

**London Borough of Islington**  
**CIPFA Graduate Trainee Scheme**

**August 2021**



## Introduction

Thank you for taking an interest in Islington Council's CIPFA Graduate Trainee Scheme.

We believe that finance should be at the heart of any organisation and our scheme looks to develop finance leaders capable of playing a pivotal role in the direction and progress of the organisation. As this document will show, our scheme is not just an accountancy programme it also includes leadership, strategic and personal development. On this journey you will be supported by a mentor, who has successfully been through a CIPFA programme.

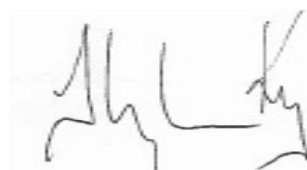
The London Borough of Islington lies in the heart of the city, with thriving cultural, culinary, and nightlife experiences within its six square miles. Although geographically small, Islington has a young and growing population and is culturally and economically diverse. All of this combines to make Islington an interesting, dynamic and challenging place to develop your skills and enhance your experiences, all in the very centre of London.

You can find out more about the Council's vision and priorities on page 9.

We are personally committed to CIPFA and to the CIPFA qualification and will take a personal interest in your development in this scheme.



David Hodgkinson  
Corporate Director of Resources



Steve Key  
Director of Service Finance

## Aim of the Scheme

To produce tomorrow's public sector finance leaders, who can meet the ever-changing demands of public sector finance.

Not just support for an accountancy qualification, but a development programme to produce the leaders of tomorrow.

Our challenging and rewarding 4-year scheme is designed to equip you with all the skills and understanding you need to carve out a successful career within public services:

- Achieve a professional accountancy qualification with CIPFA to become a Chartered Public Finance Accountant.
- Gain a breadth of work experience, both finance and non-finance through a structured programme of work placements
- Access a suite of training courses and events, tailored to you to maximise your professional and personal development
- Receive expert guidance and mentoring throughout the programme
- Discover an excellent benefits package that improves as your training progresses.
- Realise long-term career opportunities at Islington Council when your scheme ends.

We are looking for talented, enthusiastic individuals to join our team and help drive forward improvements; people who will take ownership of their professional development and go the extra mile to succeed in their studies and realise their full potential.

# What is the scheme?

## Professional studies

As part of our graduate scheme, you will attend college/complete online classes to study for the CIPFA Professional Qualification. We will:

- Cover the cost of your college, exam, and membership fees
- Islington Borough Council supports a generous amount of study time to assist in your development with up to 20% of your working time held for off the job development. This time will cover day release to college, study days, and attendance at events such as relevant training events.

Your day-to-day work programme is designed to help you build an impressive CIPFA Portfolio. We will

- Pay the Practical Experience Portfolio submission fee, provided it is submitted within 6 months of completing the final exam.

We recognise that professional qualifications can be challenging. We will:

- Support you throughout your studies, including with your preparations for exams. If you need to resit an exam, we will cover the cost of one resit per stage in the CIPFA qualification (Certificate, Diploma and Final Stage).

We'll encourage you to attend CIPFA events that enhance your development, and explore volunteering opportunities within CIPFA, which will build up valuable networks and provide excellent experiences.

## A breadth of work experience designed to inspire

In your four years with us, you will gain invaluable finance and wider leadership experience, through a programme of rotational

work placements, of varying lengths each. The placements cover the eight Statement of Expertise areas in the CIPFA Portfolio:

- Financial and performance reporting, including producing our annual accounts, statutory returns to central government and VAT;
- Strategic and operational financial management, including budget setting and monitoring
- Audit and accountability, including placements with Internal Audit and working closely with external audit
- Partnership and stakeholder relations, including exposure to commercial accounts with our trading company Islington Ltd, and placements with internal partners in Property Services and Legal Services
- Change, risk and project management, including involvement in exciting transformational projects
- Procurement and contract management
- Governance, ethics and values
- Leadership and strategic management, including supervising staff, typically in year 4

The scheme offers a strong grounding in financial and management accounting, and first-hand knowledge of our core activities. With its variety and progression, by the end of the scheme, you'll understand your strengths and interests, and in which direction you want your career to develop.

## Long-term career opportunities at Islington

The graduate scheme comes to an end when you are accepted as a full member of CIPFA and become a Chartered Public Finance Accountant. This typically takes 3-3.5 years. At the end of your scheme, subject to performance, we will seek to find you a permanent role at Islington. Islington Borough Council want you to have a long, happy, and successful career with us; indeed, many of our senior managers are former graduate trainees. We also understand that many graduates near to the end of the

scheme may seek to apply for permanent opportunities at Islington as they arise. We would welcome candidates to apply for roles and if successful in applying, we will facilitate a smooth transition from the scheme into the new position.

## Training and development

In addition to your CIPFA studies and on-the-job training, you will have a personal development plan unique to you, including training courses and conferences designed to empower you and take your career to the next level.

Each trainee should undertake and receive a Myers-Briggs Type Indicator report and participate in a group feedback session to identify appropriate development strategies.

Examples of the training courses on offer in the council include:

- Managing Time and Productivity – to help you plan, prioritise and manage your work when faced with tight deadlines and complex roles;
- Presentation skills – a practical course to help you deliver confident, competent and interesting presentations;
- Influencing and persuading – Do you want to strengthen your working relationships? Would you like to more effectively engage and influence colleagues, project teams, residents or external partners? This course will give you the tools to help you get the results you are looking for;
- Creative thinking – learn how to stimulate new ways of thinking to release new ideas and take a fresh approach to solving problems;
- Moving into management - explore your management style and reflect on how your personality can influence your approach to work and your ability to work effectively with your team to deliver results;
- Effective delegation – to motivate and increase your team's confidence and productivity.

## Mentoring scheme

Each graduate trainee will be allocated a mentor for the course of their graduate traineeship.

Where possible, the mentor will be a qualified accountant who had successfully completed a similar graduate traineeship.

Your mentor will be there to:

- offer encouragement and support, and listen to your ideas and concerns
- help you identify challenges, barriers, opportunities and potential
- help you articulate your career goals and offer guidance on professional development
- share their personal insight, experience and suggestions

## Other benefits

In return for your hard work and commitment to the scheme, you will benefit from exceptional career enhancing opportunities where the individual is valued as much as the team.

Islington Council offers an excellent benefits package which includes:

- Flexible working, promoting a healthy work-life balance
- Competitive salaries, with progression following the successful completion of each stage of the CIPFA qualification
- Local Government Pension Scheme
- Interest free season ticket loans
- Generous holiday allowance
- Staff discounts in leisure, travel, health services and goods
- Access to staff forums for BAME, LGBT, disabled, and female staff and carers

# Islington's Commitment

## Our vision

The council's over-arching vision is to make Islington a fairer place. As an employer and service provider, the council is committed to eliminating discrimination and valuing diversity in all of our activities. The council's Dignity for All policy sets out our standards and commitment to equality for all. If you wish to discuss any additional requirements you may need during the scheme, please contact us by emailing [Thomas.Cooksey@islington.gov.uk](mailto:Thomas.Cooksey@islington.gov.uk)

## Our values

We know that how we do things is just as important as what we do. So, in 2018 60 teams around the council (around 600-800 staff) took part in an exercise to help us choose a new set of values for the organisation. Staff choose their top three words and these have been adopted as the council's values. These are:

- Collaborative
- Empowering
- Efficient

Islington Council's values run like a thread through everything we do.

## Our priorities





We are focused on:

- Building more council housing and supporting private renters
- Helping residents who are out of work find the right job
- Helping residents cope with the rising cost of living
- Making Islington a place where our residents have a good quality of life
- Providing residents with good services on a tight budget

## Appendix A: Example work experience plans

The exact nature and timing of the placements will be matched to you and the organisation's priorities and needs, but will typically last 9 to 12 months. Work on transformational and strategic projects will take place at suitable intervals alongside these placements as this work underpins everything we do.

Year	Stream 1	Stream 2
Year 1	Corporate accountancy, banking and VAT; Corporate Closing of Accounts/ External Audit	Service Finance - Budget Monitoring, Closedown, Budget setting
Year 2	Service Finance - Budget Monitoring, Closedown, Budget setting	Corporate accountancy, banking and VAT; Corporate Closing of Accounts/ External Audit
Year 3	Financial Planning: Corporate Budget Setting and monitoring	Service Finance - Budget Monitoring, Closedown, Budget setting
Year 4	Service Finance - Budget Monitoring, Closedown, Budget setting	Financial Planning: Corporate Budget Setting and monitoring.

During the 12 month placements there will also be smaller placements with other areas such as: Property Services, Procurement, Internal Audit, Treasury, and Banking.

## Appendix B: Salary Scales for Graduate Trainee Scheme\*

Stage	Pay Scale	2020/21 Salary rate
On appointment and whilst undertaking Certificate Stage	SO1 Scp 23	£32,301
Undertaking Diploma Stage and one year's satisfactory work-based performance	SO2 Scp 27	£34,689
Undertaking Final Stage of CIPFA qualification and two years' satisfactory work-based performance	P01 Scp 30	£36,618
Successful completion of the CIPFA qualification and three years' satisfactory work-based performance	PO2 Scp 33	£39,462

\*Updates for FY21/22 are subject to local authority pay awards.

## Appendix C - Repaying fees

We are committed to investing in your career development and personal journey to becoming a qualified CIPFA accountant. We would endeavour to find permanent roles at the successful conclusion of your training. If you do decide to leave, payments made by the council in regards to your CIPFA membership, registration, exams, and any other costs not relating to your tuition fees will be repayable to the council, depending on when you leave:

<b>Period</b>	<b>Repayable</b>
Whilst studying (pre-qualification)	100% of costs (exc. tuition fees) repayable
Up to the end of one year after qualifying	100% of costs (exc. tuition fees) repayable
Between 1 and 2 years after qualifying	50% of costs (exc. tuition fees) repayable