

Chief Finance Officer

Candidate Pack

October 2026



Welcome

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Chief Finance Officer here at St John Ambulance. As an organisation we are at a pivotal moment in our development and if you are the right candidate for us, this role could offer you a brilliant opportunity to make a tangible and lasting impact in communities up and down the country.

St John is a remarkable, well loved, volunteer powered charity with a proud heritage and a critical mission. Every day, our volunteers and employees provide first aid education, deliver medical cover at events, support the NHS and work with young people to build skills, confidence and resilience. What unites all of this is a deep sense of purpose and commitment to helping people when they need us most and to putting the power of first aid into everyone's hands.

Having launched our current three year organisational strategy at the start of 2026, we are now starting to think further ahead and prepare for our long-term success. Our strategy sets a clear direction for how we will strengthen our impact, improve sustainability, and better connect our people, systems and services. High quality financial planning, and sound management of our budgets are central to that, but we need someone who can do all that and more - someone who can help us shape our organisation for the future and play a central role in bringing that vision to life.

Reporting directly to me and working as a member of the Executive Leadership Team, you will lead the Charity's financial strategy and stewardship, advising Executive Leadership Team colleagues, the Board and myself, on all aspects of St John Ambulance's long-term financial sustainability. You will be supported by a high-performing Finance Function in ensuring our resources are aligned with our strategic priorities, and work across a large and complex organisation to balance robust cost control with forward-looking commercial insight, innovation and growth opportunities.

I am looking for a CFO with an outstanding record of achievement as a board-level leader and of leading high performing Finance teams. Someone who brings us deep experience of financial strategy, control and leadership gained in a comparable environment, and of financial planning, governance and risk management. Someone who is strategic in approach, highly credible, and quickly able to establish trust and confidence.

I do hope this candidate pack gives you a clear sense of the opportunity ahead and the impact you could make by joining St John at this moment, and if you think you are the person we are looking for, I very much look forward to meeting you.

Shona Dunn

Chief Executive Officer

About Us

We are England's first aid charity. Our **purpose** is to put the power of first aid into everybody's hands. So that we are all closer to help in an emergency. Every person. Every place. Every time. We do this by responding to health emergencies ourselves and by educating the public to feel confident to do so too.

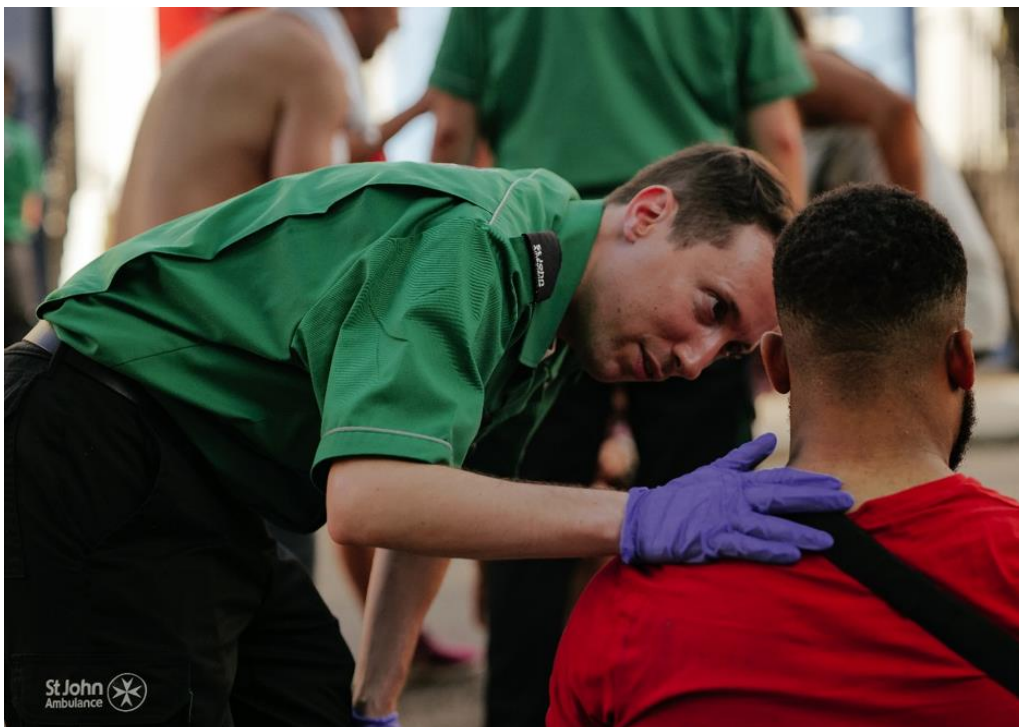
Our **vision** is a world where everyone receives the first aid they need in a health emergency from those around them.

Our **mission** is to put first aid at the heart of every community by:

- Educating and equipping others to ensure resilient communities and safer workplaces;
- Inspiring every generation with the confidence to act in a health crisis; and
- Responding as volunteers and as first responders at events, in communities and as a trusted partner to the NHS.

We are St John Ambulance, built on centuries of service to meet the needs of today. We are:

- A vibrant **volunteer-powered** first aid movement, rooted in communities across the nation and reaching out to those who need us
- A **national leader** in first aid education, providing unmatched first aid training, supplies, and resources that support first aid, health and safety, and wellbeing
- A **trusted specialist** provider of first aid care, delivering expert support at events, as part of local health and care systems, and in a crisis
- An **inspiring** and **inclusive** place for **young people**, equipping our Badgers and Cadets with first aid skills, confidence, and purpose



Our Values

Our Pro Fide ethos - for faith and in the service of humanity – reflects our heritage and drives our values today, calling on us all to act with purpose, justice and compassion. Our HEART values embody our Pro Fide foundations for everyone:



Our First Aid Focus

First aid is the first and immediate assistance given to anyone experiencing a medical emergency. It is delivered to preserve life, prevent a condition from worsening, and promote recovery, either as standalone care, or as part of an ongoing response alongside other health and emergency services.

For almost 150 years, St John Ambulance has been at the heart of community first aid in England. Born out of a tradition of care and service, rooted in the historic values of the Order of St John, we have continuously evolved to meet the needs of the communities we serve.

Today we educate the public in first aid skills and we respond as trained first aiders, in roles ranging from community first aider to critical care clinicians. All our people, whether volunteer or employee, are united by compassion, expertise, and a commitment to excellent first aid care.

Our People

For 150 years St John people have saved lives and strengthened their communities and we are rightly proud of the skills, commitment and resilience that makes this happen. Our volunteers and employees work shoulder to shoulder in every county across England to deliver our mission and turn our values into reality.

We know that inclusion strengthens our first aid movement and makes our purpose possible by helping us to reflect and respond to the diverse communities we serve. We are intentional about improving the diversity of our people and creating a culture where everyone feels respected, valued, and able to thrive, whatever their background, identity, or experience.



Our Strategy

Our Strategy 2026–28 sets out a clear direction for the next three years, centred on one simple aim: **to grow the power of first aid together.**

To achieve this, we will focus on what we do best: training people to be confident in first aid and delivering expert care when it matters most. We will reach more people through education and response, set the standard through the quality of our work, and build the insight, partnerships and income that unlock our long-term impact.

Our strategy is built around three ambitions and seven priorities:

- **Amplifying Our Purpose** - to reach more people with first aid. To do this we are focusing our efforts on these two priorities:
 1. **Educate:** So that everyone knows first aid and feels confident to use it. Our 2028 goal is to train 800,000 people a year in simple first aid, in workplaces, communities and schools
 2. **Respond:** So that together we act to deliver first aid when it matter most. Our 2028 goal is to support more than 70,000 patients annually, delivering specialist care at events, in communities and during crises
- **Setting the Standard** - to continue to set and deliver high standards in all our work by working on these four priorities:
 1. **Brilliant Basics:** improving systems and processes to make it easier to volunteer, work, partner and donate
 2. **Thriving People:** ensuring St John remains a connected and empowering place for its people by focusing on inclusion and wellbeing
 3. **High Quality:** embedding quality, reliability and trust in every patient, customer and partner experience
 4. **Strong Partnerships:** building strong, trusted partnerships to maximise impact locally and nationally
- **Unlocking Future Potential** - to be ready to lead first aid into the future, we will focus on a Forward Thinking priority, including:
 1. **Insight** - Using robust data to better inform decisions and maximise impact
 2. **Innovation** - Testing and scaling new ideas to help us reach more people and improve outcomes in emergencies
 3. **Income** - Building sustainable, diversified funding routes to power our first aid mission long into the future

To read more about our strategy, [please click here](#).

Job Description

Role Title: Chief Finance Officer

Role Purpose:

As a core member of the Executive Leadership Team, the Chief Finance Officer leads Charity's financial strategy and stewardship, advises the Chief Executive, Executive Leadership Team and Board, and safeguards St John Ambulance's long-term financial sustainability. The post holder will lead a high performing Finance Function ensuring Charity resources are aligned with strategic priorities, and work across the Charity to ensure a balance of robust cost control, with forward-looking commercial insight, innovation and sustainable growth opportunities.

Main Responsibilities:

Financial strategy, sustainability and growth

- Develop and lead an integrated medium- and long-term financial strategy that underpins St John Ambulance's mission, ambitions and resilience, ensuring organisational decisions are grounded in a clear understanding of affordability, risk, opportunity and impact.
- Lead financial planning, budgeting, forecasting and scenario modelling, translating strategic priorities into clear and deliverable resource plans.
- Support a more growth-oriented agenda by providing the financial insight, investment appraisal and commercial challenge needed to identify and pursue sustainable opportunities.
- Work with colleagues across fundraising, enterprise and operations to assess new services, partnerships, contracts and other growth opportunities, ensuring that risk, return, cash and impact are properly understood.
- Provide disciplined oversight of capital allocation, reserves, liquidity, investments and cash, ensuring that the organisation can invest confidently while remaining financially resilient.
- Drive value for money and ensure that resources are focused on the areas of greatest strategic and charitable impact.

Governance, Control and Assurance

- Maintain a strong and proportionate financial control environment and ensure compliance with all relevant accounting, charity, company, tax and regulatory requirements.
- Provide effective assurance to the Board and relevant committees on financial performance, sustainability, stewardship and risk.
- Lead relationships with external auditors, banks, investment advisers and other professional partners.
- Oversee treasury, statutory reporting, taxation, investment strategy, financial policies and relevant subsidiary or group arrangements.

- Ensure financial, commercial and related enterprise risks are identified, understood and actively managed.
- Oversee the Charity's procurement strategy and supplier management through the Head of Procurement, ensuring procurement activity delivers value for money, manages risk, supports compliance and aligns with organisational priorities.
- Champion continuous improvement, effective systems, high-quality data and proportionate, efficient processes.

Strategic Financial and Executive Leadership

- Contribute fully to the collective leadership of St John Ambulance as a member of the Executive Leadership Team, taking shared accountability for the delivery of our strategy, culture and organisational performance.
- Act as a trusted adviser to the Chief Executive, Board and Executive colleagues, offering clear insight, constructive challenge and sound judgement.
- Lead, develop and inspire a high-performing Finance function that combines technical excellence with strong service, business partnering and strategic insight. Create the capacity, capability and ways of working needed for Finance to operate as a trusted strategic partner, not simply a reporting function.
- Contribute to a diverse and inclusive leadership culture, with clear accountability, strong succession and opportunities for professional growth.
- Represent St John Ambulance credibly with external partners, advisers, funders, auditors, regulators and other stakeholders.

Perform any other duties commensurate with these responsibilities, the band of the post and skills and qualifications of the post-holder.



Person Specification

Please respond directly to the criteria listed under Knowledge and Experience in your supporting statement. Criteria listed under Parts Two and Three will be further tested at interview for selected candidates.

Part One

Knowledge and experience

- Qualified accountant (ACA, ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA or equivalent).
- Outstanding record of achievement as a board-level leader and of leading high performing Finance teams.
- Deep experience of financial strategy, control and leadership in a comparable or similarly complex environment.
- Proven track record in financial planning, governance and assurance, risk management and organisational performance.
- Experience leading transformation, innovation and continuous improvement initiatives.
- Strong understanding of regulatory, compliance and assurance frameworks.
- Experience working with auditors, regulators and external partners.
- Exposure to, or strong interest in, the charity or purpose-driven sector.

Part Two

Skills and abilities

- Strategic thinker with the ability to balance long-term vision and operational delivery.
- Credible and influential leader, able to engage and challenge at Board and Executive level.
- Strong, effective communicator, able to translate complex financial information into clear, compelling insight.
- Agile, flexible and able to respond proactively to a changing environment and demands.
- Resilient, forward-thinking and comfortable operating in a complex, evolving environment

Part Three

Leadership style and behaviours

- An energetic, dynamic and collaborative leader with an emotionally intelligent leadership style.
- Collaborative and inclusive, with a track record of building high-performing teams.
- Values-driven leader, with a genuine commitment to the Charity's mission and purpose and ability to act as an influential role model for St John's values.
- Comfortable leading within a networked environment and under their own initiative.

Terms of Appointment

Salary

This role attracts a salary of £140,000. Starting salary will be dependent on experience. More may be available for an exceptional candidate.

Location

We operate hybrid working arrangements, but you must be willing and able to travel as necessary to venues across England (reasonable travel and accommodation costs will be covered where appropriate).

We encourage everyone to at least spend 2 – 3 days in the workplace - that includes, for example, attendance at St John events, not just office-based working.

Please note that there will be a particular requirement for frequent travel to Sheffield where the Finance Team are based, and to London for Executive and Board meetings.

Annual leave

Annual leave entitlement is 25 days (plus bank holidays) and will increase by 1 day for each year of service to a maximum of 30 days (plus bank holidays). The additional entitlement will be calculated with effect from the anniversary of your start date and will be pro-rated in the year of initial entitlement.

Pension

Up to 8% matched employer contribution.

Wellbeing

Lifestyle mental and physical health portal, mental health platform, and access to spiritual wellbeing support as well as an EAP.

Discounts – you will have access to Reward & Recognition app, Blue Light and NHS Discounts as well as discounts on mobile phones, gym membership, cinema tickets, restaurants, holidays and shopping.

Cycle to Work and EV Scheme.

How To Apply

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

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A covering letter that sets out your motivation for the role and describes the specific experience you can bring to the appointment.

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.

Deadline for applications is **Friday 13th November 2026**.

Closing date:	Friday 13th November 2026
Preliminary interviews:	w/c 23rd November 2026
Final Panel interviews:	Monday 14th December 2026

