

NORTH CORNWALL LEARNING TRUST

Working together for local children

Job Description

Job Title: Chief Financial Officer, North Cornwall Learning Trust

Grade: N1-6
£48,211 to £57,913

Reporting to: NCLT Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Overview of the post:

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

The Trust is required by the funding body to appoint a suitably qualified professional to act as CFO. The CFO will be responsible for the strategic development of the Trust's finances and business functions to enable the Trust to run smoothly, efficiently and effectively in the delivery of The Trust's core aims, under the direction of the CEO. The CFO should play both a technical and leadership role within the multi-academy trust but in terms of governance, the post-holder acts in an advisory role serving the Board of Trustees, individual Headteachers and local governing boards.

The CFO will ensure sound and appropriate financial governance and risk management arrangements are in place, prepare and monitor budgets and ensure the delivery of annual accounts in accordance with the Academy's financial handbook, ESFA guidelines and all statutory requirements.

This is a senior management post, critical to the success of the Trust. The responsibilities attached to the post will change over time as the Trust responds to new guidance, develops its business and expands by taking in more students and other schools. Key responsibilities will include:

- Undertake the role of Chief Finance Officer as outlined in the Academies Financial Handbook and any other relevant documents from the DfE/ESFA
- To be responsible and accountable for the delivery of financial support services throughout the Trust, including the establishment/operation of a suitable accounting system and implementation of systems of internal control.
- To be the primary point of contact for all aspects of funding and financial/statutory returns.
- To maintain a secure overview of the management of all financial issues within each of the Trust's academies.

- To lead the promotion and delivery by the whole organisation of good financial management so that public money is safeguarded at all times and used appropriately, economically, efficiently and effectively.
- The management of staff, including commissioning and delegation of relevant activities as appropriate.
- To have oversight of payroll.
- To provide leadership of effective systems and processes.

Key responsibilities will include:

Strategic:

- To provide strategic advice to the CEO, Trustees, Headteachers, Local Governing Bodies and senior managers on financial issues.
- To analyse and interpret information in relation to the MAT and develop solutions and produce plans/strategies over the medium and long term.
- To prepare the Trust's annual financial forecasts, medium and long term corporate plans and report to the CEO, Trustees and Headteachers.
- Develop and implement strategies for maximising the Trust's current finances.
- To be directly responsible for the finance function in schools, including the development and maintenance of financial systems and procedures, and appropriate IT systems to support finance and wider Trust activity.
- To be accountable to the CEO for the proper financial operations of the Trust.
- To build close and effective working relationships with key partners and stakeholders.
- To participate in the management of major Trust projects as required by the CEO.
- To oversee the Trust's long term plan for capital development and investment, managing all financial aspects of major capital projects.
- To develop, design and implement financial policies and working practice across the Trust to streamline functions and ensure efficiency and value for money.

Operational:

- To provide the financial lead to the strategic planning process, including the preparation of annual and medium term budgets, periodic forecasts and funding requirements, working closely with the CEO, Headteachers and senior managers to ensure consistency with the Trust's strategic and financial objectives.
- To develop and maintain robust financial systems to ensure that:
 - all income and expenditure is effectively monitored and correctly authorised;
 - the principles of best value are applied in all purchasing decisions;
 - invoices are processed efficiently;
 - pension records and returns are up to date;
 - income collection procedures are operating effectively and debt problems are minimised.
- To manage the income and expenditure budgets across the Trust to identify any potential financial risk and implement strategies to address issues arising.
- To provide accurate and timely information to enable effective budgetary control, informed decision making and sound strategic planning.

- To design and implement effective, robust financial management systems/structures and internal control procedures that satisfy audit requirements and those of the ESFA.
- To manage the Trust's accounts in accordance with the funding agreement, the Academies Financial Handbook issued by the ESFA and the Trust's financial regulations and procedures. The CFO must ensure that the Trust follows best practice in terms of financial governance, and ensure the probity, and legislative compliance, of all financial transactions, including payroll and cash handling, and the integrity and suitability of all control mechanisms (audit and risk management).
- To ensure the timely preparation of annual accounts to prescribed standards and take responsibility for the completion and submission of statutory/regulatory reporting in line with prescribed timelines.
- To liaise with both internal and external auditors to enable them to operate effectively.
- To liaise with the ESFA on financial matters.
- To proactively manage the Trust's relationship with its bankers, to ensure that appropriate and efficient systems are in place for the Trust's accounting procedures.
- To proactively manage the cash position of the Trust and its operating activities, and reporting regularly on this aspect of financial management to the Trustees.
- To plan and co-ordinate all tax and treasury management practice and policy, with particular reference to charitable status, cash management and investments.
- To oversee the management of contracts and procurement to ensure that the Trust achieves maximum value for money across all its activities and maintain a strategic overview of services as the MAT grows.
- To lead on the management of strategic and operational risks across the Trust through the design and development of processes, systems and working practice to enable the identification of risks, providing an effective risk management strategy which is embedded throughout the organisation.
- To lead and manage the development and motivation of appropriate staff across the Trust and promote a strong customer service ethos and high professional standard.
- To lead, advise and guide individual finance teams in schools across the Trust to ensure that service levels are maintained and they continue to improve and develop.

Organisational:

- To be responsible for the strategic planning, development, design, organisation and monitoring of financial support services and whole Trust systems/procedures/policies.
- To promote financial awareness throughout the Trust.
- To interpret matters of policy/procedure/statute and ensure the Trust's compliance and initiate appropriate action arising.
- To provide leadership to school finance teams and direct line management to the Trust finance team as it develops.
- To liaise with Headteachers, Managers and support staff of schools as appropriate.
- To establish and run a financial support staff network across the MAT and share expertise and best practice.
- To identify and implement opportunities for collaborative working across the whole finance function of the MAT.

General:

- To comply with and assist with the development of policies and procedures relating to child protection, health, safety and security, confidentiality and data protection, reporting all concerns to an appropriate person.
- To be aware of and support difference and ensure equal opportunities for all.
- To contribute to the overall ethos/work/aims of the MAT.
- To attend meetings within the Trust and external events as required.
- To develop constructive relationships and communicate with other agencies/professionals.
- To maintain a presence in local and national professional networks and through these, and other means, ensure a continuous overview of appropriate policies and developments to keep abreast of current and best practice.
- To prepare policy and review papers as required and requested.
- To undertake regular reviews of Trust financial policies and procedures and submit to the Trustees/Governing Body for formal approval.
- To produce, and respond to, correspondence from all stakeholders and external agencies.
- To share expertise and skills with others.
- To participate in training and other learning activities and performance development as required.
- To recognise own strengths and areas of expertise and use these to advise and support.
- To maintain confidentiality at all times in respect of school-related matters and to prevent disclosure of confidential and sensitive information.
- Other duties commensurate with the grade of the post as directed by the CEO.

The duties and responsibilities highlighted in this Job Description are indicative and may vary over time. Post holders are expected to undertake other duties and responsibilities relevant to the nature, level and scope of the post and the grade has been established on this basis.

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CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER PERSON SPECIFICATION

	ESSENTIAL/ DESIRABLE	EVIDENCED BY
QUALIFICATIONS		
Qualified to degree level	D	Application/Certificates
Professional finance or finance related qualification at graduate level (i.e. ACA, ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA, MAAT or equivalent)	E	Application/Certificates
KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING AND EXPERIENCE (UP TO DATE/CURRENT)		
Significant post qualifying experience and in depth professional knowledge acquired through experience	E	Application/Interview
Experience managing significant financial resources with a good appreciation of relevant regulatory frameworks	E	Application/Interview
Familiarity of financial processes and procedures	E	Application/Interview
Experience of effectively managing a team	E	Application/Interview
Managing both secondary and primary school budgets	D	Application/Interview
In depth knowledge of statutory requirements, procedures and regulatory requirements relating to academies	D	Application/Interview
High level of IT competence, literacy and numeracy skills	E	Application/Interview
Experience of using and supporting others in the use of financial software packages.	D	Application/Interview
PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES		
Strong persuasive, influencing and interpersonal skills with the ability to communicate clearly and confidently	E	Application/Interview

Enthusiastic approach to creating and developing opportunities for our children.	E	Application/ Interview
Excellent skills in strategic planning and strategic management of financial resources	E	Application/Interview
Clear analytical skills to allow the exploration, evaluation and interpretation of information and opinions and utilisation of management information systems	E	Application/Interview
Strong decision making skills with the ability to make decisions and recommendations based on the analysis of options	E	Application/Interview
Capacity to work under pressure to meet deadlines and organisational priorities	E	Application/Interview
Good leadership skills and ability to inspire and challenge colleagues	E	Application/Interview
Commitment to staff's and own personal development	E	Application/Interview
Flexible in terms of working patterns and evolution of the role	D	Application/Interview
Team player, personable, emotionally intelligent with a sense of humour	D	Application/Interview