

Post Specification

Post Specification - Key Information

- **Post Title: Principal Finance Officer**
- **Date: September 2026**
- **Final Grade: 15**
- **Location: Main office - Penrith (minimum 40% office based)**

Service Area Description

Cumbria Combined Authority is a newly established organisation building the financial, governance and operational systems that will underpin its long-term success. The finance service is in a period of active development, establishing core processes, implementing new systems, and shaping the Authority's financial framework from the ground up. This is a rare opportunity to join at the beginning and help shape how the organisation operates.

Purpose of this Post

The purpose of this role is to support the development and delivery of Cumbria Combined Authority's emerging financial framework. The postholder will provide high-quality financial support across a range of activities while helping to establish the systems, processes and controls required for a new organisation. The role requires flexibility, a willingness to undertake varied tasks, and a proactive approach to building robust, compliant financial operations.

Key Job Specific Accountabilities

- Support the Finance Lead in development of the Authority's financial systems and processes, contributing to the design, testing and implementation of new arrangements as the organisation matures.
- Assist in developing and maintaining the Authority's chart of accounts, coding structures and financial workflows, ensuring they remain fit for purpose as the organisation evolves.
- Deliver a range of core accounting tasks, including bank and VAT reconciliations, journals, budget monitoring, preparation of payment runs, supplier credit checks.
- Work flexibly across the finance service, undertaking varied tasks as needed to support operational delivery during a period of organisational development.
- Provide timely financial information and advice to managers and service areas, supporting effective decision-making across the organisation.

- Build effective working relationships with colleagues, partners and legacy councils to support smooth transition and continuity of financial operations

Key Facts and Figures of the Post

- **Budget Responsibilities:** None
- **Management Responsibilities:** None
- **Other:** Information responsible for the maintenance of accounting records.

Essential Criteria

- **Qualifications:** A recognised accounting qualification (e.g., AAT, CCAB-part qualified, or equivalent experience demonstrating the required level of technical competence). Evidence of continuing professional development and commitment to maintaining up-to-date financial knowledge.
- **Knowledge:**
 - Experience of working with financial systems and the ability to support process development, system improvements or implementation activities.
 - Understanding of financial controls, audit requirements and statutory financial responsibilities.
 - Experience of delivering core accounting tasks such as reconciliations, journals, budget monitoring, financial reporting or year-end processes
- **Experience:**
 - Significant experience of providing accounting services. Public sector experience is not essential for this role; we welcome applications from candidates with strong transferable skills gained in any sector. However, experience of working within a regulated, audited or publicly accountable environment will be advantageous.
 - Good technical background in accounting covering all aspects of budget preparation, in year monitoring and forecasting and year end accounting.
- **Expertise:**
 - Competent use of Microsoft Office packages, especially Excel (VLOOKUP's, pivots, IF formulas etc)
 - Capacity to work effectively under pressure, prioritise and meet deadlines.
 - Ability to work with non-finance managers to provide objective and understandable financial advice.
 - Accurate numeracy, analytical and comprehension skills.
 - Commitment to high standards of integrity, confidentiality and professional conduct.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

- This post does not require a DBS check.

Job Working Circumstances

- **Emotional Demands:** Routine demands commensurate with the tasks and duties encountered in a modern office and challenging role of this type.
- **Physical Demands:** Limited physical demands, commensurate with those experienced in a normal office environment.
- **Working Conditions:** Conditions as experienced in a normal working office environment.
- **Other Factors:** Travel to the main office in Penrith is required minimum 2 days a week.

