was a great introduction into accountancy and finance, but CIMA has been all about the application of theory into the workplace. Here at the Trust it's about the way we deliver services in an ever changing environment and CIMA's focus on providing financial information for long and short-term decision making has really enabled me to play a part in this. It isn't an easy qualification – it takes commitment to your studies and hard work to get through the exams, but I think this is very important. It means employers know if someone is CIMA qualified then they can expect the highest standards of professionalism and business acumen – and, of course, they're good with the numbers too! ■