



Appointment of Finance Director

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Contents

- 1 Introduction from Philip Duffy
- 2 About us
- 3 The role
- 4 Key responsibilities & activities
- 5 Person specification
- 6 Diversity & inclusivity
- 7 Terms of appointment
- 8 Additional benefits
- 9 How to apply
- 10 Further information

Introduction from Philip Duffy (Chief Executive)

Thank you for your interest in the Finance Director role at the Environment Agency.

The Environment Agency plays a critical role in protecting people and the environment across England. Our responsibilities are wide-ranging and increasingly high-profile - from regulating industry and improving water quality, to managing flood risk and supporting the transition to a more sustainable economy. This means we operate in a complex environment, balancing environmental outcomes, economic priorities and public expectations, often under significant scrutiny.

Strong financial leadership is central to our success. The Finance Director is a key member of my Executive Team and plays a vital role in ensuring that we make the best possible use of public and charge-funded resources, while maintaining the highest standards of accountability and governance.

However, this role goes well beyond financial stewardship. We are looking for someone who can use finance as a driver of organisational performance—someone who brings insight, challenge and a clear focus on outcomes. The Finance Director must be able to contribute confidently at the top table, helping us make difficult decisions, prioritise effectively and navigate a complex and evolving landscape.

The role operates at the intersection of finance, strategy and delivery. It requires the ability to work across organisational boundaries, build strong relationships within the Defra group and beyond, and operate effectively in a politically aware context where decisions are shaped by a range of considerations.

We have a strong platform in place, with capable teams and a clear sense of direction, but there is more to do. This role offers the opportunity to further strengthen the contribution of finance across the organisation - enhancing capability, improving systems and supporting the development of areas such as commercial capability and income generation.

We are open to candidates from a range of backgrounds, including those looking to take a step up into a broader and more strategic leadership role. Above all, we are looking for someone with the judgement, curiosity and drive to make a real impact.

This is a challenging but rewarding role, offering the opportunity to help shape the future of the Environment Agency and contribute to some of the most important issues facing the country.

I hope you will consider applying.

About us

The Environment Agency works to create better places for people and wildlife, and supports sustainable development. We were established in 1996 to protect and improve the environment. We have over 13,000 employees, our head office is in Bristol and we have offices across England.

Within England we are responsible for:

- regulating major industry and waste
- treatment of contaminated land
- water quality and resources
- fisheries
- inland river, estuary and harbour navigations
- conservation and ecology

We are also responsible for managing the risk of flooding from main rivers, reservoirs, estuaries and the sea. Lead local flood authorities (LLFAs) are responsible for managing the risk of flooding from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses and lead on community recovery.

Our priorities are to:

- work with businesses and other organisations to manage the use of resources
- increase the resilience of people, property and businesses to the risks of flooding and coastal erosion
- protect and improve water, land and biodiversity
- improve the way we work as a regulator to protect people and the environment and support sustainable growth

In July last year we published a strategy that sets out our vision for the Environment Agency over the next 5 years and beyond.

As part of that we renewed our three strategic goals to reflect the challenges of today:

- 1. Healthy air, land and water supporting nature's recovery** - now recognises our contribution to reversing nature's decline
- 2. Sustainable growth** - is now more closely aligned with our statutory role to support sustainable development, and the government's vital growth mission
- 3. A nation resilient to climate change** - continues to show how our work on water supply and flood are vital to tackling climate change

We work with government, local councils, businesses, civil society groups and communities to make our environment a better place for people and wildlife.

We have hugely dedicated and professional employees and we are committed to promoting equality and diversity in all we do, and to valuing the diversity of our workforce, customers and communities.

We're committed to helping our people to find new ways of working and to maintain our focus on creating a better place for people and wildlife. For more information on the Environment Agency and what we do, please visit:

environmentagencycareers.co.uk

[About us - Environment Agency - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Gov.uk](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#)

The role

We are looking to recruit a Finance Director to join the Environment Agency.

Job purpose:

Reporting to the Chief Executive, the Finance Director is a critical member of the EA's senior leadership team, playing a central role not only in the sound management of resources but in improving the performance and effectiveness of the organisation as a whole. You will ensure that financial insights, value for money and risk management are integral to decision making across the organisation. But you will also be voice driving service transformation and reform in everything we do, delivering the vision set out in our corporate strategy, EA2030.

The EA is one of the largest Arms Length Bodies in the UK. You will oversee around £1.5bn of Government spending and nearly £750m of income generation each year, supporting our critically important operations. You will ensure that income and expenditure forecasting is robust, and that risks are managed. You will oversee our growing portfolio of commercial income generation projects, our future income and funding strategy and the data and systems that drive stewardship of our extensive asset portfolio. You will play a critical role in ensuring that major projects and investment aromatics are managed robustly. You will continue to improve our internal control, working closely with the Chair of Audit and Risk, and improve the timeliness, insight and rigour of our accounts.

DEFRA group operates a shared service model, and you will supervise teams of DEFRA civil servants and EA officials working on all aspects of finance that support the business. You will also play a key role in the financial leadership of DEFRA group, ensuring that risks are escalated and managed and driving reform of our underlying systems and processes. You will be a member of the Government Finance Profession, and you will receive professional oversight and guidance from the Group CFO. You will have the opportunity to support work on finance right across government.

Beyond financial stewardship, the Finance Director plays a critical role in using finance as a lever to improve organisational performance. As a full member of the Executive Team, the postholder brings independent, evidence-based insight - supporting strategic choices, challenging assumptions, and enabling better outcomes across the organisation.

The role operates within a politically sensitive and fast-evolving environment, requiring the ability to balance financial discipline with delivery priorities and wider government expectations. The Finance Director must be comfortable contributing to decisions where financial, strategic and reputational considerations intersect. You will also be an experienced manager of professionals from a range of backgrounds and able to operate effectively as a member of the Executive Board and in working with senior officials and Ministers on financial and value for money issues.

Key responsibilities & activities

- Provide strategic financial leadership and advice to the Chief Executive, Executive Team and Board, supporting decision-making and organisational performance.
- Act as a full member of the Executive Team, contributing to overall organisational leadership and providing independent financial insight and challenge.
- Lead financial planning, forecasting and budgeting, ensuring plans are affordable, aligned to strategy and deliver value for money.
- Ensure robust financial governance and compliance, including adherence to Managing Public Money, accounting standards and audit requirements.
- Identify, manage and mitigate financial risks, maintaining oversight of organisational performance, major programmes and investment decisions.
- Lead financial reporting and external accountability, including production of the Annual Report and Accounts and engagement with audit bodies.
- Provide early financial insight into policy, strategy and business cases, ensuring robust analysis of costs, benefits and value for money.
- Use finance to drive organisational performance, supporting prioritisation, efficiency and effective resource allocation.
- Lead continuous improvement within the finance function, strengthening systems, processes and capability.
- Act as a key member of the DEFRA Finance leadership team, supporting effective cross-group work on finance and contributing more broadly to the Government Finance profession.
- Engage senior stakeholders across government and beyond, supporting funding discussions and long-term financial sustainability.



Person specification

The successful Finance Director will possess:

Essential

- Significant experience in a senior finance leadership role within a complex organisation, with responsibility for financial planning, budgeting and risk management.
- A suitable financial qualification (ACA, ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA or equivalent).
- Proven track record of using financial insight to inform strategic decision-making and improve organisational performance.
- Strong experience of managing both expenditure and income, including forecasting and operating in environments with financial uncertainty or risk.
- Experience of operating credibly at senior leadership level, providing independent challenge and influencing decisions in complex or high-profile contexts.
- Good understanding of financial governance, assurance and accountability frameworks, with the ability to ensure compliance while supporting delivery.
- Experience of leading or supporting transformation in a finance function, including improving systems, processes or organisational capability.
- Strong stakeholder management skills, with the ability to build effective relationships across organisational and government boundaries, including working with or alongside central government or regulated environments.

Desirable

- Experience of working within or alongside government, or in a regulated or publicly accountable organisation.
- Understanding of Managing Public Money and government finance frameworks.
- Experience of working with shared service or group finance delivery models.
- Experience of supporting commercial strategy, income generation or cost recovery models.
- Exposure to large-scale public service, infrastructure or environmental organisations

Diversity & inclusivity

Our commitment

We value difference and welcome everyone. We aim to create a diverse workforce reflecting the UK population and are committed to equal opportunities. We particularly welcome applications from underrepresented groups including BAME communities, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ individuals, women, and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Our culture: how we do things

- One team, one mission: create a better place
- Focus on outcomes and deliver commitments
- Think big, act early, be visible
- Seek partnership, show leadership, take responsibility
- Innovate, move fast, stay agile
- Value difference, include everyone
- Be kind, stay safe and grow

Disability Confident Employer: The EA is an accredited 'Disability Confident Employer' under the government's Disability Confident Scheme which denotes organisations that have a positive commitment towards disabled people.

We guarantee to interview anyone with a disability whose application meets the minimum criteria for the role. If you wish to claim a guaranteed interview, you should declare so at the point you submit your application.

Reasonable Adjustments:

Available during interviews and employment.

Disability Leave: Supporting management of health conditions

Zero Tolerance: For bullying, harassment and discrimination

Employee Networks: Supporting BAME, Disability, LGBTQ+, Faith, Gender Equality, Mental Health, and more

Flexible working: We consider flexible working patterns for all positions, including job sharing.

We recruit based on merit through fair, open and equal selection processes.

Watch the video below to hear from some of our employees, and hear about their experience with us: [Value difference: include everyone - YouTube](#)



Terms of appointment

The role is a permanent appointment.

Salary and benefits

Join us in this role and you will enjoy the following benefits:

Grade Rate: c£135,000

Location: As this is a national role, you can be based at any Environment Agency Hub office, under the corporate travel policy. You can expect to travel to London weekly, with infrequent travel to our other offices including Bristol, Birmingham, and Leeds. Travel expenses are covered.

Hours of work: 37 hours

Leave entitlement: Your leave allowance in this role will be 200 hours (27 days) or equivalent, depending on working pattern, plus bank holidays. Your allowance will be pro-rata if you work part time. Your entitlement depends on your grade, your contracted hours, and your length of continuous service – it can rise to 30 days with continued service.

In addition to this you may be entitled to up to 133 hours (18 days) flexi-time per year.

We offer up to two days paid environmental outcome days each year. These give you the opportunity to take part in community activities with a clear environmental outcome for people and wildlife.

Enhanced maternity, adoption and paternity leave, and sickness absence provisions are available.

Additional paid leave is available for employees taking part in public duties, trade union activities, special/trained forces and for health and safety representatives.

Work/life balance

We support and encourage flexible working hours and practices at all levels to help you achieve a good balance between your work life and your personal life. We will encourage you to keep developing your skills and professional knowledge throughout your career.

Pension

We will enrol you into the Environment Agency Pension Fund (EAPF) on commencing employment if your employment contract is for 3 months or more. The EAPF is part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). It is a career average scheme, which means you will build up benefits based on your pay each scheme year rather than your final salary.

We will base your pension contributions on your actual pay and you will receive tax relief on your contributions. The pension contribution rates currently range between 5.5% to 12.5%. Whilst you are in the scheme, we will pay an employer contribution into your pension pot. We currently pay 19%, so this is a very generous scheme.

Location

If you are contractually based in one of our eligible locations, you will receive a London Weighting allowance.

Additional benefits

Personal Development	Health & wellbeing	Finance
Performance management Individual performance plans, learning and development matched to your agreed career objectives and progression plans. Learning and development A range of training courses, leadership development initiatives and access to learning and development materials are available, covering technical, managerial and personal skills. Examination leave Paid leave for exams and revision for approved studies. Professional subscriptions* We will pay the membership fees for one relevant professional association. Mentoring and coaching Access to support development and career progression.	Occupational health Access to occupational health advisory service. Eye care Free eye tests. Employee assistance service Access to Workplace Wellness available to you and your family. Sports and social club Opportunity to benefit from a wide range of subsidised events and discounts. Health discount Optional discounts provided by several external providers and health clubs. Local benefits These vary from region to region.	Interest free loans* For season tickets, bicycles and safety equipment. Financial education club Providing guidance on how to manage your finances including information on credit scores, pensions, buying your first house and getting debt-free. Tenancy deposit loan scheme* For employees directly employed by the Environment Agency, access to an interest free loan to pay for some, or all of a deposit on a privately rented home. The loan can be paid back over a period of up to 12 months, directly from the monthly salary. The following benefit is only applicable to eligible roles: • Free Car Parking *May be subject to completion of probationary period.

How to apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to the Environment Agency on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at www.saxbam.com/appointments using code **OBRZN**.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

The closing date for applications is midday on **Wednesday 5th August 2026**.

* The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.

GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

Due diligence will be carried out as part of the application process, which may include searches carried out via internet search engines and any public social media accounts.

Further Information

Eligibility to apply and continuity of employment

Employment agency workers and contractors are considered external candidates and should therefore only apply for positions that are being advertised externally. They are not eligible to claim continuity of employment should they be successful in securing a position with the Environment Agency.

If you have been a member of a Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) in the last 12 months, we will not be able to continue with your application based on agreed appointment rules related to employing ex-RFCC members. We would welcome an application from you once the 12-month period have passed.

For applicants who currently work in local government or other bodies listed in the Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government etc.) (Modification) Order 1999, you may be eligible for continuous service for the purpose of calculating any future redundancy payment.

Right to work and eligibility for employment

Before applying, it is the responsibility of all candidates to ensure they have the correct right to work documentation. If you require sponsorship, please ensure that the position you apply for meets the UK Visa & Immigration (UKVI) requirements. If selected, your appointment would be subject to you obtaining and maintaining the relevant work visa terms and conditions set for you by UKVI.

Pre-employment checks

We apply the Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) check when recruiting employees to our posts. This includes a basic criminal records check.

For the great majority of roles in the Environment Agency this will be sufficient and only certain roles will require a higher level of clearance. Should this be necessary, you will be advised of this during the recruitment process.

Positions based at our London office or roles that require frequent travel to London require Counter Terrorist Check (CTC) level security clearance. This will be confirmed to you during the recruitment process.

Want to find out more?

To find out more about what it's like to work at the Environment Agency, please visit: environmentagencycareers.co.uk/working-here

There's strength in numbers

Tara Smith

Joint-Head of Government
Finance Function,
and Chief Operating Officer at Home
Office



Conrad Smewing

Joint-Head of Government
Finance Function,
and Director General, Public
Spending at HM Treasury



Joining us in this role also means becoming part of the Government Finance Function (GFF). So, we wanted to take this opportunity to introduce ourselves.

We're the GFF, a community made up of all the finance colleagues throughout government. We might work in different organisations, in different locations all over the UK, but one very important mission brings us together: to put finance at the heart of decision making, delivering value for money and strengthening public trust.

We manage big budgets, in big ways. And we do it all together. Which means, even though working with public money is a big responsibility, you'll never shoulder it alone. We're always sharing knowledge, expertise and resources with each other. And ensuring everyone within the GFF gets the learning and development they need: from internal training through the Government Finance Academy to support to pursue external qualifications. It makes the GFF a great place to progress your career, with plenty on offer to help you follow your interests and build a future you're truly excited by.

A community only works if everyone feels they belong. So, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing are always important to us. In fact, they're the foundation of our future strategy. Plus, we make sure to keep our community connected in lots of different ways: through colleague networks and virtual and in-person events. So, no matter where you're based, or which organisation you work in, you'll always feel part of the GFF.

It all adds up to something pretty special. A 10,000+ strong community managing one of the largest balance sheets in the UK. All working together to enable the delivery of high-quality public services, ensure public money is spent efficiently and effectively, and improve lives all throughout the country. That's quite something. And it's why we say: there's strength in numbers.

Find out more about us on our careers site:

www.financecareers.civilservice.gov.uk.

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