



March 2016

The NHS Finance Function in 2015: England

Results of the NHS finance staff census and staff attitudes survey

Briefing

In association with



Contents

Introduction and summary	2
Results of the NHS finance staff census	4
NHS finance staff attitudes: survey analysis	15
Conclusion	22

Box 1: How we collected the data

The NHS finance function census is the result of a collaboration between the HFMA and NHS Finance Skills Development (FSD). The FSD team has long undertaken a high-level census of the NHS finance function, providing a profile of the size of the NHS finance team.

Since 2009, the HFMA has worked with FSD to produce a more detailed picture of finance staff in England. The 2015 census is the fourth. It is not a mandatory collection, but the core value of the census comes from its comprehensive coverage. All organisations completed the return in 2015, so the census provides an accurate picture of the NHS finance function, rather than assumptions based on sampling.

We are extremely grateful to FSD contacts in organisations who compiled the detailed return. It is their combined contribution that led to a 100% return rate for the census.

The HFMA acknowledges the work of FSD managers in each region, who led the local compilation of data, supported responders and ensured deadlines were met. Substantial support was also given by Hazel Rushton (national communications manager).

¹ The main accountancy qualifications held by NHS finance staff are those offered by Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies (CCAB) and the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)

Introduction and summary

This briefing summarises the HFMA and FSD's 2015 finance staff census and the results of the HFMA's finance staff attitudes survey, completed by a sample of NHS finance staff. The briefing covers the census of English NHS organisations and survey responses from English NHS finance staff. Separate briefings will be available summarising the results for the rest of the UK.

Since 2009, the HFMA has collaborated with FSD to produce biennial reports analysing the national finance function. The aim is to develop a better understanding of the make-up of the NHS finance function and how it has changed over time. The staff attitudes survey was carried out to help understand the qualifications, career path, morale and training and development needs of NHS finance staff.

The census data, collected in summer 2015, reflects the number of finance staff in post at the end of June 2015. The staff attitudes data was collected in October 2015 via an online survey run by the HFMA, with a response rate of 753 finance staff from across the UK and 526 staff from the English NHS.

The reorganisation of NHS bodies that took place in 2013 saw a large change in the finance team numbers. Between 2013 and 2015 finance staff numbers have remained relatively stable, increasing from 15,730 to 16,211. Some of this increase relates to NHS bodies that were not included in the 2013 census, in particular the Department of Health.

Excluding the Department of Health staff numbers to give a more comparable figure, the 2015 headcount is 16,038. The main changes have been in commissioning bodies, but the reductions to commissioning support units (CSUs) and NHS England staff numbers have been largely balanced by increases in clinical commissioning group (CCG) finance staff numbers.

Finance staff carry out a wide range of roles, not just preparing financial accounts. Some 53% of finance staff work in financial management and have important roles in preparing budgets, long-term financial plans and ensuring budgets are closely monitored. This figure has increased since 2013, when the figure was 50%.

Our census also shows that finance staff are highly qualified – 44% of finance staff are CCAB/CIMA¹ qualified or students, and 17% have other finance qualifications relevant to their work. Thirty-nine per

cent of finance staff do not have a qualification, down from 2013, when the figure was 41%.

The census also shows that there is still a large imbalance between the number of women working in NHS finance and the number of women in finance director roles – 62% of finance staff are female but only 26% of finance directors are women. The HFMA has published a summary of a recent roundtable discussion on this issue².

From our survey of NHS finance staff attitudes we know that respondents have high average job satisfaction, at 6.7 out of 10 (compared with 6.8 in 2013). They are drawn to working in the NHS because of a sense of public sector values and to help improve patient care. Our survey found that 74% of respondents think NHS finance careers offer sufficient opportunities for development and 78% of respondents felt they have received good training and development opportunities. However, many believe that their role and contribution is not recognised or properly valued by national government, the public or patients.

Of those surveyed, 64% would like to spend the rest of their career in the NHS, but only 47% expect they will be able to remain employed by the NHS. When asked specifically about job security, 45% are concerned about losing their job in the next few years and 13% are concerned about losing their job in the next 12 months, which inevitably has an impact on staff job satisfaction.

NHS finance staff are continuing to face challenges as they grapple with managing tight financial settlements while trying to add value to patient care. It will be important for finance staff to continue to work closely with clinical colleagues to make best use of the diverse range of skills NHS finance teams possess.

Table 1: Survey response by organisation type

Organisation type	Number of orgs in 2015 census	Number of orgs in 2013 census
Core NHS organisations		
FT acute	100	101
FT ambulance	5	5
FT community	3	0
FT mental health	43	41
NHS trust acute	55	60
NHS trust ambulance	5	5
NHS trust community	16	19
NHS trust mental health	13	15
CCG	209	211
CSU	8	19
NHS England specialised commissioning	10	0
NHS England national office	1	1
NHS England regional offices	4	4
NHS England area teams	16	27
Total core NHS	488	508
Non-core NHS		
Department of Health	1	0
NHS Trust Development Authority (TDA)	1	1
Health Education England (HEE)	1	1
Local Education and Training Boards (LETB)	11	13
NHS Property Services	8	5
Audit consortia	3	6
Shared services	3	6
Social enterprises	10	7
Other organisations	3	4
Total non-core NHS	41	43
Total organisations	529	551

Note: 2015 'other organisations' category includes the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), the NHS Business Services Authority and the Health and Social Care Information Centre

Overall, there are 16,211 finance staff working in the NHS, an increase of 3% from the number we counted in 2013

Results of the finance staff census

The census counted the number of NHS finance staff in post at the end of June 2015. In total we received data from 529 organisations, including the 488 'core' NHS bodies shown in **Table 1**. We achieved a 100% response rate from the organisations approached.

In comparison with the organisational changes between the 2011 and 2013 census, the number of organisations has remained relatively stable. The main changes to the core-NHS organisations have been mergers and boundary changes to CSUs and NHS England area teams. We have also included the Department of Health for the first time and the staff of the 10 specialised commissioning organisations are now counted as working for stand-alone bodies rather than being included in NHS England area team or regional office figures.

The list of non-core NHS organisations is not exhaustive

and represents the main national agencies, arm's-length bodies and local service providers such as audit consortia, financial services providers and social enterprises.

Staff in post

Each of the 529 organisations taking part in the census provided a range of data about their finance staff. We collected data on establishment, staff in post (based on whole-time equivalent number), vacancies and actual headcount. Overall, there are 16,211 finance staff working in the NHS, an increase of 3% from the number we counted in 2013. On a like-for-like basis (excluding the Department of Health) there are 16,038 finance staff, a rise of 2%.

Table 2 shows that the majority of the increase in staff numbers has been in London, where there are now 9% more finance staff, although some of this increase is due to the way in which NHS England has reported staff numbers in its national office

Table 2: Headcount data by region

Region	Headcount	Includes agency staff covering vacancies	Change in headcount since 2013	% change in finance staff since 2013
North	5,316	172	163	3%
Midlands and East	4,545	218	76	2%
London	2,840	269	240	9%
South	3,510	151	2	0%
Total	16,211	810	481	3%

Table 3: Whole-time equivalent by region

Region	Establishment WTE, 2015	Staff in post WTE, 2015	Vacancies	Vacancy rate	Establishment WTE, 2013	Staff in post WTE, 2013
North	5,186	4,983	203	4%	5,013	4,754
Midlands and East	4,571	4,233	338	7%	4,404	4,123
London	2,924	2,661	262	9%	2,653	2,521
South	3,409	3,246	163	5%	3,515	3,255
Total	16,090	15,123	966	6%	15,584	14,653

compared with 2013. The headcount number of finance staff in the South region has remained at the same level as 2013. London is also the region with the greatest proportion of agency staff, but all regions place some reliance on agency to cover vacancies. The North region headcount increase is attributable to the inclusion of Department of Health finance staff numbers for the first time.

Table 3 (previous page) shows the whole-time equivalent (WTE) data for each region. The WTE numbers differ from headcount, reflecting part-time working arrangements and that not all established posts were filled at the time of the census. This data shows the number of established posts fell in the South region, from 3,515 to 3,409, while in the other three regions establishment numbers increased.

The majority of finance vacancies are in London-based organisations. At the time of the census, 9% of posts were unfilled or covered by agency staff in London, compared with 4% in the North. **Chart 1** shows the range of vacancy rates in different organisations.

For core-NHS organisations including NHS trusts, FTs and CCGs, the vacancy rate was consistent at 6% but this rose to 16% in specialised commissioning bodies. As might be expected, the majority of actual vacant WTE posts were in NHS trusts (276) and FTs (463).

Organisational level analysis

In this section we analyse the census data by organisation and sector type. **Chart 2** shows the change in NHS finance staff headcount numbers in each sector over the past two years. Although headcount overall has increased, there has been a significant reduction in CSU and NHS England area team finance staff, as well as in mental health trusts.

This has been offset by larger increases in CCG finance staff numbers, which may include staff doing work previously undertaken

Chart 1: Vacancy rate and vacancy numbers by organisation type (core NHS organisations)

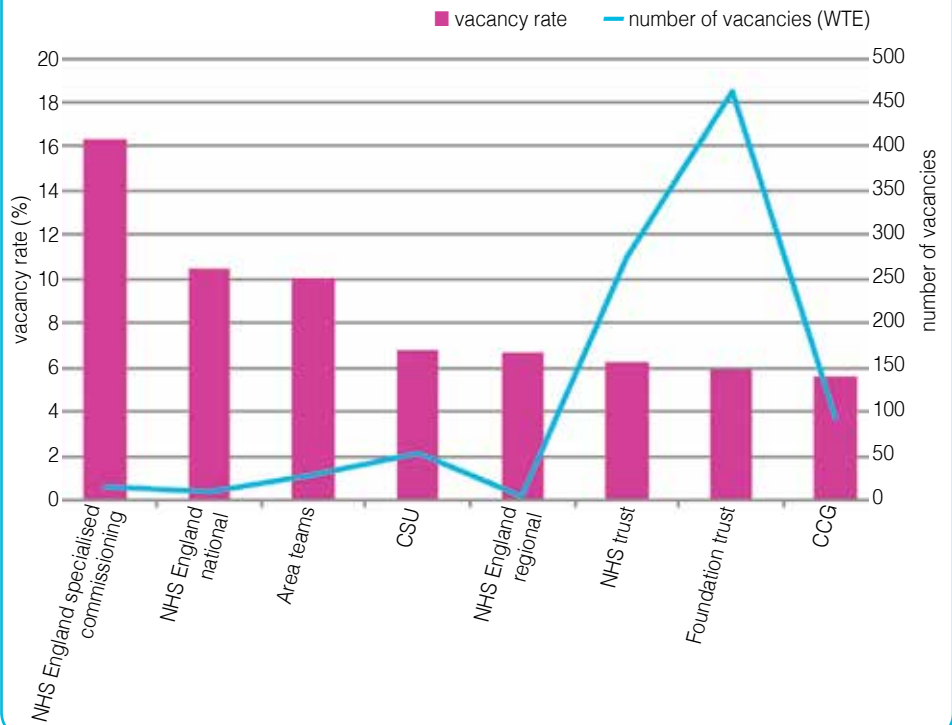
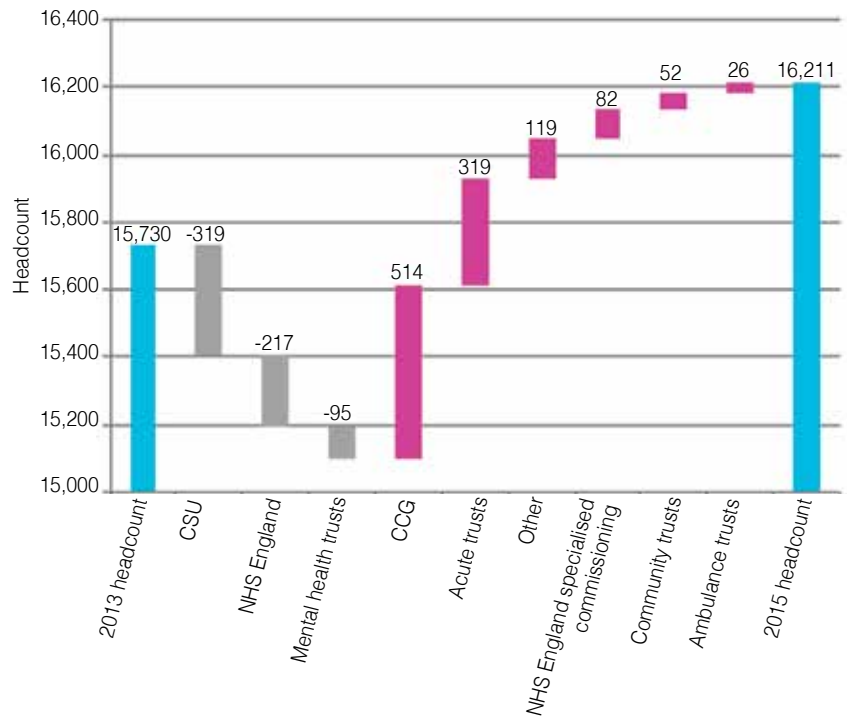


Chart 2: Change in finance staff numbers between 2013 and 2015



Note: Staff working for specialised commissioning organisations were counted as part of NHS England area teams and regional offices in the 2013 census and the Department of Health finance staff (included in 'other') are counted for the first time in 2015

by CSUs, and in acute trust staff numbers. There have also been smaller increases in community trust and ambulance trust staff headcount.

Table 4 provides additional detail about the changes in headcount.

The data shows that in the provider trust sector, FTs of all types have increased the total headcount of their finance teams, whereas acute and mental health NHS trusts have decreased total headcount. Some of

Table 4: Change in NHS finance staff headcount between 2013 and 2015

Organisation type	2015 staff in post headcount	2013 staff in post headcount	Change in headcount	% change in headcount
Providers				
Acute – NHS trusts	3,446	3,475	-29	-1%
Acute – FTs	6,000	5,652	348	6%
All acute	9,446	9,127	319	3%
Mental health – NHS trusts	465	609	-144	-24%
Mental health – FTs	1,732	1,683	49	3%
All mental health	2,197	2,292	-95	-4%
Ambulance – NHS trusts	153	144	9	6%
Ambulance – FTs	151	134	17	13%
All ambulance	304	278	26	9%
Community trusts – NHS trusts	403	467	-64	-14%
Community trusts – FTs	116	0	116	n/a
All community	519	467	52	11%
Total providers	12,466	12,164	302	2%
Non-providers				
NHS England – national	88	77	11	14%
NHS England – regional offices	72	88	-16	-18%
NHS England – area teams	255	467	-212	-45%
NHS England – specialised commissioning	82	Not collected	n/a	n/a
CCGs	1,704	1,190	514	43%
CSUs	736	1,055	-319	-30%
Total non-provider	2,937	2,877	60	2%
Total core NHS organisations	15,403	15,041	362	2%
Department of Health	173	Not collected	n/a	n/a
Trust Development Authority	80	42	38	90%
Health Education England (HEE)	8	21	-13	-62%
Local Education and Training Boards (LETB)	101	111	-10	-9%
NHS Property Services	56	94	-38	-40%
Audit consortia	48	116	-68	-59%
Shared services	132	184	-52	-28%
Social enterprises	88	51	37	73%
Other organisations	122	70	52	74%
Total non-core NHS organisations	808	689	119	17%
Grand total	16,211	15,730	481	3%

Note: Change in headcount numbers and percentages are provided for FTs and NHS trusts in each sector but it is important to consider the change in the sector overall, given the number of NHS trusts merging or becoming FTs

this change will be related to NHS trusts becoming FTs, but there has also been some restructuring of organisations within sectors.

Since 2013, the number of acute FTs has decreased from 101 to 100, while the number of acute NHS trusts has decreased from 60 to 55. The change in acute trust numbers is related to organisational mergers and restructuring, as well as a handful of new acute FTs being authorised. The number of mental health FTs has increased from 41 to 43, in line with the reduction in mental health NHS trusts from 15 to 13. It is important to consider the average number of finance staff per organisation as well as the total number, given the changes to organisations' size and level of service provision. Average staff numbers are analysed in the next section.

In the non-provider sector, headcount increased by 60 staff since 2013, but

underlying this were large reductions in area team, regional office and CSU staff numbers, balanced by larger increases to CCG finance staff numbers. Provider organisation staff account for the majority (77%) of NHS finance staff and commissioning and commissioning support staff account for 18%. This is the same as in 2013.

Average staffing levels

As well as the overall staff numbers in each sector we have used the census data to explore the average number of staff in post (by headcount).

Table 5 shows that mental health trust finance teams have reduced in size since 2013. In mental health NHS trusts, the average size of the finance team has dropped from 41 to 36. By comparison, acute NHS trust finance teams grew from an average size of 58 to 63. Overall, the average FT finance team increased from 51 staff to 53 and the average NHS trust

In mental health NHS trusts, the average size of the finance team has dropped from 41 to 36. By comparison, acute NHS trust finance teams grew from an average size of 58 to 63

Table 5: Average headcount by sector

Organisation Type	Number of bodies, 2015	Staff in post	Average staff in post, 2015	Average Staff in post, 2013	Change between 2013 and 2015	Turnover, £m	Average staff per £bn turnover
Provider organisations							
FT acute	100	6,000	60	56	4	35,328	170
NHS trust acute	55	3,446	63	58	5	22,427	154
FT mental health	43	1,732	40	41	-1	8,802	197
NHS trust mental health	13	465	36	41	-5	2,142	217
FT ambulance	5	151	30	27	3	956	158
NHS trust ambulance	5	153	31	29	2	1,203	127
FT community	3	116	39	0	39	535	217
NHS trust community	16	403	25	25	0	2,426	166
FTs total	151	7,999	53	51	2	45,621	175
NHS trust total	89	4,467	50	47	3	28,198	158
Non-provider core NHS organisations							
CCG	209	1,704	8	6	2	68,437	25
CSU	8	736	92	56	36	617	1,193
NHS England specialised commissioning	10	82	8	0	8	13,251	6
NHS England (national, regional and area teams)	21	415	20	20	0	40,599	10
Grand total	488	15,403	32	30	2	73,819	209

finance team from 47 to 50. In the non-provider sector, CCG finance teams grew significantly from an average size of six in 2013 to eight in 2015. Again, this may reflect the large reduction in CSU staff numbers. The number of CSUs has dropped from 19 in 2013 to eight in 2015, hence the average finance team size has increased from 56 to 92, in spite of a decrease in total headcount.

Provider organisations

In **Table 5** (previous page) the census data highlighted the difference in the size of finance teams in the acute and mental health sectors. There can be variation due to the complexity of an organisation and how it generates revenue, as well as if back-office services have been outsourced to other organisations.

Table 6 provides additional detail by separating acute and mental health trusts according to annual turnover. This shows that for the majority of trusts the size of the finance team

is very similar. For the 18% of acute trusts with turnover of between £100m and £200m, the average finance team has a headcount of 32, compared with 34 staff in the 50% of mental health trusts in the same turnover band. Similarly, in the 29% of acute trusts and the 25% of mental health trusts with turnover between £200m and £300m, the finance teams have an average headcount of 46 and 47 respectively.

Commissioning organisations

CCGs have increased their aggregate finance staff headcount by 514 since 2013, equating to an increase in WTE staff in post of 475. The biggest rise has been in London CCGs, where the average WTE finance staff in post has increased from two to six. But despite this increase, London CCGs still have the smallest finance teams when measured by the average number of staff per £bn of turnover. This figure ranges from 20 in London to 27 in the Midlands and East region. **Table 7** summarises the results.

Table 6: Provider organisation analysis – by organisation type and turnover

Turnover band	Acute			Mental health		
	Number of organisations	Staff total	Average staff	Number of organisations	Staff total	Average staff
£0 - < £100m	5	103	21	5	97	19
£100m - <£200m	28	887	32	28	939	34
£200m - < £300m	45	2,082	46	14	661	47
£300m - < £500m	47	3,126	67	9	500	56
£500m+	30	3,248	108	0	0	0
Total	155	9,446	61	56	2,197	39

Table 7: Average staff in post in commissioning organisations

Region	CCG WTE staff in post 2015	CCG WTE staff in post 2013	Change	Average WTE staff in post per CCG 2015	Average CCG WTE staff in post per £bn allocation 2015	Average WTE staff in post per CCG 2013	Average CCG WTE staff in post per £bn allocation 2013
London	202	65	136	6	20	2	7
Midlands and East	552	379	173	9	27	6	20
North	480	422	58	7	23	6	22
South	373	264	109	7	22	5	17
National	1,606	1,130	475	8	23	5	18

Table 8: Staff in post in area teams and regional offices (ROs)

Region	Area team WTE staff 2015	RO WTE staff 2015	Area team WTE staff 2013	RO WTE staff 2013	Change in area team staff	Change in RO staff
London	0	39	0	60	0%	-34%
Midlands and East	78	15	114	8	-32%	90%
North	97	9	207	9	-53%	-6%
South	70	10	122	9	-43%	13%
National	245	73	443	86	-45%	-15%

Table 9: Change in the CSU numbers and staff in post

Region	CSU WTE staff in post 2015	Number of orgs	Average WTE staff in post 2015	CSU WTE staff in post 2013	Number of orgs 2013	Average WTE staff in post 2013	Difference in WTE staff	Difference in number of bodies
London	230	2	115	230	3	77	0	-1
Midlands and East	208	2	104	388	6	65	-181	-4
North	180	3	60	181	5	36	-1	-2
South	108	1	108	190	5	38	-82	-4
National	726	8	91	989	19	52	-264	-11

NHS England has restructured its area teams since the 2013 census, resulting in significant reductions to finance team staff in area teams. London region is different to the rest of England in that the area teams and regional office for London are combined as a single organisation, which is the reason there are no area team finance staff in London. **Table 8** shows the effect of the restructuring on finance staff numbers.

Another big change to commissioning organisations has been in the consolidation of the CSU sector, down from an initial 23 organisations to 19 in the 2013 census and now to eight in the 2015 census. There are 264 fewer WTE finance staff in 2015 than in 2013. The new configuration means that CSUs generally have much larger finance teams, with between 104 and 115 WTE staff, working in one or two bodies in each region. In the North there are three CSUs with an average of 60 WTE finance staff, as shown in **Table 9**.

Shared and outsourced services

Shared and outsourced financial services continue to be a feature of the NHS, especially in the commissioning sector. Some CCGs are continuing existing arrangements to share a CFO or finance teams and only seven CCGs reported that none of their services were outsourced. Provider organisations are more likely to retain all of their finance needs in-house but the majority outsource some services. Only 60 (25%) provider organisations do not outsource any services.

Of the 180 (75%) provider trusts outsourcing some services, 64 (27%) use an external provider for accounts receivable, 74 (31%) use an external provider for accounts payable, 118 (49%) outsource payroll, 165 (69%) outsource internal audit and a handful reported outsourcing other services, such as systems accounting and procurement. The providers are a mix of local shared service organisations, private sector providers and national

The CSU sector has dropped from an initial 23 organisations to 19 in the 2013 census and now to eight in the 2015 census

shared business services (SBS), and 51 (21%) provider trusts reported outsourcing all their financial services.

In the commissioning sector (including CCGs, specialised commissioning organisations, area teams and regional offices) 162 of the 239 (68%) organisations outsource all of their financial services. Only 10 (4%) organisations reported that none of their services are outsourced.

NHS finance staff by pay band

The census data also covers the numbers of NHS finance staff in each pay band. **Chart 3** shows the proportion of staff in each broad pay band grouping in each region.

There is a large variation between the proportion of staff in London and those in the North being paid at band 7 to the 'very senior manager' (VSM) scale and in the proportion of those in band 1 to 4. The pay

Chart 3: NHS finance staff pay bands by region

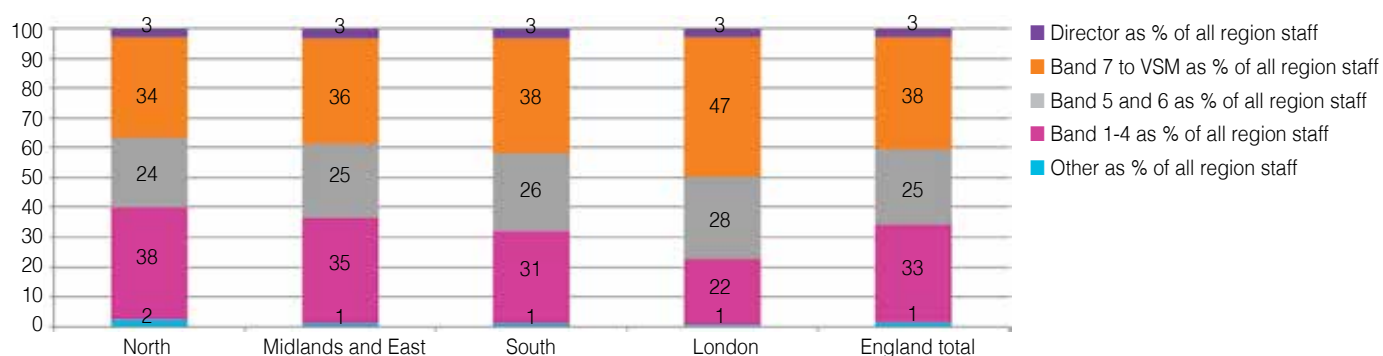


Table 10: Mix of seniority by organisational type

Organisation type	Number of organisations	Total headcount	Directors	Directors as % of all staff
Core NHS organisations				
FT acute	100	6,000	104	2%
FT ambulance	5	151	5	3%
FT community	3	116	3	3%
FT mental health	43	1,732	43	2%
NHS trust acute	55	3,446	57	2%
NHS trust ambulance	5	153	5	3%
NHS trust community	16	403	16	4%
NHS trust mental health	13	465	14	3%
CCG	209	1,704	169	10%
CSU	8	736	8	1%
NHS England national office	1	88	4	5%
NHS England regional office	4	72	6	8%
NHS England area teams	16	255	12	5%
NHS England specialised commissioning	10	82	3	4%
Total core NHS organisations	488	15,403	449	3%
Total non-core NHS organisations	41	808	27	3%
Grand total NHS	529	16,211	476	3%

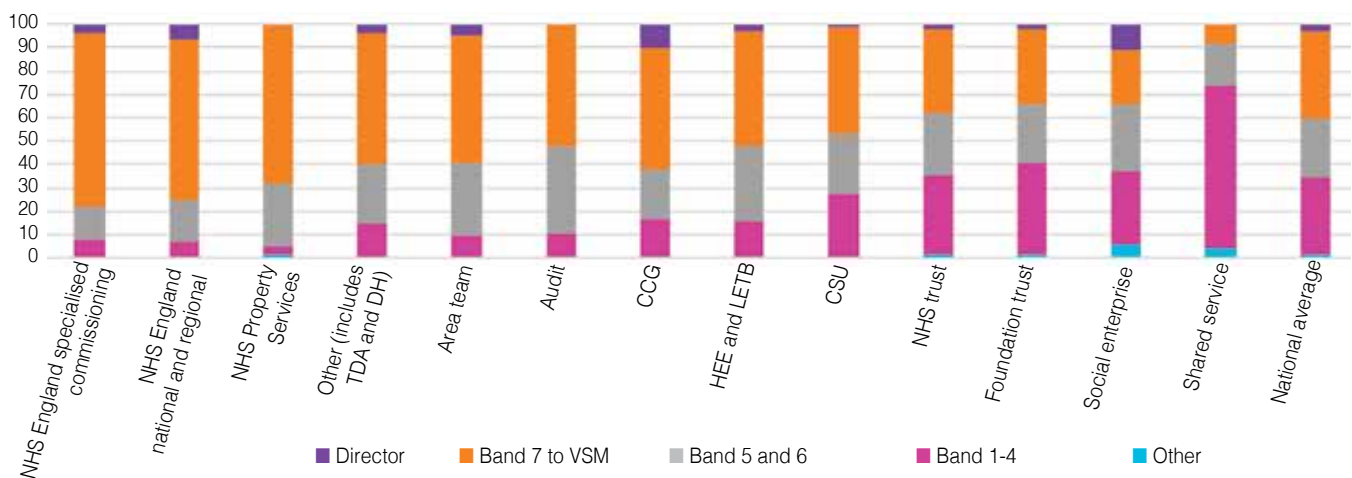
gap has widened since 2013, when 32% of staff were paid at band 7 to VSM in the North region and 43% in London.

Chart 4 analyses the same pay band data by organisational type. At the left-hand side are the organisations with the highest proportion of staff in the band 7

to VSM grouping. The data is broadly similar to 2013 but there has been a small shift in the national average, driven by provider trusts and CCGs staff who have moved from pay bands 1 to 6 into pay bands 7 to VSM. Nationally, 38% of finance staff are paid at band 7 to VSM, compared with 35% in 2013.

Table 10 shows this data.

Chart 4: NHS finance staff pay bands by organisation type



Total band 7 and above	Band 7 and above as % of all staff	Band 5 and 6	Band 5 and 6 as % of all staff	Band 1 to 4 (includes 'other')	Band 1 to 4 as % of all staff
1,936	32%	1,448	24%	2,512	42%
63	42%	46	30%	37	25%
31	27%	26	22%	56	48%
579	33%	480	28%	630	36%
1,211	35%	910	26%	1,268	37%
49	32%	34	22%	65	42%
163	40%	120	30%	104	26%
172	37%	130	28%	149	32%
887	52%	364	21%	284	17%
335	46%	190	26%	203	28%
64	73%	14	16%	6	7%
47	65%	14	19%	5	7%
139	55%	80	31%	24	9%
61	74%	12	15%	6	7%
5,737	37%	3,868	25%	5,349	35%
358	44%	211	26%	212	26%
6,095	38%	4,079	25%	5,561	34%

Box 2: Definition of principal functions

NHS finance staff carry out a wide range of functions. These definitions capture a broad category for individual staff with several different roles:

- **Financial management** – financial planning, management accounts, performance, commissioning, costing, contracting
- **Financial accounting** – accounts payable, accounts receivable, treasury
- **Financial services** – audit, payroll, financial systems, projects.

Table 11: Analysis of principal functions for NHS finance staff

	Financial management	Financial accounting	Financial services	Admin and secretarial
Audit	0%	2%	98%	0%
CCG	76%	16%	3%	5%
CSU	52%	42%	3%	3%
DH	45%	32%	19%	4%
FT	47%	29%	21%	2%
HEE and LETBs	70%	20%	5%	5%
NHS England	52%	8%	30%	10%
NHS England ATs and ROs	93%	1%	0%	6%
NHS England specialised commissioning	90%	3%	1%	6%
NHS Property Services	100%	0%	0%	0%
NHS TDA	83%	6%	0%	12%
NHS trust	51%	27%	20%	2%
Other	50%	32%	16%	2%
Shared services	3%	43%	44%	10%
Social enterprises	53%	44%	1%	3%
Total	53%	27%	18%	3%

NHS finance staff by functional role and qualification

NHS finance staff normally work in distinct functional roles within the finance team. Some organisations need to employ finance staff across a range of disciplines while others are more specialised. Organisations that have traditionally employed a diverse range of staff are increasingly outsourcing some of the roles to specialist organisations.

Nationally, the majority of finance staff work in financial management roles (53%), a slight increase on 2013 (50%). Meanwhile, 27% of staff work in financial accounting roles (29% in 2013), 18% in financial services (19% in 2013) and the remainder in administration and secretarial roles. Full details are shown in **Table 11**.

Census data analysed in **Chart 5** shows that the majority of finance staff have, or are studying for, some kind of finance qualification. A total of 39% of staff are neither qualified nor studying, compared with 41% in 2013, while 31% of staff are CCAB or equivalent body-qualified and a further 13% are studying for a CCAB or equivalent body qualification.

Of the 7,111 CCAB or equivalent body-qualified or studying staff, almost half (48%) are CIMA-qualified or studying, while 33% are ACCA-qualified or studying, 13% CIPFA and 6% ICAEW.

Chart 5: Analysis of qualification type for NHS finance staff

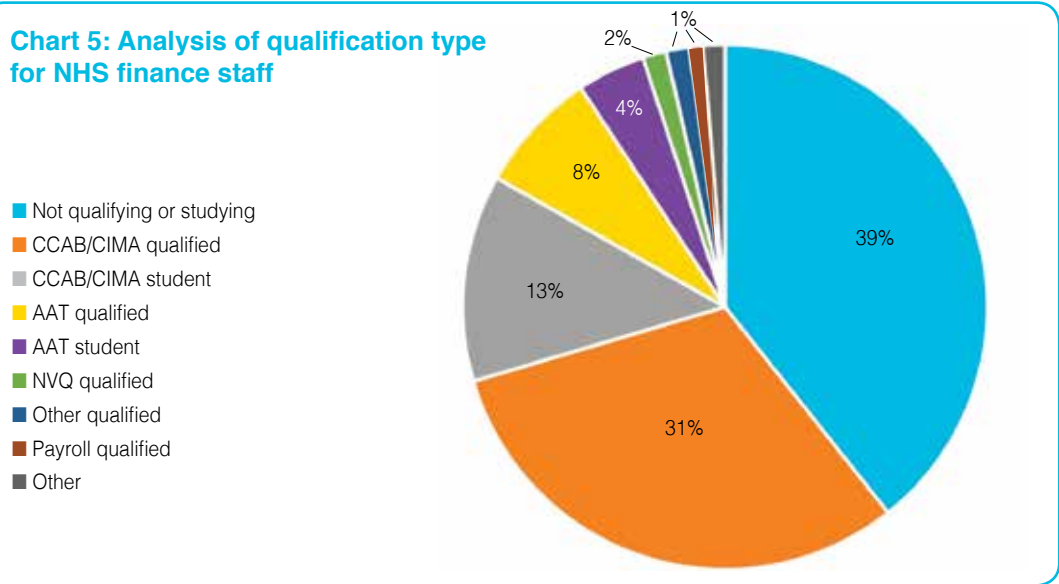
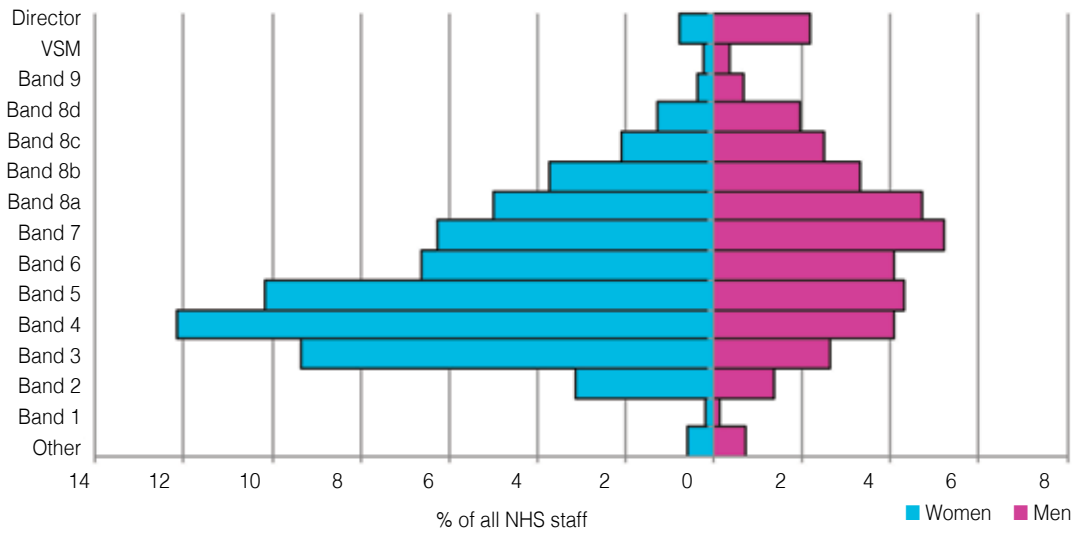


Chart 6: NHS finance staff by gender at each pay grade**NHS finance staff by gender**

There continues to be a large imbalance between the pay of male and female finance staff, as **Chart 6** shows. Women make up 62% of the NHS finance staff headcount but are outnumbered by men at director level. Only 26% of finance directors are female and women only make up 50% of the finance workforce in band 7 to VSM pay band roles.

Table 12 provides some additional data, which shows the proportion of male staff in all pay band groupings is higher in London than in the other regions. Consequently, London is an outlier compared with the national average, although the extra male staff compared with the rest of England does not account in full for the large imbalance between the proportion of male and female directors.

Table 12: NHS finance staff gender by region

	North	Midlands and East	London	South	National
Staff in post headcount	5,316	4,545	2,840	3,510	16,211
Male staff as % of all staff	36%	36%	46%	37%	38%
Female staff as % of all staff	64%	64%	54%	63%	62%
Male directors as % of all directors	73%	72%	86%	69%	74%
Female directors as % of all directors	27%	28%	14%	31%	26%
Male band 7 to VSM staff as % of all band 7 to VSM	45%	49%	57%	49%	50%
Female band 7 to VSM staff as % of all band 7 to VSM	55%	51%	43%	51%	50%
Male band 6 and below staff as % of all band 6 and below	30%	27%	34%	28%	29%
Female band 6 and below staff as % of all band 6 and below	70%	73%	66%	72%	71%

Nationally, 88% of those at director level are white British, compared with 72% of the overall finance workforce

The HFMA organised a roundtable discussion in November 2015 discussing the gender imbalance at finance director level – see *Healthcare Finance*, December 2015, ‘Women leaders in health’.

Ethnicity data

For the first time, the 2015 census collected ethnicity data.

Table 13 shows that the NHS finance workforce is predominantly white British, with 72% of finance staff identifying themselves as white British nationally.

However, there are large regional variations. London has the lowest proportion of white British staff, at 34% (although 26% of finance staff in London chose not to disclose their ethnicity). In the North, 83% of finance staff are white British.

At director level there is an imbalance compared with the profile for the overall finance workforce. Nationally, 88% of those at director level are white British, compared with 72% of the overall finance workforce. In the Midlands and East region 95% of finance directors are white British, while in London the figure is 66% (although 23% of directors chose not to disclose their ethnicity).

Table 13: NHS finance staff ethnicity by region

	London	Midlands and East	North	South	National
English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish British	34%	79%	83%	80%	72%
Irish	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%
Gypsy	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other white	5%	2%	2%	3%	3%
White and Black Caribbean	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
White and Black African	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
White and Asian	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other mixed	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Indian	10%	5%	2%	2%	4%
Pakistani	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%
Bangladeshi	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Chinese	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%
Other Asian	5%	1%	1%	1%	2%
African	7%	2%	1%	2%	2%
Caribbean	3%	1%	0%	0%	1%
Other black background	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%
Other ethnic group	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Arab	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Did not wish to disclose	26%	5%	7%	9%	10%

NHS finance staff attitudes: survey analysis

In this section we analyse the data from HFMA's 2015 survey of NHS finance staff attitudes, a separate piece of work to the finance staff census carried out with the FSD Network. The HFMA collected data for this major national survey during October 2015, to help build a comprehensive picture of the training and development, career path, values and perceptions of NHS finance staff.

The survey was open to all qualified NHS finance staff and those studying for a qualification across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This report analyses the English responses. Analysis of responses for the other countries can be found in our country-specific briefings, to be published shortly. This is the second such survey, the results of the first were published at the same time as our 2013 census report.

Who responded to the survey?

We received 526 responses (there were 847 English responses in 2013), which represents 7% of the 7,111 qualified and studying staff. And 405 (77%) of the responses came from HFMA members. **Chart 7** shows there was an equal balance of male and female respondents as well as representation across age groups.

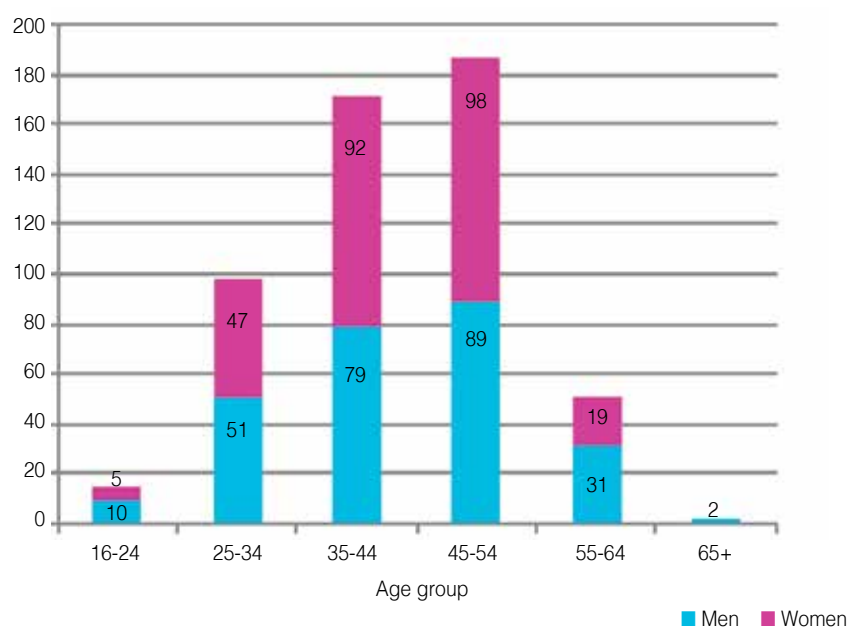
Qualification

Respondents told us their finance qualification and these are largely in proportion to the national census data on qualification. CIPFA-qualified respondents are slightly over-represented in our survey. **Table 14** provides full details.

Organisation

Respondents work for organisations across England – 15% from London, 25% from Midlands and East, 30% from the North and 31% from the South. 91% of respondents work full-time and 9% part-time. **Table 15** shows there was a range of respondents at each pay band although the band 6 and below grouping was under-represented

Chart 7: Number of respondents in each age banding split by gender



Note: three respondents did not provide their gender, age or both

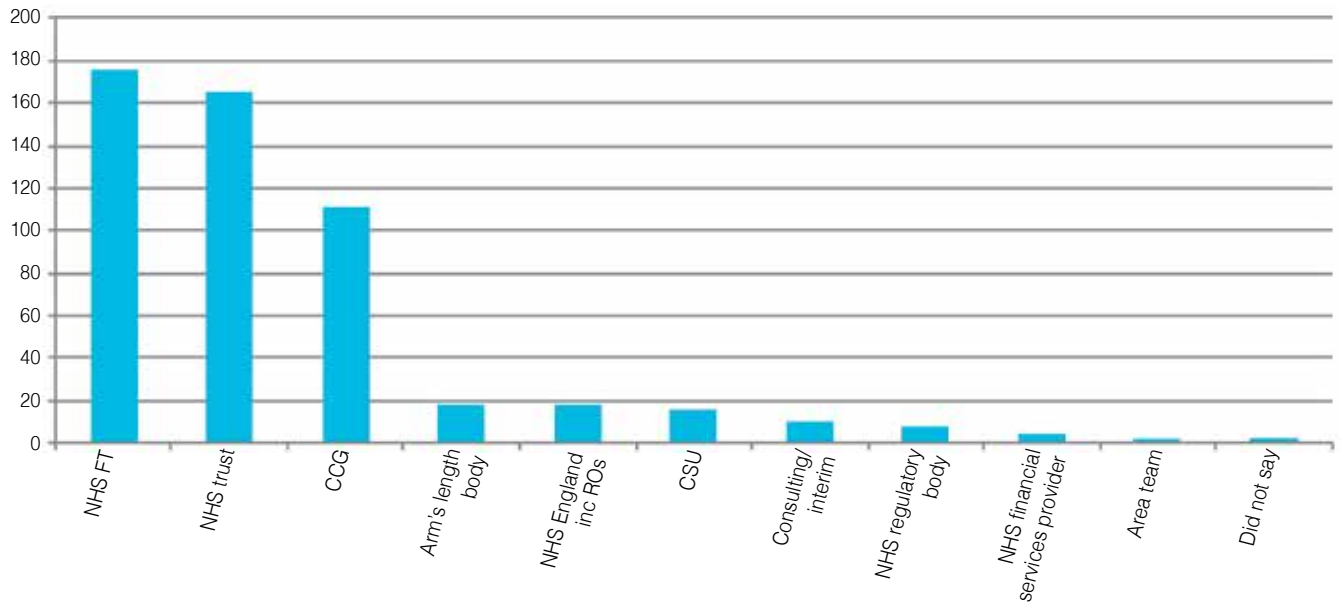
Table 14: Survey respondents' qualifications

Qualification	Number of respondents	Percentage
CIMA	239	45%
ACCA	130	25%
CIPFA	115	22%
ICAEW/ ICAS/ ICAI	42	8%

Table 15: Survey respondents by pay band

Pay band	Count	Percentage
AfC3	4	1%
AfC4	12	2%
AfC5	30	6%
AfC6	37	7%
AfC7	57	11%
AfC8a	92	17%
AfC8b	76	14%
AfC8c	50	10%
AfC8d	62	12%
AfC9	29	6%
Local contract (above AfC pay range)	35	7%
Very senior managers pay framework (VSM)	38	7%
Did not say	4	1%
Total	526	100%

Chart 8: Responses by sector



and the higher pay bands were over-represented.

Chart 8 shows the types of organisations respondents work for. The majority work for NHS foundation trusts, NHS trusts and CCGs but there is representation from across core-NHS and non-core NHS bodies.

Career path and training

The purpose of the survey was to understand the detail of NHS finance staff career paths, training and motivation. **Chart 9** gives a picture of how long respondents have worked for their organisations and in their current roles. The most common length of service in

Chart 9: Length of service with organisation and in current role

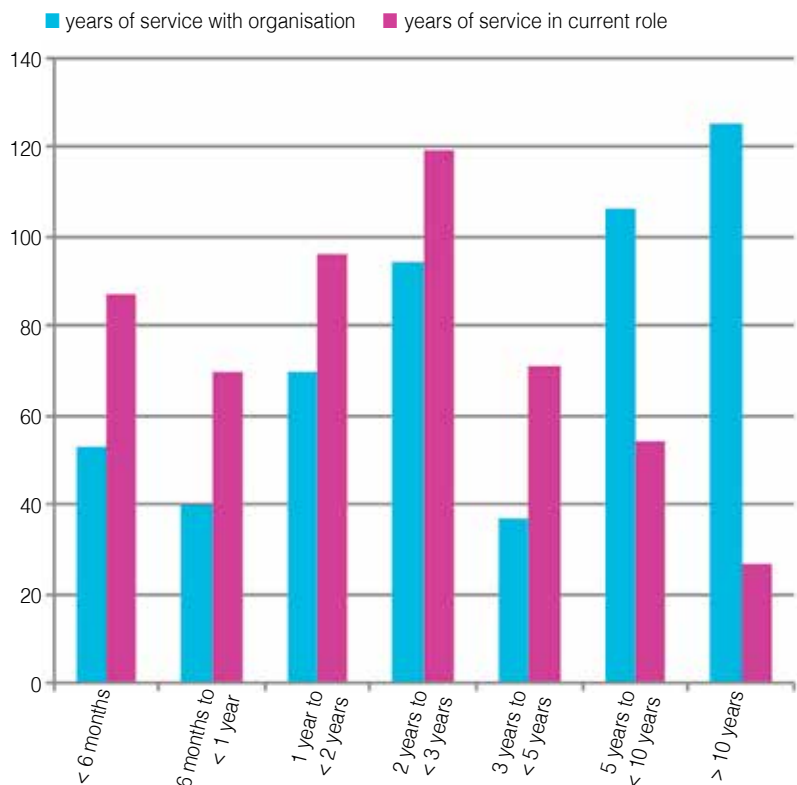
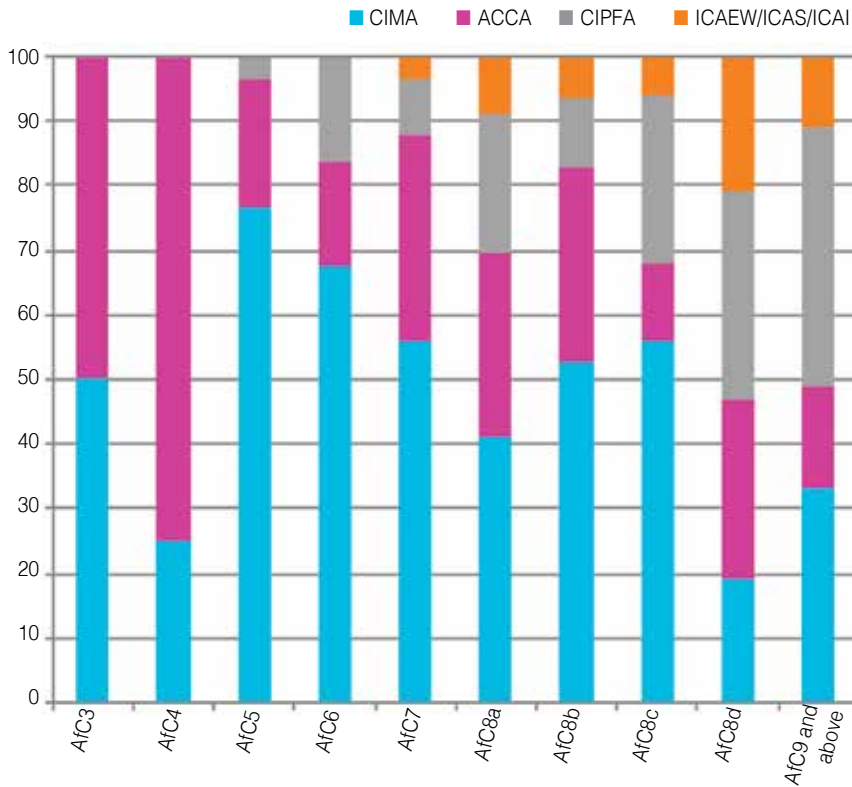


Chart 10: Qualifications at each pay band

The most common length of service in respondents' current roles is between two and three years

respondents' current roles is between two and three years; the most common years of service with respondents' organisations is 10 years or more.

Training

Survey responses show that the age profile of respondents is fairly young. Some 46% of respondents qualified within the last 10 years (or are still studying). **Chart 10** shows the range of qualifications held, or being studied for, at each pay band. More senior staff tend to have either a CIPFA or ICAEW/ICAS/ICAI qualification, whereas those at more junior levels are CIMA or ACCA qualified or studying.

Employment and pay

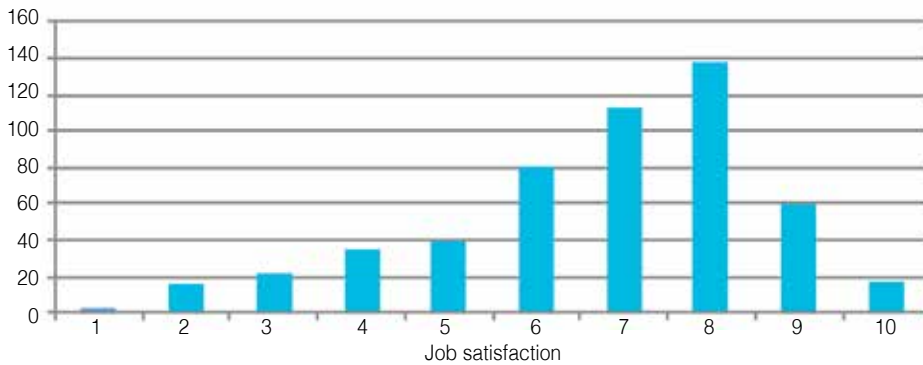
We asked respondents to tell us about their career to date. A total of 35% had spent their entire career in an NHS finance role. Of these staff, 53% had qualified in 2004 or earlier. Pay band data shows that the more junior staff are less likely to have spent their entire career in the NHS – 80% of band 5 staff and 70% of all band 3 to 6 staff have worked in other

Table 16: Analysis of work experience

	Number	Percentage
Entire career spent in NHS	184	35%
Experience from outside NHS	342	65%
Type of non-NHS experience		
Local government	57	11%
Central government	18	3%
Other public sector	72	14%
Charity sector	24	5%
Private sector – accountancy firm	101	19%
Private sector – services sector	72	14%
Private sector – retail	37	7%
Private sector – manufacturing/ industry	73	14%
Private sector – other	58	11%

fields. By comparison 45% of those at band 9 and above have spent their entire careers in the NHS. **Table 16** provides some details about the types of non-NHS experience that NHS finance staff have brought to their current roles. The table shows the number of respondents who have worked in each sector. Some

Chart 11: Job satisfaction in numbers



respondents may have worked in more than one sector. Overall, more than two-thirds (68%) of those with non-NHS experience have worked in at least one private sector job.

Satisfaction and career plans

We asked respondents to tell us about their job satisfaction level.

Chart 11 demonstrates that job satisfaction is positively skewed towards high job satisfaction. The mean job satisfaction is 6.7 out of 10, compared with 6.8 in 2013.

Respondents were able to provide

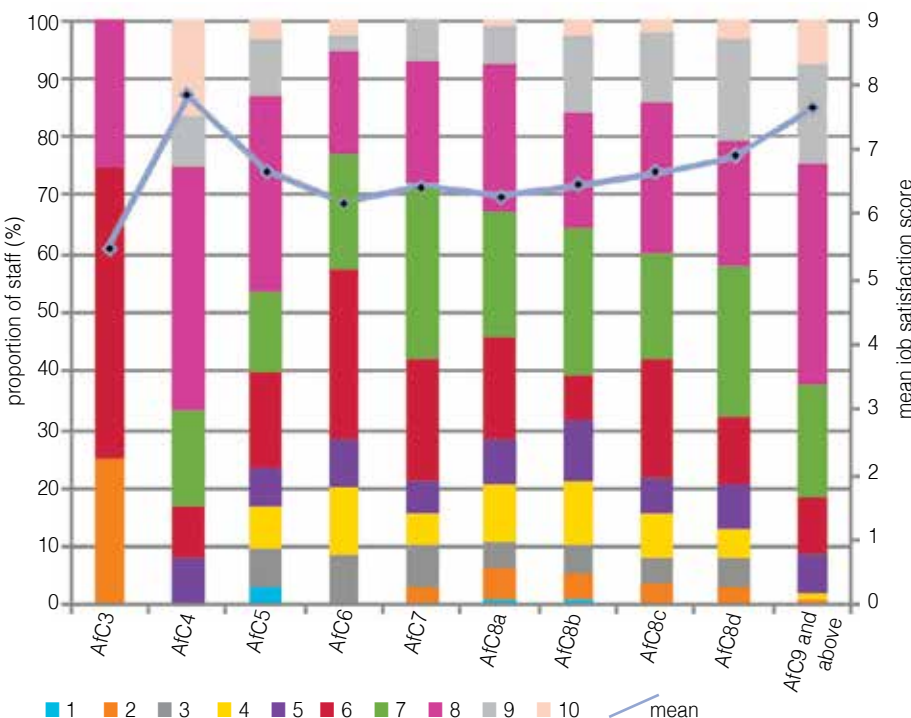
additional free text comments and these show the main reasons for low job satisfaction are the pressures of the job and increasing workloads; a lack of opportunities for development and promotion; and organisation-specific problems such as poor team communication or difficulties caused by poorly designed systems and processes.

Chart 12 shows how job satisfaction tends to increase as staff become more senior, achieving a higher pay band. The job satisfaction is not necessarily derived from the higher pay alone and is likely to be related to greater scope to manage their workload and pursue more interesting aspects of the job.

Further analysis shows that there is some regional variation – mean job satisfaction in London is 6.3, compared with 7.1 in the North. Those working in NHS trusts reported mean satisfaction of 6.5 compared with 6.9 in NHS foundation trusts and CCGs.

Finally, the 69 respondents who felt insecure about their jobs and were concerned about losing their jobs in the next 12 months reported mean job satisfaction of 5.7.

Chart 12: Job satisfaction at each pay band



We asked respondents how they felt their job satisfaction might change over the next 12 months – 18% think it will get worse, 53% think it will stay the same and 29% expect their job satisfaction to improve, indicating their current job satisfaction is the result of temporary pressures.

Some 64% of respondents would like to spend the rest of their career in the NHS, while 10% would not and 25% are unsure. However, only 47% expect they will be able to remain employed by the NHS, 16% do not expect to spend the rest of their career in the NHS and 38% do not know, suggesting there is a degree of uncertainty and concern among NHS finance staff about job security.

When asked specifically about job security only 41% reported feeling

Table 17: Frequency working additional hours, by pay band

	Never	Rarely (once or twice a month)	Frequently (once or twice a week)	Often (at least three times a week)	Always	Total
AfC3	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	100%
AfC4	8%	50%	17%	17%	8%	100%
AfC5	19%	33%	26%	19%	4%	100%
AfC6	6%	46%	31%	11%	6%	100%
AfC7	2%	26%	38%	25%	9%	100%
AfC8a	5%	30%	31%	18%	16%	100%
AfC8b	4%	24%	31%	25%	16%	100%
AfC8c	0%	8%	38%	21%	33%	100%
AfC8d	2%	15%	15%	27%	42%	100%
AfC9	0%	7%	14%	21%	59%	100%
Local contract (above AfC pay range)	0%	3%	15%	33%	48%	100%
Very senior managers pay framework (VSM)	0%	3%	11%	19%	67%	100%

'very secure' in their current role. However, 45% are concerned about losing their job in the next few years and 13% are concerned about losing their job in the next 12 months.

In spite of the concerns about job security and job satisfaction only 10% of respondents are actively looking for a new job and are very keen to move. A further 15% are looking for a new job but say they are in no desperate hurry, while 37% would only move jobs if the ideal position came up. Meanwhile, another 37% are not looking at all.

Working hours

We asked respondents about their working hours. Almost half of respondents told us they regularly work in excess of their contracted hours, with 27% reporting that they 'always' work in excess of contracted hours and a further 22% saying they 'often' (at least three times a week) work additional hours.

In addition, 26% said they work additional hours once or twice a week, 21% do so once or twice a month and just 4% of staff never work in excess of their contracted hours.

We also asked respondents to tell us how many additional hours they work. Those who work additional hours more often also report working the most extra hours.

This suggests there is a minority of staff who regularly work significantly in excess of their contracted working hours rather than additional hours being worked by finance staff responding to one-off pressures and deadlines.

In general, those who are working additional hours are more senior finance staff. All of the staff who report working more than 20 extra hours per week are at pay band 9 or above and 53% of those reporting working more than 15 hours but less than 20 hours extra per week are at band 9 and above.

Table 17 shows how often respondents at each pay band work additional hours.

Almost half of respondents told us they regularly work in excess of their contracted hours, with 27% reporting they 'always' do and a further 22% saying they 'often' do

Table 18: Additional hours worked per week at each pay band

	Up to and including five extra hours	More than five hours but less than ten	More than 10 hours but less than 15	More than 15 hours but less than 20	More than 20 extra hours	Total
AfC4	67%	0%	33%	0%	0%	100%
AfC5	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%	100%
AfC6	50%	33%	17%	0%	0%	100%
AfC7	41%	41%	12%	6%	0%	100%
AfC8a	10%	66%	17%	7%	0%	100%
AfC8b	10%	55%	26%	10%	0%	100%
AfC8c	12%	46%	23%	19%	0%	100%
AfC8d	10%	40%	43%	7%	0%	100%
AfC9	0%	35%	43%	17%	4%	100%
Local contract (above AfC pay range)	4%	15%	48%	15%	19%	100%
Very senior managers pay framework (VSM)	0%	23%	39%	26%	13%	100%

Table 19: Career development opportunities

	What development opportunities have you had through work in the last 12 months?	What kind of development opportunities would you like to have?
Local/national conferences	64%	45%
Local/national courses	59%	49%
Added responsibilities/on-the-job training	58%	52%
Webinar	57%	31%
E-learning	51%	33%
Networking events/opportunities	50%	43%
In-house training sessions	46%	33%
National/local policy groups (such as Department of Health or HFMA committees)	24%	32%

Table 18 shows that the majority of finance staff up to band 8b work no more than ten extra hours per week, when they do work additional hours. At band 9 and above the majority of finance staff report working at least ten extra hours per week when they work additional hours.

Career development

Some 74% of respondents feel NHS finance offers enough opportunities for motivated finance professionals to progress their careers and 78% believe they have been given adequate development opportunities in their current role.

Some respondents noted that in their local area, career progression is only possible if you are prepared to move a new organisation. This can be difficult for staff with family commitments if they have to travel a long way to reach another organisation. Others noted that there is strong formal support for career progression at graduate level and director level but less so at middle management grades. **Table 19** summarises the development opportunities that respondents have had in the past 12 months and the opportunities they would like. A higher

Table 20: As a finance professional, do you feel valued by...?

	Your line manager	Your organisation's board	Clinicians in your organisation	National	Public	Patients
Yes – very much	41%	15%	9%	1%	1%	0%
Yes – more often than not	37%	33%	37%	9%	4%	5%
Neutral – cannot tell	13%	37%	37%	46%	47%	53%
No – not often	7%	9%	11%	25%	26%	20%
No – not at all	2%	6%	6%	20%	21%	21%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

proportion of respondents have received each type of training and development than actually would like them, except in the case of attending national or local policy groups (such as those set up by the Department of Health or the HFMA). While 24% of respondents have attended such groups, 32% would like to.

Respondents also made additional comments about the types of development they would like to pursue. Suggestions included coaching and mentoring opportunities, secondments and work-shadowing within their own organisations or externally.

Values and perceptions

Among the survey respondents, 89% (86% in 2013, according to the HFMA's *NHS finance function in 2013*, March 2014) feel their finance department provides value to their organisation, while 11% do not believe the finance department provides value. Respondents provided free text comments to support their views.

Some feel there are still opportunities to improve finance staff knowledge of the business and improve the finance systems used, to help improve value. Some were concerned about the impact of staff turnover, vacancies and the use of interims.

Asked what would most improve the value added by the finance team, the main choices were 'better communication between finance and

non-finance staff' (60%), 'improving finance staff knowledge of the business' (59%), 'improving the financial literacy of non-finance staff' (59%) and 'access to better data' (53%). We also asked respondents to tell us about whether they feel valued and by whom.

Table 20 shows that the majority of finance staff (78%) do feel valued by their line managers but are less sure about other groups. In particular, very few finance staff could say they feel valued by the Department of Health, the public or patients.

Comparison with private sector

We asked respondents about how they felt the working environment and terms and conditions in NHS finance teams would compare with those in a similar role in the private sector.

Table 21 (overleaf) shows the results. More than two-thirds (68%) of finance staff believe the salary and financial rewards available in the private sector would be better than in the NHS and 51% believe the status attached to such a job would be better in the private sector.

However, respondents feel that factors such as stress, working hours, job security and work-life balance in the private sector would not be better than in the NHS.

Motivation for working in the NHS

We asked respondents to tell us specifically what motivates them to work in the NHS. For the majority

Some feel there are still opportunities to improve finance staff knowledge of the business and improve the finance systems used, to help improve value

Table 21: Perceptions about the private sector

	Better in the private sector	About the same	Better in the public sector
Salary and financial rewards	68%	21%	12%
Pension scheme	3%	10%	87%
Professional fulfilment	19%	41%	41%
Status (value attached to role by public/friends/work colleagues)	51%	38%	11%
Stress	16%	52%	32%
Working hours	13%	44%	43%
Job security	6%	37%	57%
Work-life balance	10%	43%	47%

Acknowledgements

This briefing was written by Richard Edwards, independent consultant, under the direction of Emma Knowles, HFMA's head of policy and research.

This briefing was produced in association with the NHS Finance Skills Development (FSD). FSD is a collaborative network of Finance Skills Development managers, dedicated to improving the finance skills of all NHS staff. FSD provides both personal and technical skills training, together with support in all aspects of personal development. The HFMA is grateful to FSD managers for their support in collecting the census data and helping to ensure that a 100% response rate was achieved. Thanks are also due to Future-Focused Finance for their assistance in encouraging responses.

© Healthcare Financial Management Association 2016. All rights reserved

Any enquiries should be sent to the publishers at info@hfma.org.uk

or posted to the HFMA at:

1 Temple Way, Bristol BS2 0BU
t: 0117 929 4789
f: 0117 929 4844
e: info@hfma.org.uk

(71%) it is the public-sector values of the NHS, which has not changed since our 2013 survey.

In addition, 60% of respondents said that improving patient care is a motivation and 55% reported that job satisfaction motivates them. Only 21% felt that good remuneration is a motivating factor, but 54% said they are motivated by the good pension and leave benefits offered in the NHS. Just 8% of respondents said that being held in high esteem by others is a factor.

The additional comments provided by respondents show that many people enjoy the complex and challenging nature of the NHS and the opportunity to work with a diverse range of highly skilled professionals.

However, several people noted that their response was their motivation for joining the NHS and that, after spending their career in the NHS, some of the initial factors were being eroded.

Conclusion

The NHS finance function has experienced a period of relative stability since the major structural reorganisation of 2013, but the pressure on finance staff to help their organisations deliver high-quality services within tightening financial resources has never been higher.

Finance departments have been recruiting additional staff into financial management roles, perhaps as a response to the current financial challenges. The number of finance staff with a professional qualification, or who are studying for one, has increased since 2013.

Finance staff have a high job satisfaction on average and are clear about the reasons they work in the NHS, with the majority keen to spend their careers in roles they see as providing good opportunities for motivated staff.

The HFMA will be using the data from the census and survey to continue to support members and all NHS finance staff by providing high-quality training and development opportunities.



A game-changer for NHS finance

Efficiency savings are the name of the game in the NHS.

Ensuring your people understand how the money flows, how services are paid for and how to obtain the best value is therefore crucial if the best financial outcomes are to be achieved.

The Operating Game enables you to do just that.

It's a highly effective, interactive training tool that transforms the way clinicians and non-clinicians interact in their daily decision-making, increasing financial awareness through the power of game-play.

The board game is team-based, enabling players to solve problems and respond to typical workplace scenarios together so they can be more effective in their day-to-day roles.

It's a real game-changer that can help build a more sustainable, effective NHS for the future.

"For someone with a lack of knowledge of NHS finance, I found the day very insightful and a springboard for learning which I hope to put into practice."

Patricia McAuley
Programme Co-ordinator
Health Education West Midlands

To find out more call **0117 938 8358**
or email alex.wood@hfma.org.uk





Courses you'll click with... HFMA's Online Academy

The largest and most advanced hub for finance training in the NHS encompassing e-learning modules across a wide range of subjects.

Modules include:

Introduction to NHS Finance – provides an introductory overview to how the NHS is structured and financed

Introduction to NHS Budgeting – looks at what budgets are and how you prepare and manage them

Introduction to NHS Governance – the module sets out what governance is all about and looks at the key elements, culture and values

Introduction to NHS Commissioning – the module confirms who is responsible for what, what commissioning involves in practice and constraints that NHS Commissioners have to deal with.

Introduction to NHS Costing – provides a basic understanding of what costing is, what it involves and how it operates in the NHS. As well as explaining key costing concepts

Introduction to how NHS services are paid for – provides an overview as well as looking at how money moves around the NHS.

Over **200 NHS organisations** currently subscribe to our Online Academy and over **192,000 CPD hours** have been delivered since it launched in 2006 – with good reason.



For more information visit hfma.to/onlineacademy or contact: James Blackwell, Business Development Manager
E: James.Blackwell@hfma.org.uk T: 0117 938 8446