Finance Manager

Candidate Application Pack

About Us

Home-Start Southwark and Lewisham has been providing targeted early intervention for vulnerable children and families for 30 years in Southwark, and 5 years in Lewisham.

Our Mission

We provide emotional and practical support to families who are having difficulties managing parenting for a variety of different reasons. We help the parents to create happier lives for their children.

Our Approach

Most parents would agree that being a parent, wherever you live, whatever your circumstances, isn’t always easy. Combine that with additional pressures such as illness or financial worries, and without the support of family and friends, the pressures can seem overwhelming. Our approach is simple, but it works! We provide trained volunteers to help any parent, with at least one child under five, who is finding it hard to cope.

About Us

Home-Start Southwark & Lewisham (HSS&L) is a well-regarded local charity supporting families with children under five across the London boroughs of Southwark and Lewisham. Established in Southwark in 1995, we have expanded significantly into Lewisham over the past five years, increasing delivery there eightfold and changing our name last year to reflect our wider reach.

Through trained volunteers and a dedicated staff team, we provide vital family support that helps parents build confidence, strengthen relationships and give their children the best possible start in life. We are part of the Home-Start UK network, while operating as an independently constituted Charitable Incorporated Organisation led by a Board of Trustees and our CEO.

We have deliberately kept our non-frontline and back-office functions lean so that as much of our capacity and funding as possible is directed to frontline family support. This means nine paid staff and around 100 volunteers work together in a focused, mission-led model to ensure families receive responsive, high-quality support. In a small team, everyone needs to be motivated by making a difference to families, and everyone needs to contribute to day-to-day tasks like answering the phone to the public.

We are now at an exciting point of growth, with annual income of approximately £300,000 and an ambition to exceed £500,000 within the next two years. To support this, we are reshaping our infrastructure, including transforming our finance function from a partly outsourced model into an efficient, modern and AI-assisted approach. This will give the CEO and Board real-time financial insight while strengthening the organisation's back-office resilience without diverting unnecessary resource away from frontline delivery.

Our 2024/2025 Performance

We supported

285

Families

including

370

Parents and

522

Children

of which

144 Parent &

234 Children

in **Lewisham**

We supported

83

Active Volunteers

who provided...

10,200 hrs

of family support

Purpose of the role

We are seeking a proactive, forward-thinking, part-qualified or qualified accountant to lead the development of an efficient, AI-assisted finance function for the charity. Reporting directly to the CEO, you will be part of HSS&L's senior leadership team, in the only finance-focussed role within the team, taking ownership of the organisation's financial systems, reporting, and compliance — and critically, you will have the opportunity to strategically shape how finance operates over the next 6–12 months.

This is a growth opportunity for someone who has an interest and belief in our work supporting local families and combines strong technical finance skills with curiosity about technology, a willingness to challenge existing ways of working, and the confidence to work at Board level. You will implement cloud-based accounting with AI-enabled features, design meaningful management reporting, and ensure the charity is fully compliant with SORP 2026 and Charity Commission requirements — all while keeping the CEO's time focused on leading the organisation, not managing the books

Why this role matters now
This is not a maintenance role. We are looking for someone who wants to build something — to design and embed a finance function that is fit for a growing charity. You will have the rare opportunity to shape the tools, processes, and reporting frameworks from the ground up, working directly with the CEO to make finance a strategic enabler rather than an administrative burden.

Job Description

Job title: Finance Manager
Employer: Home-Start Southwark and Lewisham
Reports to: Chief Executive Officer
Location: Home-Start Southwark & Lewisham offices, SE1, with hybrid flexibility
Application deadline: 20th September 2026, midnight
Interview dates: 30th September - 2nd October (please let us know on applying if you cannot be available on these dates)
Salary: £38,000 – £48,000 per annum (pro rata), depending on experience and qualifications
Contract type: Fixed term to end of March 2028, with strong potential for extension
Hours of work: 12–16 hours per week (flexible across 2–3 days, within Mon-Fri 9-5)

Finance Responsibilities

- Select, implement and configure a cloud accounting platform (Xero, QuickBooks or equivalent) with AI-enabled bank feeds, transaction categorisation, and automated reconciliation
- Maintain accurate, real-time financial records, ensuring effective bookkeeping and reconciliation of all accounts
- Produce monthly management accounts, bi-monthly Board finance papers, and annual accounts to independent examination standard
- Prepare accurate funder financial reports and grant returns, working with the CEO and programme team
- Drive the preparation of the annual budget and forecasts, supporting the CEO, management team, and Board in financial planning and decision-making
- Administer payroll (via outsourced provider or integrated software), ensuring compliance with RTI, PAYE, pensions auto-enrolment, and HMRC requirements
- Manage the relationship with the independent examiner, ensuring supporting records are complete, accurate, and accessible

Job Description
continued

Finance Responsibilities (continued)

- Be the main operational contact for CAF Bank, liaising with the CEO, Treasurer, and bank signatories
- Monitor cash flow, forecast funding requirements, and alert the CEO and Board to financial risks and opportunities
- Support funding applications with accurate budgets, financial projections, and cost analyses

Operational Responsibilities

- Attend bi-monthly Board meetings, present financial reports, and deputise for the CEO as Board Secretary as required
- Actively participate in regular full team meetings and senior leadership team meetings, in person as required, ensuring that the organisation's financial functions best serve the team's ability to provide transformative support to local families.
- Prepare Finance Committee papers and support the Treasurer in their governance role
- Attend and support the Fundraising Committee, preparing updates on funds raised against targets and contributing to future strategic planning.
- Lead and train the staff team in financial procedures/ processes including financial elements of inductions for new staff (eg. payroll, expenses, pensions).
- Maintain an efficient electronic filing system for all finance records (OneDrive / cloud-based)
- Administer petty cash, volunteer expenses, regular giving payments, gift aid, donation platforms, and acknowledgement letters
- Draw up invoices, track payments received, and follow up on outstanding amounts
- Ensure compliance with GDPR and data protection requirements in all finance processes
- Support organisational events, meetings, and training as required
- Comply with all Home-Start policies and procedures, including safeguarding, equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Undertake any other duties that fall within the nature and responsibilities of the post

Job Description
continued

AI-Enabled Finance Transformation (Key Strategic Element)

A distinctive feature of this role is the opportunity to lead the introduction of AI-assisted financial processes. Within the first 6 months, working with the CEO, you will:

- Evaluate and implement AI-enabled features within the chosen accounting platform (automated categorisation, anomaly detection, predictive cash flow)
- Design real-time financial dashboards and a balanced scorecard that give the CEO and Board instant visibility of income, expenditure, fund positions, and organisational performance
- Automate routine processes (bank reconciliation, invoice generation, receipt capture via OCR) to maximise the value of limited hours
- Establish data governance practices that support AI accuracy and organisational reporting needs
- Document processes and create a finance procedures manual that ensures continuity and resilience

This job description is a guide to the nature of the work required and is not exhaustive. It may be reviewed and amended in consultation with the post-holder as the organisation's needs develop.

For the right candidate

This is a chance to build your reputation as someone who has modernised a charity's entire finance function. If you are part-qualified and working toward your AAT, ACCA, CIMA, or ACA, we will support your continued professional development. If you are newly qualified and want to move beyond pure technical accounting into strategic finance and leadership, this role gives you that platform.

Person Specification

Soft Skills & Personal Qualities

Beyond technical competence, we are looking for someone who brings:

- **Intellectual Curiosity:** A genuine interest in how technology — particularly AI — can improve processes. You do not need to be a technologist, but you should be excited by the possibility
- **Proactive Communication:** The confidence to explain financial information clearly to non-finance colleagues, trustees, and funders. You translate numbers into narrative
- **Growth Mindset:** Comfort with ambiguity and change. This role will evolve as the organisation grows — we expect you to welcome that, not resist it.
- **Strategic Thinking:** The ability to see beyond the transaction to the bigger picture. You understand that finance is a tool for mission delivery, not an end in itself.
- **Relationship Building:** Warmth and professionalism in working with the CEO, Board, funders, partner charities, and external providers.
- **Self-Direction & Initiative:** The ability to manage your own workload, prioritise competing demands, and deliver without close supervision.
- **Integrity & Discretion:** Absolute trustworthiness with sensitive financial and personal data.
- **Adaptability:** Willingness to flex your hours and approach as organisational needs evolve, including occasional evening meetings.
- **Resilience:** The capacity to stay focused and effective in a small team where you are the sole finance professional.
- **Commitment to Social Impact:** A genuine belief in the importance of family support in the early years and the mission of Home-Start

Person Specification
continued

E = Essential | D = Desirable

Qualification and training	
Part-qualified or qualified accountant (AAT Level 4, ACCA, CIMA, ACA, or equivalent)	E
Working toward or holding a full professional accounting qualification	D
Evidence of continuing professional development	D
Experience	
At least 2 years' experience in a finance role, including bookkeeping, reconciliations, and management accounts	E
Experience of using cloud accounting software (Xero, QuickBooks, Sage, or similar), or willingness to learn	E
Experience of financial reporting, budgeting, and forecasting	E
Experience of working with management and meeting deadlines in a team environment	E
Experience of working within relevant legal frameworks (GDPR, charity law)	E
Experience of taking lead responsibility for an area of work — identifying challenges, designing solutions, and delivering results	E
Experience of working with IT systems, CRM databases, and cloud-based tools	E
Experience of working in a finance role in the charity or not-for-profit sector	D
Experience of using AI-enabled tools or automation in a finance context	D
Experience of presenting financial information to a Board of Trustees or equivalent	D
Experience of charity SORP and fund accounting (restricted/unrestricted)	D

Person Specification
continued

E = Essential | D = Desirable

Skills and attributes	
Strong IT skills: proficiency in Excel, Outlook, Word, and cloud-based platforms	E
Accuracy and attention to detail in financial reporting	E
Excellent written and verbal communication — ability to explain finance to non-specialists	E
Highly numerate with strong analytical and problem-solving skills	E
Good planning and organisational skills with the ability to prioritise and meet deadlines	E
Ability to work independently, use initiative, and manage own workload	E
Curiosity about technology and willingness to explore AI-enabled finance tools	E
Understanding of and commitment to equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice	E
Genuine interest in family support, early years, and the mission of Home-Start	E
Understanding of Quality Assurance systems and processes	D
Understanding of charity governance, Charity Commission requirements, and Companies House returns	D
Special requirements	
Eligibility to work in the UK	E
Willingness to access training and professional development opportunities	E
Able to work flexibly, with occasional evening work	D

More information

We offer:

- A friendly and supportive team culture.
- Opportunities for professional development and training.
- Regular supervision, including access to clinical supervision and/ or leadership coaching as appropriate.
- 5 weeks (180 hours) FTE annual leave per calendar year plus Statutory Bank Holidays and 4 Concessionary days.
- Flexible working where operationally possible.
- Employer pension contribution (3%).
- Enhanced sick pay
- The opportunity to make a real difference to local families every day.

To apply:

To apply, please send a CV and covering letter to info@homestartsouthwark.org.uk by midnight on Sunday 20th September 2026.

To visit our website,
please scan the code

www.homestartsouthwark.org.uk

Follow us!

020 7737 7720

info@homestartsouthwark.org.uk

Registered Office: Canopi, 82 Tanner Street, SE1 3GN London

Charitable Incorporated Organisation 1107413