

Research: Role of the NHS finance business partner

Background

The HFMA, Future-Focused Finance (FFF) and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) are working together to produce some guidance on the role of the NHS finance business partner (FBP).

Across the NHS, the FBP plays a key role in supporting the delivery of safe, effective and financially sustainable clinical services. They also have a critical role in supporting the decision-making of the clinicians and operational managers with whom they work.

For many finance professionals progressing through their careers, the FBP role will be the first role which predominantly requires a skillset beyond standard reporting and data analysis.

During July and August, there are three different opportunities for both HFMA members and ACCA members to get involved and contribute to the jointly-produced guide, including:

- Being interviewed
- Interviewing NHS colleagues
- Taking part in a roundtable

The views and information gathered from each of the opportunities will be used alongside desk-based research to form a rounded view of the FBP in the NHS. They may also be developed into informative case studies or partner profiles, providing a more personable view of the role of the FBP and how they are positioned within an organisation.

All contributors to the research will be provided with an opportunity to review a draft of the briefing and amend as necessary before publication.

Opportunity 1 – Being interviewed

HFMA, FFF and ACCA would like to hear from a variety of NHS colleagues to get their views on the role of the FBP and the characteristics which make an effective FBP.

We are keen to identify how a good FBP can make a difference to the service teams they support and would like to hear from any current FBPs, senior finance colleagues, service managers and clinical leads interested in supporting this guide.

Interviews, either in person or over the phone, will be with a member of the HFMA policy and research team and are likely to take around one hour.

Opportunity 2 – Interviewing NHS colleagues

We are also keen for members to undertake their own research.

Members will be provided with a research briefing pack to order to obtain the thoughts of the key personnel an FPB supports. We are particularly interested in hearing views from service managers, clinical leads and directors of finance.

Each interview is likely to take around one hour, and will provide the interviewer with a first hand insight into the expectations of the role.

This opportunity would suit a range of members. From finance professionals looking to make the step up to a FBP, an existing FBP aiming to ensure they are offering the best support possible, or indeed senior finance professionals looking to ensure they are best meeting the needs of their organisation.

This particular opportunity will count towards your CPD units.

Opportunity 3 – Take part in a roundtable

A roundtable will be held to validate and share the key messages from the desk-based research and interviews to generate an increased understanding of the role of the FBP. The roundtable is aimed at a number of different attendees, including aspiring and current FBPs, as well as other senior finance colleagues.

During the roundtable we are aiming to hold focused discussions covering:

- the different approaches to FBPs
- the positioning of the role within an organisation and how an FBP deals with the joint priorities of service teams and the finance team
- the professional skills/experience required
- the key relationships an FBP must build in order to perform well.

This opportunity will best suit any NHS colleague keen to promote the value FBPs can bring to finance functions and share their experiences of how a successful FBP operates within an NHS organisation.

Interested?

If you would like to be involved in our FBP research please contact Andrew Monahan, HFMA policy and research manager for more information (andrew.monahan@hfma.org.uk).