Centre for Sustainable Energy

Candidate pack

Financial Controller (Maternity Leave Cover)

October 2026

About the role

We're looking for an experienced Financial Controller to lead our finance team while our current post-holder is on maternity leave, for an anticipated period of around 15 months.

You'll direct and oversee the finance function in compliance with appropriate accounting standards, company and charity law, providing timely and accurate financial and management information to support strategic decision-making by the Senior Leadership Team, Trustees, project managers and other budget holders.

Working closely with the Director of Finance and Operations and the wider Operations Team, you'll help underpin the successful delivery of CSE's charitable mission, strategic objectives and associated programmes and projects.

About you

We're looking for a fully qualified accountant who combines strong technical expertise with excellent communication skills and the confidence to lead a finance team through a busy period of cover.

Our ideal candidate will:

- Be a fully qualified ACA, ACCA or equivalent accountant, with at least 7 years' post-qualification experience, including at least 5 years in a financial management role.
- Have a strong working knowledge of accounting standards, VAT and HMRC regulations, ideally including the specific requirements applicable to a UK charity with a trading subsidiary.
- Have excellent written and verbal communication skills, with proven management skills and the ability to analyse, structure and sense-check financial data to produce clear, informative reports.
- Be self-motivated with good organisational and time management skills, comfortable working under tight deadlines and confident stepping into a fast-paced role with minimal delay.

About the team

You'll be part of the Finance and Operations team.

The Finance and Operations team provides the expertise, systems and support that enable CSE to deliver its mission, supporting around 150 staff across the organisation. As Financial Controller, you'll:

Lead the finance function overseeing day-to-day accounting, invoicing, payroll, VAT returns and internal financial reporting, working closely with the Finance Manager and Finance Assistant, whom you'll line manage.

Support strategic decision-making by providing timely and accurate financial and management information to the Senior Leadership Team, Trustees, project managers and other budget holders.

Partner across the organisation working with the Director of Finance and Operations and colleagues across CSE, including support to Retrofit West CIC and co-ordination of the annual budget cycle.

Other teams in CSE

Household Energy Services

The Household Energy Services team gives advice and support on home energy and retrofit to householders, runs a freephone advice line and manages schemes for funding and installing home energy improvements.

Research & Analysis

The Research & Analysis team conduct research and build analytical tools and models that support better energy policies and more effective action to cut carbon emissions and reduce fuel poverty.

Development and External Affairs

The Development and External Affairs team leads fundraising, communications and policy work across the organisation, helping to secure funding, raise awareness of our work and drive national policy change.

Local and Community Empowerment

The Local and Community Empowerment team supports communities, local authorities and young people to take positive action on sustainability, energy and the climate emergency.

Key responsibilities

Financial management and reporting

- Take responsibility for day-to-day accounting, invoicing, payroll, VAT returns, payments and banking, credit control and cash management, including preparation of timely monthly management accounts, working closely with the Finance Manager and Finance Assistant.
- Prepare accurate and accessible reports on organisational, team, staff and project financial indicators, and attend monthly SMT meetings to share the previous month's financial results with SLT and SMT colleagues.

Budgeting and planning

- Co-ordinate the annual budget cycle and mid-year budget refresh alongside the Director of Finance & Operations, Finance Manager, SLT and other colleagues.
- Provide project managers with information and support to plan and manage their project budgets, and timely financial data to assist in reporting to clients and funders.
- Provide expertise on financial costing and monitoring approaches for new project funding proposals, reflecting funder requirements.

Key responsibilities (cont.)

Compliance, audit and systems

- Maintain the organisation's electronic and paper financial records in line with appropriate accounting standards, and prepare documentation for the annual audit and other statutory financial reporting, including to the Charity Commission.
- Liaise with CSE's auditors, alongside the Director of Finance & Operations and with assistance from the Finance Manager and Finance Assistant, to enable an effective and timely annual audit.
- Maintain up to date knowledge of CSE's accounting software (Sage), relevant accounting standards and tax regulations, and identify opportunities to improve CSE's financial management and reporting systems. Line manage the Finance Manager and Finance Assistant, and support Retrofit West CIC with financial reporting, statutory obligations and payroll as required.

Key details

Contract
This is a fixed-term role covering maternity leave, for an anticipated duration of approximately 15 months, subject to discussion.

Role
A minimum of 30 hours per week, up to full-time (37.5 hours per week), based at our Bristol office with hybrid working available (minimum three days a week onsite).

Salary
The salary for the role will be on band J, with a starting salary of **£50,285 per annum**. There will be a salary review after successful completion of a 6-month probationary period and annual salary reviews thereafter.

Reporting to
Director of Finance & Operations

Closing date for applications
We're reviewing applications as they come in, so don't wait – apply today to be considered!

Earliest possible start date
Immediate.

Safeguarding
CSE is committed to safer recruitment practices. For roles involving contact with children, young people, or vulnerable adults, applicants will be asked to include a full employment history covering the last 5 years. Please note this role requires an basic DBS check.

Pre-employment checks
Any offer of employment will be subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks relevant to the role.

About us

The Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) supports people and organisations across the UK to tackle the climate emergency and end the suffering caused by cold homes.

We undertake practical work to support households and communities to act on energy, alongside original research and analysis to inform local and national policy.

Our vision is a world where sustainability is second nature, carbon emissions have been reduced to safe levels, and fuel poverty has been replaced by energy justice.

We are one of the UK's leading sustainable energy charities, with a 45-year track record of award-winning impact, innovation and influence (as most recently detailed in our **2025–26 Impact Report**). You can read more about our priorities, methods and approach in our **organisational strategy for 2024–2028**.

Charity number 298740

Our six Work Programmes

Our work falls into six broad areas we call our Work Programmes. They are where we are best placed to drive change and maximise our impact.

Fuel poverty

Our practical energy advice improves the wellbeing, energy literacy, and affordable warmth of those experiencing cold homes.

Housing energy retrofit

We support the delivery of high-quality and people-centred retrofit services to address British homes that aren't fit for the future.

Local authority support and action for net zero

We help local authorities of all scales to plan and deliver their energy-related net zero goals.

Community action on energy

We design and manage community energy funds, support local groups to develop projects, and provide training, support and community engagement.

Future generations

Our youth-specific work inspires young people from all backgrounds to play a meaningful role in a more sustainable and fairer energy system.

Fairness in the energy system

We're working to bring about a future energy system that is both low carbon and demonstrably fair.

Our impact 2025-26

20,143
Households supported through our energy advice service.

31
Local authorities who used our services.

£2.3 million
Value of grants distributed to community organisations to run community-focused energy projects.

6,969
Energy efficiency measures installed as a result of our projects.

1,850
Young people reached through our high-quality education and youth leadership programmes.

£33.9 million
Total financial benefit secured for people through our energy advice service.

871
Community organisations supported to take action on climate change or tackling fuel poverty.

£1,685
Average financial benefit per household who called our advice line.

Our values

Commitment to our mission

We reflect our charitable purpose, vision and strategic objectives in our work, and we contribute to a culture where everyone feels welcomed, valued and able to belong.

Conscientiousness

We take responsibility for our work, deliver to the best of our ability, and work to improve while caring for CSE's resources and reputation.

Collaboration

We share knowledge and experience generously, value others' contributions, and communicate with openness and respect.

Initiative

We look for ways to improve outcomes, solve problems and try new approaches, while responding flexibly to change and supporting others to do the same.

Our culture

We're a team of around 150 people who care about what they do and who they do it with. People join CSE because they want their work to matter and at CSE, it does.

You'll see the difference your work makes, whether that's an advice call that helps someone stay warm, a research report that changes how policymakers think, or a project that supports a community to take climate action.

Our work is mostly project-driven and genuinely collaborative. You'll work across teams, connect with colleagues with different expertise, and bring your own expertise to problems that sometimes don't have easy answers. It's varied and often fast-moving. Some roles involve supporting people in difficult situations, so it can be demanding but teams work closely together and it's easy to ask for help.

Our culture (cont.)

We want our people to shape how things are done here.

Staff-led groups including *Employee Voice* and *Equity Diversity & Inclusion Working Group* give everyone the opportunity to have their voices heard, helping to shape initiatives and policies.

We also have a range of social activities including a book club, wellbeing activities and weekly lunchtime yoga sessions – small things that reflect how we look after each other.

We offer flexible and hybrid working where possible, alongside a TOIL system that recognises your time is valuable outside of work too. We're open about what's working and what isn't, and we act on what our staff tell us.

We invest in people's development, and we work hard to hold on to what we've built together. Many of our staff build long careers here.

What our people say

We regularly ask our staff for honest feedback, and here's what our most recent survey tells us:

91%
of staff are proud to work at CSE and would recommend it as a place to work.

91%
of staff feel supported by their team.

93%
of staff feel they have the opportunity to share their opinions.

94%
of staff say CSE offers good flexibility of working options.

We use staff feedback to shape how we work, what we prioritise, and where we need to improve.

Staff benefits

Holiday	25 days annual leave plus bank holidays.
Pension	Company pension scheme - 8% employer, 6% employee contributions.
Lifestyle	Flexible TOIL for additional hours worked, which can be taken when needed. Hybrid working and flexible hours, with core hours of 10am–4pm (role dependent). Access to our benefits platform (Glo), offering discounts, flexible payment options, and a range of optional benefits and services. Cycle to Work Scheme.
Wellbeing	Health cash plan (Medicash): offers compensation for a range of medical treatments, including dental check-ups and eye tests. Life Assurance. Enhanced sick pay. Weekly yoga classes. Employee Assistance Programme. Enhanced maternity and adoption pay. Staff socials.

Equity, diversity and inclusion

At CSE, we're committed to an inclusive, diverse and non-judgmental environment in our workplace. We actively encourage applications from individuals of all backgrounds, identities, disabilities and experiences. Our applicants will be treated fairly, with respect and without discrimination.

While we seek to appoint on merit and we judge all candidates against the same criteria, we understand that women, people from black, brown and other minority ethnic communities and people living with disabilities are less likely to apply to jobs unless they meet every single qualification.

So if you're excited about this role but your experience doesn't align perfectly with the job description, please get in touch – you may still be an excellent candidate for this role. For an informal conversation to chat more about the role, email **jobs@cse.org.uk**.

We are pleased to be signed up to these initiatives:

How to apply

To apply, please submit a CV **and** a cover letter.

Applications should be sent by email to **jobs@cse.org.uk** or by post to: Reception, Centre for Sustainable Energy, St James Court, St James Parade, Bristol BS1 3LH.

As part of our commitment to ensuring we treat every application fairly, all personal information on the front sheet of the form will be removed before the application is read by the selection panel.

We're reviewing applications as they come in, so don't wait – apply today to be considered straight away!

We'd love to hear from you

If you'd like any further information or assistance with the application process, please email us and we'll be happy to help.

We're committed to making any reasonable adjustments to meet accessibility needs. If you require this information in a different form, please get in touch.

If you're excited about this role but you don't meet every requirement in the person specification, please do get in touch – you may be the perfect person for the role. We'd be happy to have an informal conversation to chat more about the role with you.

To contact us, please email **jobs@cse.org.uk**.

Centre for Sustainable Energy

We look forward to hearing from you!

To stay updated with future opportunities, **follow us on LinkedIn** or check our **current vacancies on our website**.