Senior Solutions Architect

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A solutions architect designs hardware, software, or networking applications and services to solve problems within an organisation. We create the overall technical vision for a specific solution to a problem the organisation has.

I joined DHCW in February 2022, after almost seventeen years working in banking, so it has been quite a steep learning curve and I still have so much to learn!

I'm not a traditional solutions architect, my background is business architecture rather than technical. And it may sound a little far-fetched, but after graduating, I worked as a temp in a "family firm" which turned out to actually be part of the UK's largest bank! Their office closure in 2009 led to me experiencing a role in change management for the first time and once I started, I was hooked. I worked as a project coordinator, then a project manager, and progressed into architecture. I've worked across projects and programmes of all sizes, across almost every service and product a bank offers (mortgages, loans, credit cards, motor finance). This has allowed me to apply a broad range of skills and experience to my role at DHCW.

At DHCW, I am currently assigned to the Digital Medicines Transformation Portfolio, leading on the primary care Electronic Prescription Service (EPS). This is a product from NHS England, which has been adapted for Wales. I've also done some work on Secondary Care Electronic Prescribing, so I'm gaining experience from a broad spectrum of work.

Unlike the other solution architects within DHCW, I also have the honour of facilitating the newly established DHCW Design Authority. I support a body of design decision-makers in ensuring that solutions within the organisation are well considered, architecturally assured and ultimately fit for purpose. The processes need to remain constantly transparent, auditable and the outputs simple to consume. This is quite an ask with some of the complex designs which are continually being established within the organisation.

I'm sure quite a few people can say this about their job, but no two days are the same.

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My days can include being sat quietly drawing diagrams using my 'box of crayons' (or software), moving from topic to topic, meeting to meeting, gathering information, discussing complex problems - some of which are urgent and immediate and some of which are aspirational future ambitions of the organisation. It's really varied, and a great workout for my brain!

I collaborate with a varied audience; clinicians, designers, developers and the programme management team, to name a few. Therefore, I'm constantly thinking of ways to describe the technical to a non-technical audience, and also in my case, consuming very technical knowledge from those who are far more experienced than me!

My role with the Design Authority ensures I have an insight into most things going on, which is fascinating – it's really helping me in learning more about the organisation, its people, the processes and challenges at pace. I'm a problem solver by nature, a fixer, and this role lets me do exactly that on a daily basis.

The NHS means so much to me, I don't know where I would be without it. My husband has a chronic illness, and we have two children together, so our interactions with the NHS have been numerous and varied, even before joining the workforce. My husband is also a retired nurse, and speaks with such passion about the NHS. The Covid pandemic brought into sharp focus quite how important the health service is to me and my family, and made me think about how much I wanted to directly support it. And this role appeared at the right moment to allow me to do just that. I feel so privileged to contribute towards work where the impact of a job well done will be felt across the nation.