



LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON

CORPORATE SERVICES

JOB DESCRIPTION

POST TITLE: Principal Accountant

Grade: ME15 – ME16

This is a career linked grade post but there is no automatic progression between the grades. Progress is subject to:-

- Management assessment of the individual postholder's ability to perform the tasks expected at the higher grade. This will be linked to agreed competencies for the duties involved and as shown in the person profile.
- Management assessment of the need for duties at the higher grade to be done and availability of work at the higher grade.

DIVISION/SECTION: Budget Management Team

Location: Various offices according to the needs of the service

Responsible to: Budget Manager

Responsible for: Management of Senior Accountants

Post number: TXXX

Date: 30th January 2010

MAIN PURPOSE

- To be responsible for budget management and management accounting support for a portfolio of council services.
- To undertake and present complex financial analysis to assist decision-making, and for the purposes of financial accounting, grant claims, government returns, recharges, pricing, etc.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

At ME15

- To maintain comprehensive awareness of budgeting techniques and accounting principles and best practice, and of legislation and guidance relevant to budget and

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financial management in local government, and apply this knowledge to budget preparation, monitoring and financial analysis work.

- To work with Business Partners and Service Financial Advisers to develop and maintain models for the allocation of available funding to services, including for schools.
- To lead the work of Senior Accountants in supporting service managers on budget preparation and monitoring, to ensure that budgeting and monitoring reports reflect an accurate and prudent financial position for the services concerned, taking into account all of the relevant cost and income drivers, and associated risks.
- To lead and review the work of Senior Accountants to analyse and present financial information to agreed standards and timescales, and personally to undertake the most complex aspects of such analysis and presentation
 - to assist service managers with budgeting, monitoring and budget management
 - for the purposes of business planning, business cases, capital programming, decision-making, pricing etc.
 - to inform procurement and contract management
 - for the purposes of grant claims, returns to central government and other agencies
 - for funding claims and other income, including recoupment
 - for SLAs, shared services, internal trading and recharges
 - for financial accounting in accordance with the council's timetable for the closing of accounts
 - or for any other purpose as determined by the Principal Accountant, Budget Manager or Assistant Director.
- To review a sample of amendments to budgets and accounts within financial systems to ensure they are valid, and to advise Senior Accountants on this work.
- To review grant claims and returns to central government and other agencies to ensure they are accurate and presented to maximise the council's entitlement.
- To identify and propose ways in which the council's grant funding may be maximised.
- To advise managers across the authority on a full range of budget and financial management issues.
- To liaise with internal or external auditors on budget management issues.
- To manage Senior Accountants, Finance Assistant and Accounting Trainees as allocated to work on relevant issues.

- To undertake such other duties of a comparable nature elsewhere in the organisation as may be required to facilitate management development and service flexibility.
- Any other duties as requested by the Budget Manager.

Additionally at GRADE ME16

- To deputise for the Budget Manager in their absence.
- To lead the development of budget preparation and management processes to improve corporate financial management and control.
- To ensure that budget preparation and management work is effectively linked to service issues so that the council's business planning is holistically aligned.
- To work with colleagues in Resources and senior managers across the authority to define common methodologies and standards for budget preparation and management for the various types of council budget, and work to ensure consistent application across the council.
- To liaise with the Business Partners and Service Financial Advisers, and other colleagues in Corporate Services, to identify financial training needs for managers across the authority, and to lead the design and delivery of programmes of training to meet these needs.

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PERSON SPECIFICATION

POST TITLE:	Principal Accountant
Grade:	ME15 – ME16
Date:	January 2011

ME15

Qualifications and Experience

- Full professional membership of CIPFA or equivalent (ACA, ACCA, CIMA)
- Experience of complex budgeting and monitoring processes and financial analysis for a diverse range of different activities, including trading functions
- Experience of advising and / or training managers on financial issues
- Experience of supervising staff

Skills and Knowledge

- Knowledge of local government finance, accounting practice and the regulatory framework
- Good understanding local authority expenditure, income and funding for a range of services, and the associated pressures and risks
- Good communication skills, both orally and in writing
- Excellent numeracy skills
- Understanding of the role of support services
- Understanding of the principles of value for money
- Understanding of ways in which the council's policy of equality in employment and service provision can be reflected in all aspects of work of the team
- Understanding of the council's vision and mission statement and how they relate to the work of the team

Additionally at ME16

- Experience of developing processes to improve financial management
- Experience of developing and maintaining models for funding allocation
- Broad and detailed knowledge of modern commercial and public sector practice in business planning, budgeting, monitoring and financial management.

Personal Style and Behaviours

Please refer to LB Merton's Model of Leadership Behaviours