

Executive
Search

Candidate Briefing

Chief Financial Officer

CFOIFA0226

March

2026

In partnership with



Closing Date
Friday 17th April



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Welcome

Working for the Irish Football Association offers the opportunity to contribute to an organisation whose impact reaches into every community across Northern Ireland. Football here is more than a game; it is a unifying force that supports health and wellbeing, creates meaningful pathways for young people and champions inclusion at every level of society.

On the international stage, our senior teams continue to inspire, from the men's squad reaching the FIFA World Cup play-off stage to the women's team competing strongly on the global platform. Beneath that, our elite youth programmes are thriving, with qualification for major European competitions and preparations under way to host the UEFA Women's Under-17 Championship, a landmark moment to showcase Northern Ireland on the continental stage.

Strategically, the development of the National Football Centre at Galgorm represents a transformational investment in player development, coach education and community engagement for generations to come. Initiatives such as our Youth Football Framework and the Together We Thrive strategy reflect a clear commitment to lifelong participation and to growing women's and girls' football, further underlined by our joint bid for the FIFA Women's World Cup.

Commercial growth, including the naming rights partnership for the Clearer Twist National Stadium enables sustainable reinvestment back into the game. Combined with investment in elite pathways such as the Irish FA/JD Academy, this ensures football in Northern Ireland remains ambitious, inclusive and forward-looking.

To join the Irish FA is to be part of that collective ambition, strengthening the game while delivering lasting social impact.

To help us deliver this raft of exciting work, and much more besides, we are seeking to appoint a Chief Financial Officer. In return, we offer a richly rewarding role and the chance to be part of the future success story of football in Northern Ireland.



Patrick Nelson
Chief Executive Officer
Irish Football Association

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About the Irish FA

The Irish Football Association (Irish FA) is the governing body responsible for the development, regulation and promotion of football across Northern Ireland. Through its wider group of organisations, the Irish FA oversees the governance of the game, grassroots and community development through the Irish FA Foundation, and the management of the National Football Stadium at Windsor Park.

The Irish FA's strategy for 2022–2027 sets out an ambitious roadmap to grow participation, strengthen football infrastructure, enhance performance at elite level and maximise the social impact of the sport.

<https://www.irishfa.com/irish-fa-five-year-strategy>

STRATEGIC PILLARS

Strategic Pillars and Objectives

PERFORMANCE

- Challenge every time, qualify every other time
- Transform the football pyramid to create a clear pathway for ambitious clubs
- Deliver a consistent and comprehensive approach to elite talent identification across Northern Ireland
- Continue to grow and embed the Irish FA Academy in collaboration with UEFA
- Continue to improve the standard of coaching across all levels in Northern Ireland

PARTICIPATION

- 100,000 young people participating in football by 2025
- 50,000 adults participating in football by 2025
- Increase the quality and quantity of coaches, officials and administrators across the game

FACILITIES

- Build an international-class training and development centre
- Deliver at least three Category 3 UEFA stadia
- Enhance spectator experience at all top-level clubs across Northern Ireland through the delivery of best-in-class minimum standards
- Ensure playing surfaces at the top level are consistently high quality to facilitate enhanced performance
- Support ambitious clubs who wish to progress through the football pyramid in Northern Ireland while ensuring continuous improvement and availability of facilities at the everyday game level

REVENUE

- Generate revenues in excess of €30m over five years to reinvest in the game
- Make the National Football Stadium at Windsor Park a premium venue for conferences and entertainment events and enhance the matchday experience for all fans
- Optimise the international match ticketing strategy to provide value for money for our fans, remaining consistent with economic conditions
- Maximise commercial partnerships and retail opportunities. Identify new revenue streams and protect existing ones
- Double the level of grant funding in the next five years and seek to create partnership programmes with local councils and government departments

ENGAGEMENT

- Develop tools and applications to provide a 'digital first' approach to supporting, participating in and administering football
- Build excellent working relationships with the entire local government to collectively support the football community
- Refresh the Irish FA brand identity in line with our values
- Deliver a best-in-class fan experience for all national teams

WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' FOOTBALL

- Create a top-class women's competition and pathway
- Embed the new Director of Women's Football role across the Irish FA
- Introduce licensing for women's clubs and a Club Manager programme at all levels of the game
- Recruit and retain women in coaching, match officiating and administration roles at all levels of the game
- Create a bespoke communications plan for the women's game with every youth programme having specific advertising and publicity to encourage girls

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) & SUSTAINABILITY

- Generate €3m in Social Return On Investment (SROI) value over five years for our community
- Become a leading organisation on sustainability, including a national stadium powered by renewable energy
- Become an exemplar governing body, championing equality, diversity and inclusion

Enablers

- PEOPLE & OPERATIONS**
Resource accordingly to support strategy delivery
- GOVERNANCE & REGULATION**
Devise relevant policies to support delivery of the strategy
- PERFORMANCE & TRACKING**
Implement methodology and process to track delivery against objectives
- DATA ANALYSIS & INSIGHTS**
Introduce methodology for gathering data and feedback to support and evidence strategy delivery and positive outcomes

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Job Specification

Job Title:	Chief Financial Officer
Location:	National Football Stadium, Belfast
Reports to:	Chief Executive Officer

Role Overview

To be a key member of the senior leadership team at the Irish Football Association bringing a strategic financial perspective to underpin sustainability and maximization of commercial opportunities. To successfully lead the finance department through the delivery of a business partnership approach, ensuring robust financial systems, processes, procedures, and operational finance support to meet the needs of the business.

- Take responsibility for financial reporting across the Group – IFA, Stadium Development Company and the Foundation including budgeting, forecasting, management and financial accounting, treasury, tax and statutory requirements.
- Work as a member of the senior leadership team implementing the business strategy and providing advice and support to ensure sustainable and profitable growth.
- Contribute extensively with the CEO and the senior leadership team to the formulation and delivery of business plans, cash flow and financial performance against targets.
- Ensure the provision of appropriate funding for the IFA and for specific projects and develop relationships with all funding providers.
- Provide advice to the senior leadership team on the implications of commercial opportunities.
- Participate in strategic decisions relating to organic growth and new capital projects.
- Take a proactive role in communicating with the IFA's key stakeholders, building a presence and relationship with them. This includes UEFA, FIFA, Council and fans.
- Ensure continued development of robust financial and IT systems to provide timely, accurate reporting and forecasting. Recommend further developments of up-to-date technology solutions to support the IFA's development.
- Work with the senior leadership team to ensure that all capital and investment decisions undertaken by the IFA are subject to rigorous financial scrutiny and risk appraisal.
- Work with the CEO to develop strategic commercial opportunities to enhance underlying financial sustainability.
- Build positive professional working relationships with the senior leadership team and with external bodies including banks, external and internal auditors and legal advisors.
- Ensure that there is robust risk management in place which permeates the IFA and is used as an enabler.

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- Work with the Board and the CEO to provide best practice corporate governance.
- Act as the point of contact for internal and external auditors, liaise with the internal Audit Committee and implement any recommendations.
- Oversee the Irish FA's investments and fixed assets and to ensure that through reviews and inspections that assets are in existence and valued correctly.
- Promote finance business partnering within the business and provide finance and business support across the group.
- Oversee the operation of the payroll function and ensure the authorised payments are made accurately and on time.
- Ensure that all relevant taxes, including VAT, Corporation Tax, PAYE and NIC are accurately accounted for and comply with current legislation.
- Proactively participate in training and development opportunities, staff performance appraisals and reviews as required.
- Comply with Data Protection Policy with regard to safeguarding sensitive customer information at all times.
- Perform the job in accordance with the company's policies and procedures, especially the Equal Opportunities and Harassment Policy and Procedure.
- Adhere to and actively support at all times all other company policies, procedures, processes and working practices, including adhering to best practice.
- Perform any other duties as may reasonably be required from time-to-time.

This job description is not to be regarded as exclusive or exhaustive. It is intended as an outline indication of the areas of activity and will be amended in the light of the changing needs of the Association.

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Person Specification

Essential Criteria

- Chartered Certified (ACCA), Chartered (ACA), Chartered Ireland (CAI) or Chartered Management Accountant (CIMA).
- A minimum of 5 years' experience at senior management level within a commercial organisation.
- Strong balance sheet focus.
- Fully conversant with current accounting standards.
- Strong commercial acumen with the ability to think strategically.
- Stature to instill confidence with the senior leadership team, the Board, financial and other external bodies
- Ability to provide strategic input and of undertaking negotiations and assessment in relation to capital/investment proposals
- Strong leadership and people management skills with the ability to drive cultural change, influence behaviors, and bring people on the journey.
- High levels of personal and professional integrity.
- Credible and able to build respect while maintaining approachability.
- Strong commercial awareness and strategic mindset.

Desirable Criteria

- Experience of introducing electronic purchase order systems.
- Project management experience – driving a finance department through a period of significant change.
- An understanding of how public and/or sports funding is claimed.

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Conditions of Service

Tenure

The position is offered on a permanent and full-time basis.

Remuneration

Competitive, based on experience.

Location

The position is currently based at the Clearer Twist National Stadium at Windsor Park, Donegall Avenue, Belfast, BT12 6LU.

Hours of work

35 hours per week, Monday to Friday 9am-5pm, however flexibility will be required to meet the needs of the role.

Annual Leave

25 days per annum plus 11 statutory days

Pension

Employer pension contribution 7.5%, the employee 2% and HMRC 0.5%. Therefore, a total of 10% will be paid into your pension.

Health and Wellness

- MOT Annual Health Checks.
- EAP Counselling Service with Health shield.
- Sports Chaplaincy Service.
- IFA Mental Health First Aiders.
- Health Shield Cash Back Plan
- Private medical insurance

Additional benefits

- Discounts from Partners, tickets for games, coach education
- Group income protection
- Group Life Assurance - Death in Service benefits (4x your salary)
- Christmas Closure

Reserve list

A reserve list of suitable candidates may be maintained for the purpose of any similar vacancies (temporary or permanent) that may arise within twelve months of the completion of the recruitment exercise.

Equal Opportunities

The Irish Football Association is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all sections of the community. However, as women are currently under-represented in our workforce, we would particularly welcome applications from women. All appointments will be made on the basis of merit.

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How to Apply

Staffline Executive Search (Staffline Executive) has been instructed by the Irish FA to assist with the appointment of the Chief Financial Officer. Staffline Executive, on behalf of the Irish FA, invites applications from suitably qualified candidates.

Applications should be submitted to Alex Noble, Head of Executive Search and must include the following:

- Detailed and comprehensive curriculum vitae (CV).
- Cover letter, limited to a maximum of two pages, outlining your interest in the position, relevant skills, qualifications, suitability and motivations for applying.

Method

Applications by CV with cover note can be sent to: alex.noble@stafflinerecruit.com - with the subject line: "IFA CFO Application".

Closing Date: Friday 17th April, 12pm.

Applications will not be accepted after the closing date/time.

An acknowledgement email will be issued to all applications. If you do not receive one within 24 hours of your submission, then please contact +447384218447.

Interview

Candidates will be notified of interview details at the earliest convenience. Please ensure that all contact details on your application are up to date.

Reasonable Adjustments

Staffline Recruitment Ireland places a strong emphasis on diversity, inclusion and equality at all levels of our business. Should any candidate require any reasonable adjustments at any stage of the competition, please notify Staffline Executive as soon as possible.

Selection Process

The selection process may include the following stages:

- Initial shortlisting of candidates based on the details provided in their application.
- First-stage interview conducted by Alex Noble.
- Second-stage interview with the senior leadership team of the Irish FA.
- Final-stage interview with the senior leadership team of the Irish FA, which may also include a practical assessment.

References will be required as part of the final stage.



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Contact Details

For any queries or communication about the role, we kindly ask that all interactions be directed to Staffline Executive. No enquiries or canvassing may be made to the Irish FA.

Contact Details

Alex Noble

Head of Executive Search

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