

Cutting edge

The work that led judges to name Tim Jaggard HFMA Deputy Finance Director of the Year chimes nicely with much of the current NHS agenda. Over the previous year he had helped introduce new models of care, get best value for money and brought innovative and cutting edge services to patients.

'The award means a lot to me. I have been in the NHS my entire career, starting in the graduate training scheme. It was a nice surprise to be nominated and I thought it was unlikely I'd win when I saw the other people on the shortlist,' says Mr Jaggard (*pictured, facing page*), who works at University College Hospitals London NHS Foundation Trust.

He worked on three major infrastructure projects. One involved service reconfiguration, creating a world-class cardiac centre at Barts and a world-class cancer centre at UCLH. The second was a pathology joint venture with a private sector organisation and the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust, which went live in April this year.

The third was to bring proton beam therapy to UCLH and The Christie Hospital in Manchester. 'This was a different process as I was working with the Treasury, Department of Health and NHS England so the financial modelling was quite different as a result.'

These infrastructure projects have been the most rewarding parts of his work. 'It feels like you are doing it for the benefit of the patient, which is how it should be, of course. In previous roles, I spent a lot of time negotiating contracts with commissioners. If you take a step back, sometimes you wonder how you're adding value for patients. But something like the cardiac cancer switch or proton beam therapy is driven by patient need.'

The importance of building relationships across organisational boundaries is one lesson he has taken from the work. 'I am keen to encourage my team to do more of that. The finance function has a big role to play and needs to build relationships across boundaries.'

Seven months on from winning the award, his latest challenge awaits. With Richard Alexander moving to Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, Mr Jaggard is now acting finance director. He has accepted, though this will mean ►



2014 HFMA Accounts Team of the Year winner
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS FT

Celebrating success

With preparations for the HFMA Awards 2015 now in full swing, Seamus Ward talks to some of last year's winners

Putting together an accurate, timely set of annual accounts is one of the key functions of any finance department. But there is a rising consensus that the accounts process should also include explaining the numbers. It's not easy, but Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust found a formula that was a hit with board members, the public and staff.

The finance team's accounts communication strategy employed a range of tactics. But its use of a video describing the contents of the accounts – played at the trust annual general meeting and uploaded to YouTube – was the most eye-catching. It gained wider recognition, with the team winning the 2014 HFMA Accounts Team of the Year Award.

'One of the things that really bothered us – and the majority of finance teams would recognise this – is how you best represent the financial position to the public at the AGM,' says director of finance and informatics and acting chief executive Rob Forster.

Traditional methods such as PowerPoint presentations did not work, he says. But the video moved finance from being one of the quietest parts of the AGM to one that generated some of the greatest interest.

'People said they understood finance for the first time in many years, which is no disrespect

to what we had done previously. We put it in an easy to understand format.'

It also allowed the team to explain technical details, such as impairments, in a more straightforward way. 'We could explain why a trading surplus differs from the bottom line that includes all the technical adjustments. That's been difficult for finance teams all the time I've worked in the NHS.'

But he adds that, for all the razzmatazz of the videos, the team's success is based on solid accountancy work. 'We approached this from the perspective of doing the basics correctly and excellently. That's a key part of any finance team's function. We had a clean audit report and were commended by the auditors for the pre-accounts preparation work we did. Doing it within an ever-shorter time frame is always challenging but we did it.'

'We never tire of saying it's not just about the video, but the hard work behind it. It's this and the excellence of the staff that gives us the time to work on this end product.'

This year's HFMA Awards are now open and Mr Forster urges colleagues across the NHS to enter. 'We see the HFMA Awards as the Oscars for NHS finance so we look forward to them and put effort into them. Having said that, it is a byproduct of the good work we do.'

We recognise that finance, just like every other department or division, has to change and has a major role in transforming the NHS. We must show we are willing to get involved in and able to find new ways to achieve more for less.'

The accounts team award has a particular attraction, he adds. 'The annual accounts are the ultimate end product of the finance department each year. It is a crucial part of articulating our financial position to the organisation and to stakeholders, showing where the challenges lie and putting the wider decisions made by the organisation in context. Is there cash available? Where have we spent it? And did we spend it wisely?'

The awards also help share best practice. The video drew the attention of other departments internally as well as finance teams across the NHS. Mr Forster now chairs the HFMA Technical Issues Group and it held a session where the trust shared its practice.

'We are not perfect and we are keen to learn from other organisations with good ideas,' Mr Forster says. 'But where we believe we are doing something well, we don't want to hide it away and keep it for ourselves.'


The team is putting together another video on the trust's finances this year, but with a twist. 'We want to get some non-finance people in the video to explain the financial

message. We think that will further enhance it and ensure we are saying things in an understandable and useable way for everyone.'

Communication was also at the heart of the Portsmouth Clinical Commissioning Group submission, which was highly commended in the accounts team category.

Good internal communication was vital as the team had to prepare accounts for three CCGs. But, looking outside the finance department, the team developed the idea of the 'Portsmouth pound'. This is a way to raise public awareness of the CCG's financial position and show how the commissioner gets the best value out of that pound.

'We are a small team and we try to add the most value we can,' says CCG chief financial officer Michelle Spandley. 'We were in good company, so we were really pleased to be highly commended.'

The awards are good for staff development and staff morale. 'We are keen to promote our ways of working as a CCG, so our teams realise the work they do is important and that they do it well. Awards take time and effort, but you can reap great benefits.' 

• Entries for the 2015 HFMA Awards must be received by 5pm on 2 October. For full details visit hfma.org.uk/awards

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▶ slightly more hours at work. He admits to being undecided whether he wants to take a substantive finance director job. 'It's one of the reasons why I have jumped at the chance of acting up – I can see whether I want to do it on a more permanent basis or whether the demands are too much, given that I value my family time.'



Last year's HFMA Deputy Finance Director of the Year Tim Jaggard

Technical Editor – Qualification



Band 8b. Part-time up to 2.5 days per week initially for a 6 month period

The HFMA is looking to recruit a Technical Editor to support the development of its qualification. The role involves seeing through to completion a number of web-based learning modules from raw material to final publication. The majority of the time will be spent editing externally written material to create each module and supporting a module's design from a content perspective.

The role provides a fantastic opportunity to make a difference and to support the NHS from a different perspective whilst widening your own experience. The HFMA's web-based learning modules cover a wide range of topics, all aimed at either supporting NHS finance staff to do their work to a high standard or to raise the profile of finance issues with other NHS staff.

We are looking for someone with a good understanding of the workings of NHS finance at both a policy level and at the detailed technical level. The ability to think clearly and creatively is essential but this must be coupled with excellent written skills so that (often complex) issues can be explained in easy to read, grammatically correct copy. The role is home-based and so the candidate must be organised and self-motivated. The role will require some travel to project meetings (mostly London or Bristol-based).

The Association is a great place to work and this is an excellent opportunity to raise your profile and develop your skills within a really friendly, effective and fast-paced team. If this role has taken your interest and you would like an informal discussion, please contact Sarah Bence, Technical Editor at sarah.bence@hfma.org.uk

A job description can be found at: hfma.to/hfmarecruit

To apply please send your CV and covering letter setting out why you would be suitable for the role to sarah.moffitt@hfma.org.uk by 15th September. Secondments will be considered.