

Case Study

Real South West London

Real Jobs

Real You

South West
London
Integrated
Care System

NHS
South West London



Name:

Melanie Ashdown

Job Role:

**Lead of Integrated Care Support
Services and Aim Solutions**

Age:

42

Location:

Wandsworth

How long have you been working for the NHS?

22 years.

What is your background?

I was born in South Africa, which is a very difficult country to grow up in. If you don't come from money, you need to make it on your own. As I grew up in care, I didn't have the parents or a support structure around me but I always knew I wanted to study. South Africa couldn't offer me that opportunity, which made it much more difficult getting into the world of work. After school, I studied to be a personal trainer as it was the only career opportunity available to me at the time – but I always wanted to work in healthcare. It's why I came to the UK in 2001, looking at what I could do to make a career for myself – starting with nothing.

Has working for the NHS changed you?

The NHS has been a fantastic for me, helping me get on in life. It's helped me discover my values and find my purpose. To reduce inequalities, improve access to employment opportunities and support community partnerships.

What are the positives of working in the NHS?

There were a lot of negative comments made about the agenda for changing pay scales in 2004. However, I viewed these as really positive. You are paid for the job that you're actually doing and for your skills. It's not based on your culture, your ethnicity or any of those factors.

“

The NHS has been a fantastic for me to help me get on in life.”

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

Absolutely! Because of the wealth of opportunities available. It's not just about pay, it's about your work/life balance and developing and growing yourself as a person. You work with a wide variety of different clinicians, managers and other people who are driven by passion to achieve something.

What are you doing in your role now?

I run two companies: Integrated Care Support Services and AIM Solution's. I work quite closely with voluntary community sector organisations across SW London. These include Croydon BME Forum, Sutton Kingston Voluntary Action and Multicultural Richmond.

“
Here I am achieving
Here I am SW London”

Tell us about your career progression

I had very little experience when I entered the NHS at the age of 20 and started working at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital.

I stayed at the hospital for eight years working in the Chief exec's office and in drug treatment. I then worked for the head of the business in the pharmacy department which had a really large department of 100 staff.

The NHS also enrolled me onto Level 1 of Understanding Health and Social Care with the Open University which it part-funded. I finished in 2007 with BSc in Health and Social Care, which I would never have been able to do had it not been for the NHS supporting me as well as my work within a hospital environment. It really was fantastic.

I went on to study at Birmingham University at a Masters level in Healthcare Policy Management and Commissioning. The course was again funded through the NHS

What are your experiences of inclusivity and gender equality in the NHS?

South Africa is a very patriarchal society with men running the show. When I started working in Chelsea and Westminster, I was blown away by chief exec Heather Lawrence and female deputy Amanda Pritchard. It was a really inspiring situation as your salary is related to the work you're actually doing and not based on being a man or being white. It's an approach I think should be encouraged.

Ultimately, the NHS is inclusive and diverse, encouraging your development based on your skills and your attributes, rather than on any of characteristics that you may have.

www.swlicsjobs.co.uk



Real South West London

Real Jobs

Real You

 South West
London
Integrated
Care System


South West London