



Candidate Pack For Chief Finance Officer

Southdown



Welcome

If you are **brilliant with people**, and your personal motivation in your career is to use your skills, experience, and expertise to be a **force for good** in society, this is an excellent time to be joining Southdown as part of our newly created C Suite as **Chief Finance Officer**.

I have had the privilege to have led Southdown as Chief Executive for the past ten years, a truly fantastic and unique organisation, based on strong values, an inclusive and collaborative culture, with a desire and passion to make a real and lasting positive impact for the benefit of our local communities.

We have become known for our innovative approaches for care and support, often piloting new projects and programs that address the emerging needs within the community. This is something we are deeply proud of, and we are committed to working with statutory and voluntary sector partners to develop further ways to help reduce pressures on critical health, housing, and adult social care services. We were delighted that this way of working contributed to receipt of two prestigious national awards; Supported Housing Landlord of the Year 2023, and the 'Most Innovative Mental Health Intervention' accolade at the Mental Health Awards 2023.

Equally as important to us is to being the very best employer for our skilled and talented workforce. We invest in the training and development of staff, ensuring they have the skills and knowledge to provide high-quality care, whilst also placing a strong emphasis and priority on employee wellbeing, recognising that a supportive and healthy work environment is crucial for delivering excellent services. Being a larger provider within our local sector also enables us to invest in robust and professional central support resources and adopt effective business practices to drive efficiency and value for money.

Over the past year, working with my Board and wider leadership group, with engagement with key external stakeholders, I have led a process of review to ensure that Southdown can continue to grow, develop, and prosper in the years ahead. This is in recognition that over recent years Southdown has grown considerably in size and complexity, requiring us to now consider how we best structure and design ourselves for the future. As an outcome, we have developed a new organisational Service Delivery Model, redesigning how we plan and deliver central support functions and leadership roles, ensuring we possess the right capabilities and resources to work collaboratively with our operational and housing teams to drive real value for our clients, tenants, and commissioners. Alongside the move to a new service delivery model, we will be working with our Board and leadership group over the next six months to review and refresh our five-year business strategy (for which you will be able to contribute), to be agreed and launched from April 2025.



The creation of new C Suite roles, supported by new heads of functions and a strengthened wider leadership group, will lead the strategic direction and business change activities for Southdown, ensuring that we maximise performance and meet our long-term goals.

The role of CFO will manage and lead all financial considerations for Southdown, taking us to the next level in terms of strategic financial planning, analysing our financial strengths and weaknesses, providing commercial insight, and supporting our future growth strategy. The key question you will be asking yourself is 'how is the business performing and is our strategy delivering?'.

To find out more about Southdown and what it is like to work for us do check out our website, which includes some great videos from staff and clients, as well as our independent review on glassdoor.

I feel excited and optimistic about the future for Southdown and look forward to working with new colleagues within the C Suite to drive forward the organisation, whilst preserving what makes Southdown such a wonderful organisation.

Neil Blanchard, CEO



About us

Southdown is a Sussex-based, not-for-profit organisation specialising in the provision of care, support and housing services that respond to the needs of local communities.

We were established in 1972 by a group of volunteers who recognised the issues facing people with mental health issues recently resettled in Brighton and Hove from long-stay hospital institutions. They decided to work together to make a difference, ensuring that everyone had the right and opportunity to live well in the community.

At Southdown, we are dedicated to supporting individuals with mental health challenges, learning disabilities, past or present homelessness, addiction issues, and sensory or physical disabilities. Now, supporting around 12,000 people a year, approximately 500 of whom are tenants, employing 750 staff, and with a turnover of c.£32m, we offer personalised support to help each person live their life to the fullest.

Our foundations

We Believe

Everyone has the right to live their life well.

Our mission

To provide exceptional community support services and housing which enable people to live well.

The difference we want to make

Working with partners we create value through developing and delivering innovative and integrated solutions so that:

- People can access timely and appropriate support to help manage their mental health, reducing the risk of deteriorating health, hospitalisation, or suicide.
- People at risk of becoming homeless can access affordable and secure housing, receiving the additional support they need to help them live independently and manage their home.
- People with a learning disability have access to specially adapted housing and adequately funded packages of care to enable them to live and engage in the community.

Our income sources

- Commissioned contracts.
- Rent and service charge income.
- Commissioned packages of support for individual clients.

As a not-for-profit social business, we reinvest any surpluses into service delivery and development.

Our value proposition (what we do best)

- Big enough to be taken seriously, small, and local enough to care.
- Renowned for consistency, quality, reliability, and professionalism.
- Unique capability to act as an inclusive VCSE Lead Provider.
- Being a psychologically informed organisation.
- We influence and innovate.
- We believe in and stand up for our people (clients and colleagues).

What we do

We deliver specialist, person-centred and psychologically informed services:

- 24-hour and community care and support (autism and learning disabilities).
- Mental and physical wellbeing community services.
- Peer support opportunities.
- Homelessness prevention and support.
- Learning and employment.
- Social landlord of supported housing.

Please click the links below to learn more about our services.

Housing: We are a specialist landlord of supported housing for around 570 tenants and shared owners across Sussex.

Housing Support: Homelessness is one of the biggest issues facing our society, with thousands of people living on the streets and in temporary accommodation across Sussex.

Mental Health and Employment Support: To support people to get well, stay well and prevent crisis, we provide a range of mental health and employment support services across Sussex.

Learning Disability Support: We provide specialist accommodation and support for people with learning and physical disabilities.

Our values



Force for good

We're passionate about making a difference.



Brilliant with people

We're compassionate, inclusive and welcoming; our colleagues and local communities deserve nothing less.



United

Together, we can achieve so much more.



Trustworthy

We're knowledgeable and act with integrity.



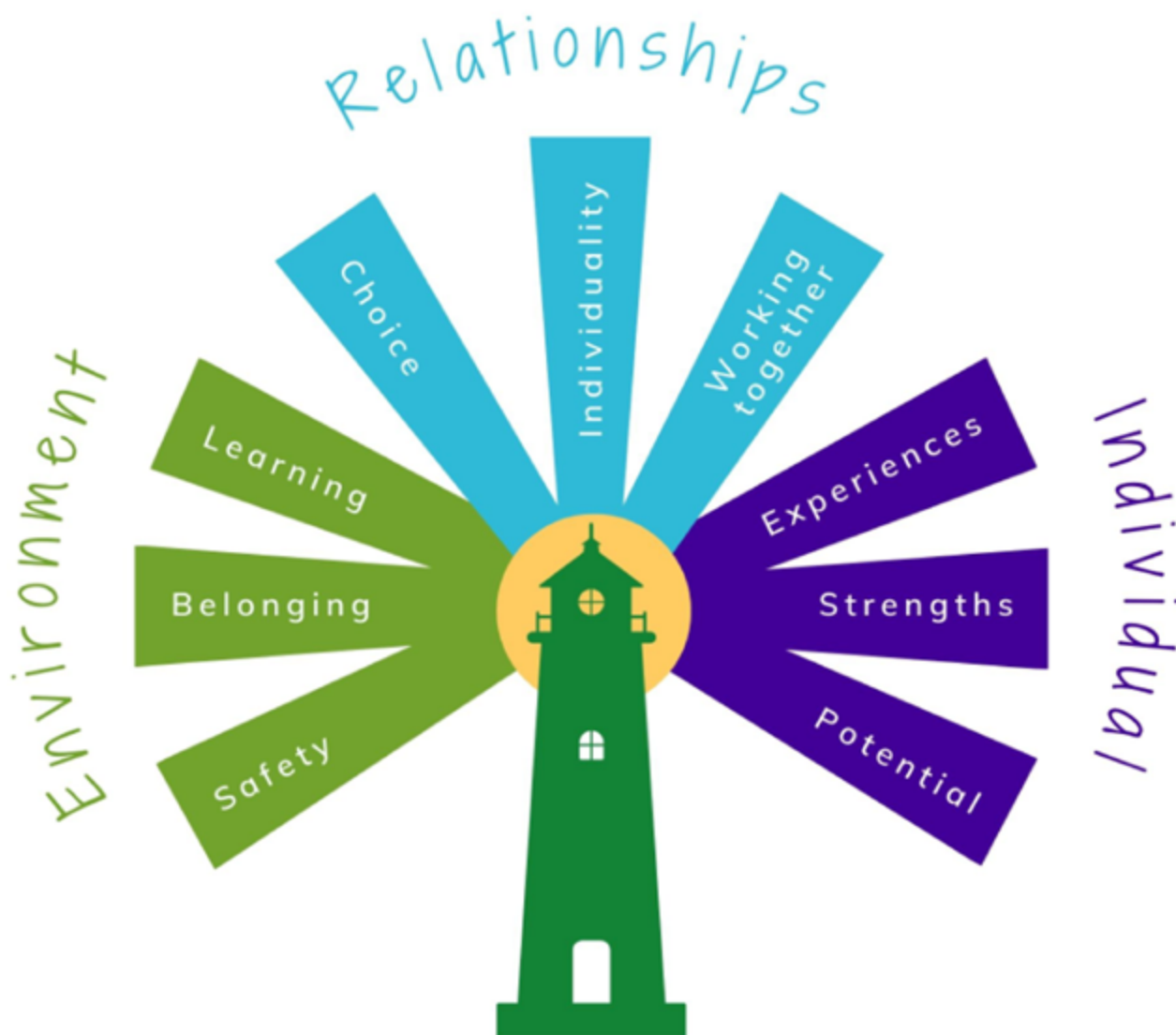
Responsive

We listen, learn and adapt.

In 2023, we also launched our new bespoke psychologically informed framework (The Southdown Beacon). This acts as a practical guide and training tool equipping colleagues with the skills and knowledge to recognise and respond to people's psychological needs.

The framework was co-produced and piloted over 18 months with input and support from colleagues and clients from across the organisation and it has been clinically reviewed by external psychologists, providing additional assurance and quality benchmarking.

As shown in the pictorial representation below, The Beacon comprises of three domains; Environment, Relationships and Individual, with nine 'beams'; each of which acts as a focus for specific training and team discussions as we embed the tool.



Southdown Beacon

Southdown operates within a complex and dynamic environment influenced by regulatory frameworks, funding challenges, policy changes, workforce pressures and societal needs.

With over 50 years of experience, Southdown is expert in recognising and responding to the issues, and the need to achieve an appropriate balance between providing quality, safe, accessible, and flexible services, whilst also ensuring that the organisation remains financially viable and continues to invest and plan.

We achieve this through the adoption of robust internal business practices, as well as playing a leading role within local and national sector networks to help lobby, shape and improve the operating environment.

As has been recognised in the Regulator of Social Housing's Sector Risk Profile 2023, providers operating in supported housing, and care and support activities face specific additional risks and challenges. It is a low margin, high risk sector. When operating at such tight margins, the need for effective and proactive risk planning and management is vital.

Southdown is expert in navigating this challenging operating environment, with a strong track record of being reactive to live issues, but also using market intelligence and insight to plan.

Our Strategy

We are an ambitious organisation, with a commitment to continually innovate, evolve, invest, and grow our services and reach to respond to the changing needs of people within our local communities. We do this by acting as a trusted and preferred strategic partner to commissioners and other stakeholders, including increasingly taking the role of lead provider for other VCSE organisations.

To deliver on our ambitions we operate a five-year business strategy model. This establishes both longer-term strategic priorities and our business objectives, delivered through clear functional strategies which outline the initiatives and activities required to deliver our overarching strategy.

Strategic priorities

Following a review in 2023, we agreed four longer-term strategic priorities for 2023-2028:

- **Voice (clients, colleagues, and sector):** Create opportunities to express opinion, respond and influence.
- **Growth in partnership:** Expand the role of Southdown as a sector leader in delivery of community support services and housing.
- **Income generation:** Develop profitable income streams to enable us to have greater autonomy in achieving our mission.
- **Digitally enabled care and support services:** Modernise ways of working to improve systems, data insight, integration, connectivity, and client experience.

Business objectives

Southdown has six strategic objectives that describe how we will deliver our business to fulfil our mission. They also act as the basis for our performance goals that we measure our success against.

- **People (our colleagues):** Be an exceptional employer, maximising pay, and development opportunities.
- **People (our clients and tenants):** Provide exceptional services to our clients and tenants.
- **Assurance:** Operate safely and meet regulatory standards.
- **Growth:** Develop partnerships to expand services offered.
- **Finance:** Maintain long-term financial security.
- **Efficiency:** Modernise ways of working to reduce overheads and improve experience.

Financial strategy

To support delivery of our Business Strategy and Priorities, our Board approves a financial strategy to ensure our continued long-term financial strength and viability.

Principles underlying the financial strategy are:

- Be financially sustainable, enabling us to invest in staffing, pay and benefits because we want all our clients and colleagues to 'live well' as part of the Southdown community.
- Be competitive (as a contracted delivery partner and employer) through operating efficient and simple processes which enable us to have proportionate central cost overheads.
- Pursue sustainable and managed growth.
- Achieve and evidence effective Value for Money benchmarking.
- Make best use of our property assets through implementation of recommendations in the Housing and Asset Management Strategy.
- Re-invest surplus funds into service delivery improvements for clients and colleagues, and capital investment opportunities to increase homes in management.
- Review our treasury management and investment strategy to maximise returns on cash within acceptable levels of risk.

We are proud of our work and what we have achieved so far, but with a continued and growing need for our services, we have set out our future plans in our 2023-2028 Business Strategy [here](#) (subject to refresh by April 2025).

To review our most recent Financial Report, please click [here](#).

And to learn about the amazing work done throughout the last year by our colleagues, volunteers and commissioning partners, find our Impact Report [here](#).

Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

We aim to promote equality and diversity both in our service delivery and as an employer. We want all our clients and employees to feel welcome, and we won't tolerate discrimination or unfair treatment.

Our mission is to help people in Sussex communities live well, and we are committed to overcoming any barriers or inequalities that may hinder this for our clients, tenants, staff, and partner organisations.

Since 1972, we have championed the rights of our clients and supported equal opportunities among our employees. We are dedicated to providing the necessary resources, support, choices, and control for everyone to achieve their full potential. We advocate for those we work with and strive to create an inclusive culture where differences are celebrated, voices are encouraged, and co-production is integral to our work. We take pride in our achievements and the positive feedback we receive from external audits.

The principles of equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are central to Southdown's purpose. We believe that a diverse workforce with lived experiences representative of our clients and the broader Sussex communities will help us:

- Remain relevant to our clients
- Make better decisions
- Foster creativity
- Become an employer and service provider of choice

This commitment means integrating EDI into our core values and fostering a truly inclusive culture where individuals feel a sense of belonging rather than pressure to conform. "[This is Us](#)" is our framework for realising this ambition. We view this framework as a living document, continually updated to reflect best practices and the contributions of our people and partners in advancing EDI at Southdown.

Job description

Job title: Chief Finance Officer

Reports to: Chief Executive Officer

Direct reports: Four direct reports

Role purpose:

To act as the CEO's strategic partner in maximising value creation and use the mastery of efficiency and productivity to help shape portfolio strategies and manage corporate governance whilst leading a multi-disciplinary finance team to ensure Southdown's financial wellbeing and success.

The CFO is a member of the C-Suite and requires the highest level of leadership with accountability for policy development, major decisions and assets alongside significant budgetary responsibility and risk.

The role directly supports Southdown's value chain (service delivery model) by leading a high performing, enterprise enabling service that provides strategic advice, guidance, support and oversight. The role oversees functional areas where inherent attributes of a finance function (efficiency, productivity, fiduciary) will add real value – governance, risk, contract management, procurement, portfolio management, financial management and performance monitoring.

The CFO will play a critical role in shaping the company's future and will drive growth initiatives, exploring new opportunities for income generation and expansion

As a commercial business leader and strategic advisor to the CEO, the CFO directs Southdown's financial strategic planning and supporting initiatives ensuring their proper and timely execution and the realisation of associated benefits. They track strategy progress through strategic KPI development, monitoring and reporting, and benefit realisation.

The CFO builds long term organisational resilience through proactive organisational risk management, ensuring risk is articulated through a commercial and financial lens.



Main responsibilities:

C-Suite Leadership

- Lead The Southdown Way – uphold our values, demonstrate our leadership behaviours and create a psychologically informed environment through application of The Beacon.
- Contribute to the development of Southdown's strategy, objectives and KPI's.
- Engage in setting the position's Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for this position and attain KPI's set by the CEO.
- Provide visible, inspiring, and engaging leadership, direction and decision-making for the Finance function and Southdown as whole.
- Build an open, innovative, collaborative, diverse and inclusive culture across teams.
- Support the Board and its appointed committees in their responsibility to ensure robust governance structures are in place and to provide advice and information to the Board regarding organisational performance and direction.
- Articulates the project portfolio and associated risks, opportunities, and challenges to the C-Suite to ensure informed and effective decisions can be made.
- Lead the business planning process.
- Ensure compliance with data protection policies and promote equality and diversity in all aspects of work.
- Deputises for the CEO Executive as required

Financial Strategy

- Develop and execute the company's financial strategy in alignment with organizational goals and objectives.
- Provide strategic recommendations to the CEO and senior management team regarding financial opportunities and risk.
- Evaluate investment opportunities and capital allocation decisions to maximize value.
- Develop, implement and review a sustainable, balanced and diverse income generation strategy through new sources of funding, grants and tax saving methods.
- Tracks and monitors strategy and business performance through strategic KPI development, monitoring and reporting, and project benefit realisation.

Financial Planning and Analysis

- Lead the annual budgeting and forecasting process, ensuring accuracy and completeness.
- Conduct financial analysis to support business decisions, identify areas for improvement, and optimize financial performance.

Financial Reporting

- Oversee the preparation of timely and accurate financial reports, including monthly, quarterly, and annual financial statements.
- Ensure compliance with all regulatory requirements and accounting standards

Financial Operations

- Supervise day-to-day financial operations, including accounts payable, accounts receivable, and treasury functions.
- Streamline processes and implement best practices to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- Oversee procurement (including insurance renewals) ensuring effective supply chain management.

Risk, Governance & Assurance

- Maintain high standards of corporate governance and financial control, overseeing the organisation's strategic risk framework, conducting annual financial risk stress testing, and ensuring data security and GDPR compliance.
- Act as Company Secretary ensuring that Southdown operates within its legal and regulatory framework, keeping abreast of changes in legislation and advising the Board on compliance requirements.
- Oversee corporate governance - assist the Board of directors in their duties and responsibilities, including organising Board meetings, preparing agendas and minutes, and ensuring that Board decisions are implemented effectively.
- Oversee disclosure and reporting - the preparation and filing of statutory documents and regulatory filings, such as annual reports, financial statements, and disclosures to regulatory authorities.
- Oversee corporate secretarial duties: handling administrative tasks related to the company's incorporation, registration, and dissolution.
- Establish and maintain internal controls to safeguard company assets and ensure financial integrity.
- Responsible for overseeing development and management of a Board Assurance Framework (BAF).

Contract Management

- Maximising income through effective contract management and billing.
- Oversees the creation, execution, and analysis of contracts between parties.
- Administer contracts from initiation through to completion, ensuring that contractual terms and conditions are adhered to.

Portfolio Management

- Creates a systematic approach to managing project investments and maximises value generation and benefit realisation by aligning project activities with strategic objectives, optimising resource allocation, and balancing risk and return, to drive long-term success.

Other

- Drives commercial growth and maximises potential while upholding Southdown's values and principles and ensuring compliance with health and safety regulations.
- To carry out any other reasonable duties as requested by the Chief Executive or other designated Senior Staff.

Person specification

Knowledge and experience

- Experienced finance leader comfortable operating in complexity with experience of leading multidisciplinary teams at an executive level
- A solid understanding of corporate governance principles and ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations
- Experience of strategic planning including strategy development and delivery
- Healthy risk appetite and experienced at identifying and managing financial risks and working within strategic risk frameworks
- Proven experience of growing turnover including contract and supply chain negotiations

Skills and qualities

- Possesses strong commercial acumen, analytical insight and decisive decision making to ensure delivery of performance improvement
- Strong communication and influencing skills to engage effectively with internal and external stakeholders with high levels of personal integrity to foster a collaborative organisational culture
- High emotional intelligence, inspires trust and commitment through people-focused leadership, while promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace and community
- Motivates teams to embrace change and pursue opportunities, communicates, and directs service delivery in alignment with the organisational vision, and leads change transparently and realistically, inspiring involvement and accountability.

Styles and behaviours

- Setting a clear, shared vision of success for the organisation
- Empowers, inspires and develops people
- Recognises achievement and encourages continuous improvement and experimentation
- Sets stretching performance expectations, reviewing progress and holding people to account to ensure delivery of planned outcomes

Essential Qualifications and Specific Requirements

- Educated to degree level or equivalent experience
- Enhanced DBS clearance



Terms of appointment

Salary

The salary for this role is c.£100,000 per annum on a full-time permanent basis.

Location

Lewes, East Sussex.

Pension

We offer competitive pension contributions (5% from the employer / 5% employee) through salary exchange - an arrangement where employees exchange part of their salary in return for an employer pension contribution. Because the salary is being exchanged rather than paid directly, neither you nor your employees will pay National Insurance Contributions on the amount exchanged.

Annual leave

Your holiday entitlement is **27 days** paid holiday per annum, pro-rated according to the number of hours you normally work. You will be entitled to **32 days** on completion of 5 years' service.

Additional benefits

Essential Car User allowance

You will receive an essential car users' allowance of £1000 per year (pro-rata according to the number of hours you work) paid in 12 monthly instalments with your salary. Business mileage rate is paid at 45p per mile.

Private Health Care

As a member of the C Suite, you will be eligible for individual private healthcare (currently through Bupa).

Sick pay

Based on length of service, starting at 5 days on commencement of employment up to six months occupational sick pay after 5 years.



Financial benefits

- Commitment to paying the Real Living Wage.
- £100 probationary bonus.
- £300 refer a friend cash award.
- Birthday gift card (£10).
- Free Blue Light Card.
- Free Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check: For many roles you'll need a DBS check to clear you to work with our clients. We'll help you with the application and cover the cost.
- Life cover: For staff under the age of 65 years in our pension scheme, we offer a non-contributory life assurance scheme (2xannual salary).
- Interest-free loans: You can apply to us for a loan (up to £1,500) to cover costs like tenancy deposits, travel season tickets, or buying a car.
- Help managing your money: Our employees get free access to financial services and advice through Salary Finance.
- Access to the Easit Network: You'll be able to get discounts and incentives on train, bus, cycle and car journeys.
- Health Cost Cash-Back scheme from UK Healthcare.
- Cycle scheme – option to purchase bike through salary exchange, repaid in instalments.
- Long service cash awards (£50 to £350).
- Team Events - To promote one of our Values, 'United', we want to encourage teams to get together for some social team events. An allowance of £8.00 per person for a summer event and £15 per person is available for a winter/Christmas event - OR you could combine the two and spend £23 per person for an event at any time during the year.

Work-life balance

- Employee Assistance Programme - Advice & Counselling helpline is provided by UK Healthcare, who hold a membership and accreditation with the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy.
- Flexible working: many of our staff have some kind of flexible working arrangement, such as part time, compressed hours, job share or hybrid working.
- Parental and adoption leave – Occupational maternity / shared parental leave and adoption pay.
- Special leave for emergencies.
- Special leave for moving home.
- Special leave for IVF treatment.
- Career breaks.
- Time off for public duties.
- Training and development
- In-house professional training courses covering a wide range of specialist subjects.
- Support to gain relevant industry professional qualifications where required.
- Specialists working within teams to support development and delivery of best practice.
- Opportunities to join organisational working groups looking at areas including client involvement, health and safety, staff training, diversity and equality, and staff health and wellbeing.

We also have a robust induction process to support new employees fully understand their role and feel confident and fully prepared. All staff have regular supervision and appraisals to ensure they have the skills and support they need to work effectively and achieve their goals.

How to apply

We hope you will consider making an application. If you have questions about the appointment and would find it helpful to have an informal conversation, please contact chris.milo@starfishsearch.com and we will be happy to arrange a call.

To make an application, please go to <http://starfishsearch.com/jobs/southdown-cfo> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A supporting statement (no more than two sides) that sets out why you think this role is the right move for you and how you meet the knowledge and experience criteria.

We would also be grateful if you would complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

Closing date:	Friday 26th July 2024
Preliminary interviews:	w/c Monday 5th August 2024
Final Panel interviews:	Tuesday 20th August 2024

