

# CANDIDATE PACK FOR DIRECTOR OF FINANCE



# WELCOME

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Hello, and thank you for your interest in the UKSA.

Here at UKSA, we're driven by a powerful vision: a world where more people unlock their potential through the opportunities of the seas. It's a vision that guides everything we do, from delivering world-class maritime training to inspiring a lifelong passion for the sea in young people of all backgrounds.

We're not just a sailing academy; we're a community committed to removing barriers to thriving maritime careers and supporting children and young people to broaden their horizons through inspirational water-based adventures giving them life skills and building their confidence and resilience. We provide comprehensive welfare support, expert careers guidance, and financial assistance, ensuring that every young person has the chance to access the maritime sector, regardless of their background.

We are now seeking a part-time Director of Finance to join our leadership team. This is a pivotal role in helping us to achieve our growth ambitions and strengthen our financial position for the future. The Director of Finance will lead a capable and committed finance team, ensuring strong financial management while also helping to shape our product strategy, support profitable growth, and build the reserves that will underpin our long-term sustainability. Working closely with me, you will play a central role in steering UKSA towards a resilient and exciting future.

You will be an experienced Director of Finance with a sound understanding of the SORP. You will bring excellent financial analysis skills and a proven track record of using data and evidence to inform product/programme development and strategic decision-making. Just as importantly, you will be able to look ahead: helping us to make choices that support growth, strengthen sustainability, and ensure UKSA continues to thrive. This is an opportunity to use your expertise to make a tangible impact – ensuring UKSA remains financially strong, resilient, and able to deliver life-changing opportunities through the sea.

If you're dedicated to helping develop children and young people and eager to contribute to a dynamic and forward-thinking organisation, then UKSA is the place for you. We believe in investing in our people, providing opportunities for growth, and fostering a supportive and collaborative environment.

Together, we can make a real difference in the lives of young people and the future of the maritime industry.



**Catherine Dixon**  
**UKSA Chief Executive Officer**

# ABOUT US

Founded by Sylvia and Noel Lister, UKSA was born of a passion to share the inspiration and adventure of sailing with young people. Now, UKSA is a leading youth charity and recognised maritime centre of excellence, dedicated to inspiring, educating, and equipping individuals for transformative careers and personal growth through sea-based learning and leadership experiences.

For nearly four decades, UKSA has delivered life-changing experiences, education, and training programmes to thousands of students. In the 2024–25 period alone, over 10,000 students embarked on their journey with us in Cowes, Isle of Wight, nearly one-third of whom received financial support, totalling nearly £1.5 million. We believe that traditional classrooms are not always the most inclusive or effective learning environments. Through challenging and immersive maritime experiences, UKSA empowers learners of all ages to overcome barriers, build confidence, and develop practical life skills.

Our programmes are designed to break down social, economic, and educational barriers. Many of our students thrive in the practical, hands-on learning environment we offer, discovering talents, teamwork, and leadership qualities that might never emerge in a conventional classroom. For some, UKSA is a place of inspiration and confidence-building; for others, it provides a clear pathway into employment in the maritime industry.

Our state-of-the-art training infrastructure includes engineering workshops, a superyacht-style galley, a yacht construction and finishing workshop, high-fidelity simulation suites, and radio and navigation training rooms, all complemented by modern classrooms with conferencing and interactive learning technologies.

At UKSA, we strive to remove financial and social barriers to maritime careers. Whether it's a first step onto the water or formal vocational training, we're committed to providing equal access and fostering a highly skilled, dynamic, and diverse maritime workforce.

## OUR VALUES

Our values reflect the type of charity that we want to be - one that loves what we do, has a passion for sharing it and wants to inspire as many people as possible through our work. They apply to all our employees, trustees, beneficiaries, supporters and volunteers:

- Excellence: Getting better never stops; we will always do our best
- Inspiration: Inspire the people around you and be inspired by them
- Caring: We care about everything we do here
- Integrity: Stay open, be honest and do the right thing





## WHAT WE DO

- Schools & Groups – Residential trips and outdoor learning programmes that build confidence, independence, and teamwork through sailing, watersports, and adventure activities.
- Careers & Training – Professional training courses in yachting, watersports instruction, and maritime careers, with pathways into superyachting, commercial shipping, and leisure industries.
- Charitable Programmes – Targeted initiatives to support disadvantaged and vulnerable young people, helping them overcome personal challenges and realise new opportunities.
- Community Engagement – Working with local schools and community partners, we provide inclusive opportunities for young people on the Isle of Wight and beyond.

To find out more, please [click here](#).

## OUR IMPACT

Over 8,000 children and their leaders from 130 schools and groups across the UK come to UKSA each year. Our water-based programmes are designed to increase children's life and leadership skills, build confidence and encourage teamwork with their peers. For many, UKSA is their first experience of the sea and being away from home.

Our world-class professional training and further education courses provide an alternative to university. We provide vocational training and qualifications for careers in the maritime industry. We are the world's largest RYA training centre and widely recognised for both our RYA and MCA training courses.

As a charity, we also provide a wide range of funded programmes to help transform the lives of those who need it most.



# JOB DESCRIPTION

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**Job title:** Director of Finance

**Reports to:** Chief Executive

**Direct reports:** Financial Controller; Digital Partner; Management Accountant; Senior Finance Officer; Payroll & Finance Administrator; and Finance & Facilities Assistant

## ROLE PURPOSE

This position plays an integral and leading role in helping UKSA enact its strategic plan, ensuring the ongoing sustainability of the organisation and strengthening UKSA's finances through effective long-term business and financial planning. This position will focus on the financial and capital planning of the next exciting phase of UKSA's development.

## MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES:

### Strategic Leadership

- Partnering with the Chief Executive and SLT (Senior Leadership Team) colleagues, FSC (Finance Sub-Committee) and Board of Trustees, supporting the organisation strategy and transformation plan; contributing subject matter expertise and looking for commercial, innovative and evidence-based solutions to improve effectiveness and performance
- Ensuring that the charity is aware of its accountability to its stakeholders and that all relationships are managed, monitored and considered in the development of the charity. These include external stakeholders, peer organisations and professional and statutory bodies
- Maintaining an up-to-date knowledge of leading practice in Finance and IT as it relates to the sector and keeping the CE and SLT informed of developments and how they impact the organization
- Driving commercial behaviour throughout the organisation with a key focus on improving access to financial information and financial resilience
- Champion inclusive financial practices, ensuring equitable access to resources across the organisation

## FINANCIAL & COMMERCIAL

- Leading UKSA's financial planning, forecasting and management reporting processes, ensuring that the organisation has plans in place to deliver against its ambitious strategic goals and financial targets
- Production of annual reports and accounts for the charity and its trading subsidiary to comply with the statutory accounting standards and recommended practice and Charity Commission rules
- Prepare and deliver the charity annual budget for approval by the CE and Board of Trustees
- Ensuring timely and accurate financial information is provided to enable effective decision-making at Trustee, FSC, senior and operational management levels
- Providing an external interface with banks, auditors, solicitors, investment managers, consultants, and charity finance specialists, including providing and/or coordinating all accounting, legal and taxation services and advice to the charity
- Being the custodian of the charity's system of financial controls, and ensuring that controls are fit for purpose and in line with recommendations of the Charities Commission
- Contribute to the development and delivery of new and existing programmes by providing financial modelling and analysis aligned with the organisation's product strategy
- Ensuring compliance with FCA rules in respect of Assisted Funding loans to students

## REPORTING AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- Designing and overseeing the organisation's reporting infrastructure, including automated dashboards and data visualisation tools
- Monitoring and reporting against agreed KPIs, including financial performance, operational efficiency, and strategic progress
- Support the measurement and demonstration of impact by providing financial data and analysis that evidences delivery against the organisation's charitable objectives
- Provide financial modelling and reporting to inform and underpin the organisation's fundraising strategy
- Ensuring that reporting outputs are accurate, timely, and tailored to the needs of different stakeholders, including the CE, SLT, Trustees, and the Board
- Ensuring financial reporting supports clear, transparent, and accountable communication with internal and external stakeholders
- Championing data-driven decision-making across the organisation by embedding reporting tools into routine management practices

## INTERNAL AUDIT

- Ensuring that an effective internal audit and assurance framework is in place for the organisation, that is appropriate to organizational requirements and risks
- Ensure the charity has an appropriate major incident and business continuity plan in place
- Ensure the Charity has appropriate insurance in place for all its business activities and services
- Estate, assets, and capital planning
- Accountable for producing the long-term operational capital and asset expenditure plans, working closely with the Director of Training and Operations to agree and monitor all expenditures
- Responsible for procurement and project management of contractors / third-party providers of capital projects and purchasing of new assets
- Integrate environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations into procurement, investment, and financial decision-making

## IT AND DIGITAL

- Lead the day-to-day running of the IT function, via management of our outsourced provider, ensuring high standards of compliance with cybersecurity standards and continuing to develop the standards of IT infrastructure to facilitate efficient and effective operations
- Develop and lead a programme of digital transformation for the organisation in line with our UKSA strategy
- Develop the UKSA approach to information management as part of the broader digital transformation strategy ensuring that UKSA has clear data architecture in place and that data is managed in a structured, efficient and accurate way

## CONTRACTS

- Taking oversight and reviewing all major contracts with commercial providers and, and leading any contract renewals
- Maintaining organisational contracts register including contractual liabilities and safekeeping of documents in compliance with UKSA quality framework ISO9001
- Responsible for UKSA's terms and conditions with its customers



## COMPANY SECRETARY AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

- Acting as company secretary to the charity and subsidiary companies, working closely with the Chair of the Finance Sub Committee
- Submission of annual returns to Companies House and the Charities Commission and ensuring that registers are kept up to date
- Responsible for the Charity's levels of delegated authority and procurement process

## TEAM PERFORMANCE

- Providing management, support and development to all teams, and team members, within their area of responsibility
- Effectual line management of all reports covering recruitment, induction, conduct matters, contractual terms and conditions and professional development reviews
- Ensuring adherence to all policies and procedures and promoting the Vision, Purpose, and Values of UKSA

## GENERAL

- Comply with and promote UKSA equality and diversity, data protection and health & safety policies and procedures
- Work in a way that demonstrates a duty to take care of your own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by your actions
- Co-operate with employees and co-workers to help everyone meet their legal requirements
- Ensuring operational safeguarding policies and practices are followed by all staff and that safeguarding is actively always promoted throughout the organisation
- Make a commitment to deliver excellent customer service



# PERSON SPECIFICATION

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## KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

- Proven experience in a strategic financial leadership role, with a track record of successfully leading organisational change or transformation
- Experience of working at Board level, giving insight and providing clarity in a way that supports strategic decision making and aligns stakeholders on key objectives
- Proven track record of successful team management and development
- Proven experience of driving digital transformation and strong knowledge of data governance
- Proven experience of managing IT services and software provision plus advanced proficiency in Power BI, Excel, and other data visualisation and reporting tools
- Substantial financial planning experience alongside experience in developing and managing KPI frameworks and performance dashboards
- Good knowledge of commercial and business law
- Experience of charity law, governance and SORP compliance is strongly preferred
- Procurement experience
- Experience of planning estate and facilities

## SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills with the ability to present in a clear, concise and impactful manner
- Ability to work in situations that maybe ambiguous or changing using an agile approach but remaining pragmatic
- Able to analyse complex financial information, identify issues and recommend solutions
- Ability to operate confidently at Board level
- Highly commercial mindset and able to prioritise and make business decisions
- A collaborative team player
- Self-starter, highly organised and able to work at all levels in the organisation
- Demonstrable alignment with UKSA's values of Excellence, Inspiration, Caring and Integrity, and the ability to model these in leadership practice

## QUALIFICATIONS

- Professional Accountancy qualification (ACCA, ACA or CIMA)
- Evidence of continued professional development
- Masters level further education qualification desirable



# TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

## Salary

This is a part time role to be undertaken over three days a week. The full time equivalent salary is £95,000 which equates to £57,000 pro rata.

## Where are we?

Our main site is located in Cowes on the Isle of Wight. We're easily accessible from the mainland, with a regular ferry service that takes just 25 minutes to cross the Solent from Southampton. Our campus is based along the River Medina and is a 15-minute walk from the ferry terminal, or a short taxi ride. Our address is: UKSA, Arctic Road, Cowes, Isle of Wight, PO31 7PQ, UK

## Pension

Employee contribution of 5%, employer contribution of 4%

## Annual leave

25 days plus bank holidays. This increases with service up to a total of 28 days with an extra day awarded following 3, 4 and 5 years' service.

## Additional benefits

We also offer private health insurance (AXA) for Directors and their families.



# HOW TO APPLY

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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 (chris.milo@starfishsearch.com ) and we will be happy to arrange a call. To make an application, please go to o <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/uksa-dof/> 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.

<b>Closing date:</b>	Monday 13th October 2025
<b>Preliminary interviews:</b>	end w/c 20th and early w/c 27th October 2025
<b>Final Panel interviews:</b>	w/c Monday 17th November 2025

