

Case Study

Real South West London

Real Jobs

Real You

South West
London
Integrated
Care System

NHS
South West London



Name:

Awais Ahmed

Job Role:

**Trainee Finance Manager,
South West London
Integrated Care System**

Age:

30

Location:

Southwark

What were you doing before you worked in the NHS?

I studied pharmacy at Kings College London.

How long have you been working for the NHS?

Two years.

Did you have any worries about finding a good job?

Yes, because there were personal barriers. I have multiple mental health conditions including PTSD. I identify as a gay man and my mental health conditions are chronic, so technically I fall under the Equality Act. I'm also disabled as well. I would say being from an ethnic background did not preclude me from any opportunities at all and any worries I did have, which were very few – were purely in my head.

Has working for the NHS changed you?

I was given feedback that I needed to be asking for help but I found it really hard because I'm so self-sufficient. But I do keep a daily reflective journal and ask for help when I need it.

What are the positives for working in the NHS?

There are human resources policies designed to ensure the workforce is inclusive, diverse and support people who are from ethnic backgrounds to gain employment. There is also a push to employ local people so that you're getting a really good representation of your local population as well.

“
**The workforce is
inclusive and diverse**
”

Would you encourage others to apply for work within the NHS?

This is a very nebulous time to ask that question because of the management restructuring that is happening. It means everybody's very stressed at the moment. I'd probably say don't go in right now – but I would recommend it, definitely. I enjoy what I do.

Tell us a bit about your background

I grew up as a Muslim and Pakistani, but I'm not Muslim anymore. I grew up on one of the poorest council estates in the country and brought up by a single mum who had severe depression. By the age of 12, I was looking after myself, my mum and my two older brothers. I was doing most of the cooking and paying most of the bills. I come from a lot of trauma, a lot of abuse and had a damaging, traumatic childhood. But I put all my focus and my attention into my academia and I managed to get straight A*s in my exams. These achievements allowed me to get into the position I'm in today, which is on a grad scheme.

“
Here I am achieving
Here I am SW London”

What are you doing in your role now?

After university, I applied to the NHS Graduate Management Training scheme. It's run by the NHS Leadership Academy and is funded through NHS England. I am now training to become an accountant.

I've got a full-time job as well as training for my qualifications. So it's really intense, especially for a person with mental health problems. To help, I have a couple of occupational health adjustments in place such as flexible working hours.

Tell us about your Grand Scheme

Generally speaking, it's two years but for finance trainees, it's 2.5 because the actual finance qualifications are supposed to take three years to gain. However, the NHS really tries to cram it into 2.5.

So one year in, your first placement might be at a provider and then you get something called a flexi placement where you can choose any organisation you want; private sector, public sector, charity sector, anything. You just need to put a proposal forward for why you want to go there. It might be due to personal interest or they might be offering something that you are not getting out of your first placement.

I was in the hospital for my first year and now I'm on the ICBIS Commission side. It means, in effect, we're giving the hospital money, whereas before we were receiving it. It's nice to see both sides.

What have you learnt about the NHS?

I didn't realise until I got into corporate how much of the NHS is actually non-clinical such as finance, marketing and care roles.

Have you worked anywhere else in the NHS?

While I was studying for my second masters, I worked as a healthcare assistant, which only required GCSEs. I miss it because I absolutely loved it and I didn't need any qualifications for that. I absolutely love the patient and interaction elements.

“
Whilst I was studying for my second masters, I worked as a healthcare assistant and I absolutely loved it.”

Is there anything you would change?

I wish I went to an easier University. I don't know why I put so much pressure on myself because you come out with the same opportunities. Exams can only take you so far. It's how you get on with people and how people relate to you.

Real South West London

Real Jobs

Real You



South West
London
Integrated
Care System



www.swlicsjobs.co.uk

