

# Developing Leadership and Skills



“ Meeting challenges head on requires us to ensure that the aspiring leaders of tomorrow have the skills they need to tackle anything that may arise.

**Rob Whiteman**  
CIPFA CEO





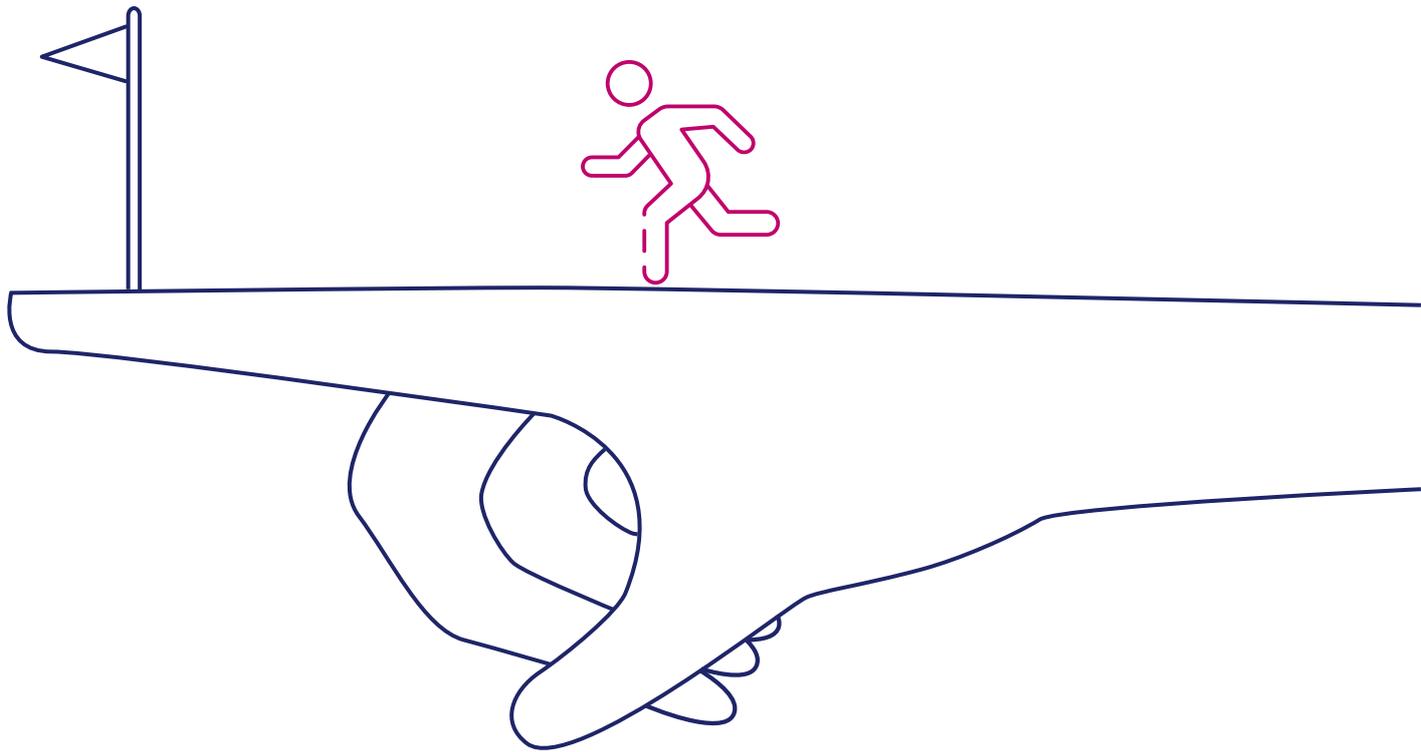
# Introduction

At its heart, CIPFA is a membership institute, and across all sectors, economies and geographies, we believe people are an organisation's most important asset.

However, the challenges faced by our members – and more broadly by public sector bodies – are different and often more complex than for other types of organisations. For example, public finance professionals operate in highly political environments with competing stakeholder demands. They must focus not just on financial outcomes but the outcomes for the people and communities they serve.

From financial resilience to tackling sustainability and the impact of COVID-19, more than ever, the public finance profession needs to adapt to ensure it can effectively tackle the challenges of both today and tomorrow.





# Why does it matter?

Public services around the world are facing unprecedented change and challenges, from new regulations and transforming working practices through to climate change and a global pandemic that continues to affect all aspects of society.

Compounding the challenges is the disruption we see throughout the working world. Technological advances and innovations such as artificial intelligence and machine learning are transforming processes and practices, while the impact of climate change demands that we account for environmental outcomes.

Most recently, COVID-19 has accelerated the debate around how we work, develop talent and share skills within and across teams and the wider profession.

Public finance professionals must have the skills to not only be able to plan for the unexpected and be able to respond to it when it happens, but to be continually seeking to improve the lives of those within their communities. In essence, the right leadership, organisational skill set, and culture are key to supporting a strategic, sustainable, resilient and ethical public finance profession.

# The challenges

External change  
and advancement



Management of  
employee expertise



Time  
constraints



Budget  
constraints



## ▶ External change and advancement

Technological progress in the areas of artificial intelligence and machine learning are transforming processes and practices and organisations must keep pace. There is also a balance to be struck between regulation and income generation. In addition, leaders must also ensure they establish a strong financial governance system, increase resilience within their public body, support the required services and initiatives for their community and effect transformation in their organisation.

## ▶ Management of employee expertise

Not investing in robust workforce training will always be to the detriment of progress in any organisation. Nonetheless, public sector organisations today face more hurdles than ever as they seek to ensure they invest in staff who will give back as much as they take and more, replace expertise as it leaves, and transform the skills of long-standing employees.

## ▶ Time constraints

As the pandemic has taught us, when external events negatively affect our lives, it takes time to deal with them. In many instances, the extra resourcing needed during COVID-19 within the public sector has come at the expense of continued training and development as priorities shifted to supporting and delivering essential frontline services.

## ▶ Budget constraints

The public sector faces extensive change, and more is being expected of its employees than ever as it seeks to improve services and outcomes, all with fewer resources. However, the training and professional development of a workforce requires investment, and as budgets tighten, the constant advancement needed in this area is impacted.

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# How can CIPFA help?

Responding to today's challenges, preparing for the issues of tomorrow and building trust by strengthening public financial management are core to CIPFA's mission.

In line with this, and as the only accountancy body in the world exclusively focused on the public sector, we are committed to lifelong learning and to continuing professional development (CPD) – not only for our members but also for other public finance professionals and their teams.

Using our *Key Competencies for Public Sector Finance Professionals (2020)* to stimulate thinking and discussion, we can help you identify current and future skills gaps within your organisation and teams. Through a training needs analysis, we can develop tailored, lifelong learning programmes to help ensure your organisation is best placed to tackle the challenges it faces.



## CIPFA's professional accountancy qualification

At the heart of our mission to build trust by strengthening public financial management is the CIPFA professional accountancy qualification. For those beginning their public finance journey, it is the only qualification focused on delivering sustainable public value and leads to becoming a chartered public finance accountant (CPFA). Having conducted a rigorous review of the qualification syllabus and consulted extensively with our students, members, employers, partners and other stakeholders, we will be launching its next iteration in March 2022.



## CIPFA apprenticeship programmes

Our market-leading accountancy and counter fraud apprenticeship programmes are focused on providing full support to both apprentices and their employers. All our programmes are levy funded, making them a very cost-effective way to either upskill existing staff or to introduce fresh talent into your organisation, future-proofing skills pipelines and broadening the diversity of your workforce. Registrations are now open for our autumn programmes. Additional incentives are available from the government for employers who appoint apprentices before 30 September 2021.

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## Continuing professional development

We believe that lifelong learning and a commitment to CPD are key to supporting a robust, resilient and ethical public finance profession. Our range of training courses is designed to equip you and your teams with the full range of skills and competencies required for a successful public finance career, no matter what stage you are at. They cover a diverse range of topics (including our CFO Leadership Academy and Leadership Development Programme), anti-bribery and corruption, collaborative transformation, contract management, corporate governance, financial business partnering and public sector procurement. Our flexible delivery options cater for a wide range of learning preferences, and if you can't find the topic you're interested in, we can work with you to develop a programme specifically for your organisation.



## CIPFA membership

Working in the public sector has always been both challenging and rewarding. Through our membership programme, public finance professionals are provided with a range of CIPFA benefits, from the latest insights and expertise to specialist support services, peer-to-peer networking events, discounted training and exclusive member resources.



## TISonline

TISonline is an established and invaluable reference source providing 30+ information streams of best practice, guidance, commentary and legislative context for financial managers across the public services. Written and reviewed by contributors from all areas of the public sector on a 'by practitioners, for practitioners' basis, TISonline supports managers at all levels in their everyday activities, as well as underpinning professional development.



## Publications

All organisations need good leadership, but what does this look like for the public sector organisations operating in a complex regulatory environment and for which leadership is shared between members and officers? Our publication *Leadership Matters* (2020) provides practical guidance to help public bodies assess and develop their leadership teams. Our keystone document *The Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Authorities* (2015) sets out a principles-based framework for all public service organisations and their chief financial officers (CFOs), while *The Role of the Head of Internal Audit* (2019) sets out what is required in this critical position and how organisations can engage with and support the role effectively.

## Recruitment services via CIPFA-Penna

CIPFA-Penna is a recruitment service for finding jobs and traineeships in public finance, advocating the provision of those early skills for new starters and guiding professionals on to the next stage of their career. The CIPFA-Penna service facilitates both interim and permanent positions.

# Contact us

## **Chris O'Neill**

Head of Business Development

**call** +44 (0)20 7543 5702

**email** [chris.o'neill@cipfa.org](mailto:chris.o'neill@cipfa.org)

## **Chris Tidswell FCPFA**

CIPFA Solutions

**call** +44 (0)78 2519 0321

**email** [chris.tidswell@cipfa.org](mailto:chris.tidswell@cipfa.org)

## **Nina Johansson**

Senior Business Development Manager

**call** +44 (0)74 6464 9300

**email** [nina.johansson@cipfa.org](mailto:nina.johansson@cipfa.org)

## **Amie Bridson (formerly Hall)**

Senior Business Development Manager

**call** +44 (0)78 2483 9567

**email** [amie.hall@cipfa.org](mailto:amie.hall@cipfa.org)

## **Victoria Davitt**

Employer Relationship Manager

**call** +44 (0)20 7543 5796

**email** [victoria.davitt@cipfa.org](mailto:victoria.davitt@cipfa.org)

**visit** [cipfa.org/developing-leadership-and-skills](https://cipfa.org/developing-leadership-and-skills)

**CIPFA** \

77 Mansell Street, London E1 8AN

+44 (0)20 7543 5600

**[cipfa.org](https://cipfa.org)**