

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE:	Assistant Finance Business Partner
MANAGED BY:	Finance Business Partner
GRADE:	8

BACKGROUND

The West of England Combined Authority is seeking to appoint a Assistant Finance Business Partner to join the Finance team.

This is an exciting time to join the West of England Combined Authority. In the last year nearly three quarters of a billion pounds of new investment has been secured for the region. New plans are in place to deliver on Mayoral priorities to improve transport, skills and housing for our residents, take decisive action to tackle the climate emergency, and to support communities facing the cost-of-living crisis. There is a relentless focus on delivery to put the West of England on the map for regional, national and global success.

Led by the regional Metro Mayor, the West of England Combined Authority brings together three local councils, the Local Enterprise Partnership and works with communities, other public services, and industry to deliver for the region.

Come and help shape the future of the West of England, a place so many people are proud to call home.

THE ROLE

Our new Assistant Finance Business Partner will join our Finance and Procurement team and help them deliver effective and efficient finance support to the West of England Combined Authority.

The role sits within a small and relatively new team and the post holder will play a key role, helping to provide financial advice, information, reports and analysis.

The Assistant Finance Business Partner will support the Finance Business Partner to ensure that financial reports to both internal and external users accurately reflect the financial position of the Combined Authority.

The post holder will be required to complete on-the-job training to gain competencies in one or more of the following specialist areas;

- To play an active role in helping to establish reporting routines including month end reporting, statutory reporting, budgets and commentaries.

- To support the provision of effective and efficient financial information through proactive business partnering and providing financial modelling assistance when required.

In addition, our Assistant Finance Business Partner may be asked to:

- Represent the team on inter- and intra-departmental working groups (e.g. Service Director's Management Teams) and/or external groups to provide financial advice as and when required.
- To contribute to specific project teams and where necessary take on the role of an independent project leader within the financial environment, ensuring that all projects meet their objectives.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Under supervision of the Finance Business Partner, monitor income, expenditure and outturn predictions, identifying and communicating unexpected budget variances, budget volatility and monitoring the validity of budget management decisions against accountancy rules and regulations.
- Assist in the creation and production of the monthly management accounts pack within agreed timescales as set out within the team's objectives.
- Assist the Finance Business Partner in the production of budgets and revised forecasts for the West of England Combined Authority.
- Liaise with budget managers on a monthly basis to establish the cause of budget or forecast variances when comparing to actual results.
- Effectively handle queries from key budget managers, and proactively help them to manage costs in their areas of the business through business partnering.
- To assist in producing final accounts in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards including the production of disclosure notes and supplementary financial analysis.
- To assist in the production of streamlined reports from the financial system that automates the production of the information required for the submission of returns.
- To prepare and proactively contribute to reports for directors and managers and political decision makers clearly identifying the financial effects of policy and other corporate proposals on the delivery of services.
- Ensure that optimum functional use is made of the financial system and that all budget managers can undertake basic enquiries to track their budget position.

- Assist in proactively developing systems and the use of IT to improve information in the financial suite when systems are upgraded.
- Write reports for a wide range of individuals from the financial suite using a range of tools.
- Interpret the financial requirements of non-financial managers and other users and provide suitable data in clear reports.
- Maintain and develop the integrity of the financial systems, reconciling the General Ledger records to those of any feeder systems, investigating discrepancies and generating improved financial reporting systems.
- Maintain and develop the integrity of information in a range of control accounts.
- To challenge and improve financial systems, processes and control on an ongoing basis.
- Provide an accounting service for funding streams where the West of England Combined Authority. has Accountable Body status, including submission of returns to Government departments as required.
- Provide support and financial advice to individual service areas for specific projects, including provision of detailed reports and advice to assist with project management.
- To plan and prioritise own workload in order to meet the deadlines for reporting to directors, managers and political decision makers.
- To contribute to effective and accessible communication with staff, service users, the general public and others as appropriate
- To undertake such other duties and responsibilities of a similar responsibility level as may be allocated from time to time by the line manager.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL (MUST HAVE)

Qualifications and Knowledge

- Good standard of general education.
- Experience of working with Microsoft packages, including Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
- Qualified accountant or part-qualified accountant actively studying at the final level (CCAB/CIMA).

Experience

- Experience of providing financial support in a dynamic and complex organisation.
- Previous experience of preparing budgets and budget monitoring.
- Experience of providing regular financial management information/advice to tight deadlines.
- Specific experience and understanding of financial and management reporting.
- Experience of performing complex reconciliations.
- Experience of delivering high-quality customer service both inside and outside an organisation.

Skills and Competencies

- Excellent numeracy skills with strong attention to detail and accuracy
- Excellent written and verbal communication and inter-personal skills.
- Excellent organisational and time-management skills with ability to prioritise, multitask and manage a busy workload.
- Proactive with the ability to use initiative and work autonomously without close supervision.
- Articulate, resilient, and able to work as part of a team and under pressure.
- Focus on excellent customer service with a commitment to continuous improvement.

- Strong attention to detail.
- Knowledge of accounting systems, preferably including Agresso.
- Advanced use of Microsoft office packages: Excel, Word, PowerPoint
- High degree of motivation and personal enthusiasm.

DESIRABLE

Qualifications and Knowledge

- Experience of local government finance and the statutory framework for local authority accounting.
- Be able to deal with several complex and conflicting issues simultaneously.
- Knowledge or awareness of public sector financial systems, including budgetary control,
- accounting procedures, Risk Management, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

REWARDS AND BENEFITS

Alongside a competitive salary, we offer an excellent benefits package including:

- 26 days annual leave plus bank holidays
- Generous Employer-Contribution Pension Scheme through the Avon Pension Fund
- Cycle to work scheme and secure bike parking
- Free eye tests for all display screen equipment (DSE) users
- Discounted monthly bus tickets
- Hybrid working to split your week between the office and home to help you achieve the best work/life balance and career goals.

We have recently moved into a new bright, airy, modern office space, with all latest technology, under a 10-minute walk from Bristol Temple Meads Train Station. We offer flexible and hybrid working options too if you would rather work from home, or another suitable location.

As an equal opportunities employer, we invite applicants to contact us to identify any additional support they may need during the recruitment process.

WE PAY THE LIVING WAGE

We're proud to have been accredited as a Living Wage Employer

Living Wage accreditation means that everyone working at The West of England and Combined Authority receives a minimum hourly wage of £14.21 - higher than the government minimum for **over 23s, currently £10.42 per hour**



It also means that anyone who provides services to, or has contracts with us, must pay the Living Wage, setting the bar for good employer practices in the region. This includes those who provide services to The West of England and Combined Authority, such as cleaning and facilities management contracts, as well as those who have contracts with us - such as IT providers.