



**SOUTH WEST ESSEX**  
COMMUNITY EDUCATION TRUST

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## Job Description Chief Financial Officer





**JOB TITLE:** Chief Financial Officer

**REPORTS TO:** Chief Operating Officer (COO)

### **JOB PURPOSE**

- To provide strategic and operational advice to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), COO and other senior colleagues of SWECET (South West Essex Community Education Trust) on all aspects of financial management.
- To contribute towards the continual development of the Trust's financial practices and policies; ensuring the Trust maintains consistent internal controls and accurate accounting records.
- To provide timely, reliable, and insightful management reporting to enable senior colleagues to make financially informed decisions.
- To assist in budget and forecasting processes to ensure that individual schools' budgets are designed to facilitate CEO/Headteacher's plans for school improvement.
- Responsible for the consolidation of accounts, managing the Trust's funds and be responsible for the preparation and consolidation of all financial returns to the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and connected government departments.
- To provide effective line management to the Finance Business Team ensuring that the values and vision for the central teams are delivered.

### **KEY CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITIES**

- Commitment to the Trust and school's vision and values;
- To maintain awareness of and commitment to the Trust's Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy in relation to both, employment, and service delivery and to observe of conduct which prevents discrimination taking place;
- To comply with all Trust policies and procedures including the Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policy, and E-Safety Policy;
- Undertake safeguarding training at least annually, with further updates as required;
- To fully comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Trust's Health and Safety Policy and all locally agreed safe methods of work;
- To work with colleagues to achieve service plan objectives and targets;
- To participate in the Performance Management Procedure and contribute to the identification of team development needs; and
- At the discretion of the Head Teacher, such other activities as may from time-to-time be agreed and are consistent with the nature of the job description herein.

### **PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES**

- To work with the Finance Business Team to develop and implement the Trust's financial strategy and policies across the trust to ensure the values of regularity and propriety are firmly imbedded.
- To ensure accurate, consolidated, and timely management accounts are presented to the relevant stakeholders within agreed schedules. Be responsible for the preparation and consolidation of the relevant financial returns such as the annual Audited Accounts and Annual Return.



- To work with Auditors to ensure robust compliance, monitoring and scrutiny are embedded in line with relevant frameworks set out by the ESFA.
- To ensure significant value procurement is carried out in a compliant manner and the correct accounting practices are carried out for capital and earmarked funding streams.
- To ensure any surplus funds are identified and invested to maximise income in line with the Trust's Investment Policy.
- To ensure the Trust's Vision and Values are embedded at the centre of the Trusts financial framework and used to ensure consistency, probity, and value for money.

### **Special Features:**

The post holder will need to be flexible, adaptable, and able to travel to any of SWECET academies to fulfil the responsibilities of the role as needed and/or at the request of the COO.

### **Responsibilities**

- To provide professional advice and support to the Trust leadership team, Trust Finance Committee, and the Trust Board on all aspects of finance including ESFA guidance and directions;
- To work with the Finance Business Team to support and advise each member academy in the preparation of annual budgets, monthly management accounts and cash flow forecasts; including the central operating fund and any other Trust affiliated budgets as required;
- By establishing excellent working relationships across all levels of the Trust workforce and academies including HR and Payroll colleagues in respect staffing commitments, set revised budgets during the year as necessary, benchmarking where possible.
- To proactively ensure that accurate and timely financial monitoring reports are presented to the Trust in line with the agreed periods;
- To ensure consolidated Trust budgets and monthly management accounts are reconciled and presented as required;
- To prepare and submit all financial returns in a timely and accurate manner including financial records for the auditors and returns to Companies House, including Budget Forecast Returns and Annual Audited Accounts;
- To prepare individual academies and/or the Trust for any internal or external audits and to respond appropriately with any subsequent recommendations;
- To support and co-ordinate the annual audit work of the Trust, ensuring compliance with SORP, the Academies Financial Handbook, and funding agreement;
- To support and develop the Trust's risk management strategy and procedures to ensure that key operational and financial risks are identified, assessed, and managed;
- To work closely with the relevant Trust teams to ensure all returns are completed accurately and submitted to HMRC (HM Revenue and Customs) in a timely manner;



- To ensure effective financial controls are in place to support robust financial management across the Trust.
- To have oversight of all contracts across the Trust to support with obtaining VfM and ensuring compliance with the AFH requirements;
- To support the Trust with the effective purchasing, negotiating and procurement of products and services across the trust;
- To implement and maintain procedures for a centralised fixed asset register;
- To ensure the Trusts investment and reserves policy are being maximised across the trust;
- To ensure compliance with data protection regulations;
- To ensure the income generation plans and debt management arrangements are delivered in support of the Trust's financial security and school operational needs;
- To attend meetings across SWECET sites as needed and/or at the request of the COO, CEO or Trust Board;
- Maintain and update the Trust's Fixed Asset Registers in line with the Trust's fixed asset policy;
- Monitor income and expenditure of the Trust's Capital Funding and report in accordance with ESFA requirements;
- To support and assist the Finance Business Team in all aspects of their roles and champion best practice and lead by example;
- To work with the Chief Operating Officer to deliver a robust internal audit.
- As necessary support the Finance Business Team with the production of school's monthly management accounts

The duties and responsibilities in this job description are not restrictive and the post-holder may be required to undertake any other duties that may be required from time-to-time. Any such duties should not, however, substantially change the general character of the post.

***This organisation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.***

I confirm that I have read and understood, and that I accept, the above job description:

Signature: ..... Date: ..... Name in full .....

**Chief Finance Officer                      Person Specification**

Criteria	Detail	Requirements
<b>Qualifications &amp; Experience</b>	Specific qualifications & experience	<p>Formal accountancy qualification (ACA, ACCA, CIPFA, CIMA, AAT) and education to degree level or equivalent is desirable.</p> <p>At least three years' experience of working in a finance department and able to demonstrate understanding of all aspects of management accounts and academy finance.</p> <p>Proven experience of preparing and presenting financial and management accounts, reports, and data.</p> <p>Experience of finance with the education or public sectors.</p>
	Literacy	Excellent reading and writing skills – at least English GSCE (AC) level or equivalent
	Numeracy	<p>At least Maths GSCE (A-C) level or equivalent</p> <p>A Level or other higher level Maths qualification desirable</p>
	Technology	<p>Strong ICT skills including MS Office including Word and Excel.</p> <p>Familiarity of PS Financials and other financial systems.</p>
<b>Knowledge</b>		<p>Excellent working knowledge of current academy finance best practice</p> <p>Excellent working knowledge of finance policies and procedures</p> <p>Working knowledge of general school policies and procedures</p>
<b>Communication</b>	Written	Proven experience of completing detailed and complex reports, forms, and letters to an elevated level of accuracy
	Verbal	Effective at exchanging verbal information clearly and sensitively
	Negotiating	Effective negotiation skills
<b>Other</b>	Teamwork	<p>Proven experience of working in a team and contributing to a team's success</p> <p>Proven experience of working on own</p> <p>A positive attitude with energy and commitment</p> <p>Has a process driven approach and a 'can do' philosophy.</p>



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	Relationships	Proven experience of establishing rapport and successful working relationships and has confidence to communicate with headteachers and staff in schools.
		Empathy – ability to see other viewpoints and support senior leaders.
	Information	Excellent analytical and problem-solving skills  Proven ability to provide timely and accurate information
	Organisational skills	Excellent organisational skills and able to work under pressure to prioritise and meet deadlines.  Ability to work accurately with attention to detail  Able to drive and has their own car/transport.
	Time Management	Proven ability to manage own time effectively with competing demands of the job role.  Flexible and adaptive.
	Creativity	Proven ability to produce create solutions to complex situations which comply with statutory or procedural requirements
	Child Protection	Good understanding of and commitment to child protection procedures
	Confidentiality/Data Protection	Good understanding of procedures and legislation relating to confidentiality
	CPD	Demonstrates a clear commitment to develop and learn in the role  Proven ability to effectively evaluate own performance and share knowledge with others