

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Assistant Accountant (Schools)
Directorate: Finance & Resources
Service: Finance
Reports to: Finance Business Partner (Schools)
Grade: LG Scale SO1

Job Purpose

The post is located in the Children's, Education and Families (CEF) Finance Team. The CEF Finance Team is the business partner to the CEF Management Team and is responsible for:

- Advice and support on finance and performance to budget holders, budget reviewers and senior managers and schools.
- Developing use of finance and performance indicators
- Promoting high standards of financial management
- Improving efficiency

The posts key role is to monitor and reconcile schools accounts run through their local financial system. Reporting to the Finance Business Partner, the postholder is the frontline representative of the County Council in scrutinising and analysing monitoring information returned by schools. The post will also monitor school financial returns to ensure compliance with local authority financial requirements and to provide assurance to members and senior officers that schools are properly accounting for their resources.

The post holder additionally plays a vital role in ensuring maintained schools and academies receive funding on an accurate and timely basis each month from the Local Authority.

Principal Accountabilities

1. Financial Monitoring

- Through the financial cycle, monitor and review the performance of financial information received from schools, providing timely accurate and relevant information feedback to schools and to both the Executive Director of Finance and Resources and CEF Management Team through the Finance Business Partner.
- Complete the reconciliation process between schools records and the Council's general ledger, implementing appropriate action to ensure integrity of data.

2. Control, Assurance and Compliance

- Assist in ensuring schools are managing their bank account effectively including cash flow management within corporate requirements and in accordance with professional accounting standards.
- Support the Finance Business Partner in monitoring schools finance' compliance with county council financial regulations, protocol and guidance, including Financial Regulations, Contract Regulations, and Schemes of Delegation.

3. Service Support

- Support the Finance Business Partner in ensuring that written procedures and instructions are produced and updated to facilitate sound financial management.
- Assist in supporting and training schools' finance staff to effectively manage the school's bank account.
- Work in partnership with ICT Services, the Councils bank provider, external providers and other internal services to provide a coordinated service to schools.
- Maintain effective relationships with schools.
- Provide advice to schools in relation to the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) and on Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR).

4. Service Development

- Contribute to the continued development of our services consistent with the reasonable aspirations of customers and our business aims.
- Contribute to team planning.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

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Education, Qualifications & Training

Essential

- Working towards AAT, equivalent qualification or relevant experience.
- Evidence of commitment to ongoing personal and professional development
- Good GCSE's including Maths and English

Desirable

- AAT qualified or equivalent qualification

Knowledge & Experience

Essential

- Experience applying accounting standards to day-to-day financial management.
- Knowledge of accounting packages desirable
- Knowledge of double entry book keeping principles

Desirable

- Experience in working in a customer focused environment with challenging customers.
- Awareness of major issues facing schools nationally, and the governance model for maintained schools.

Financial Skills

Essential

- Ability to collate and present financial information
- Ability to investigate and resolve errors in financial information
- Ability to use appropriate software packages to analyse and present data

IT Skills

Essential

- Knowledge of advance formulas and data manipulation tools in Excel
- Fully competent in desktop applications (spreadsheet and word processing)

Desirable

- Use of Excel Macros to automate simple tasks

Personal Skills

- Communication: Ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing
- Team working: Ability to contribute as part of a team with a flexible approach.
- Relations with others: The personal qualities and skills that promote open and constructive relations with colleagues and customers including difficult/hostile situations and the ability to pass on financial information concisely to non-financial customers.
- Flexibility: The flexibility for and commitment to continual service development and improvement
- Initiative: ability to work on own initiative, under appropriate pressure, and maintain high quality service to customers