INSIGHTS

PRIVATE EQUITY:

Senior Finance Salary Guide 2025

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Contents

Foreword

Welcome to our Private Equity Senior Finance Salary Guide 2025.

In the highly competitive Private Equity (PE) sector, we are uniquely positioned to provide expert salary benchmarking and recruitment insights, thanks to our specialised focus on building elite Accountancy and Finance teams.

Our in-depth understanding of the Private Equity market allows us to form strong partnerships with PE Funds and their portfolio companies across the UK and Europe, helping them source both Permanent and Interim talent.

This guide delivers a comprehensive overview of the latest recruitment trends and salary benchmarks for Senior Finance roles in Private Equity.

As the UK Private Equity market continues to expand, there is growing demand for Accountancy and Finance professionals who play a critical role in managing transactions, financial operations, and value creation within portfolio companies. This increasing need spans roles such as Financial Controllers to CFOs, with a focus on expertise in acquisitions, integration, and exit strategies.

Key highlights include:

- **2025 Predictions:** We offer insights into trends shaping the market for senior finance professionals within Private Equity, including deal flow and exits, skills in demand, and diversity hiring.
- **Candidate & Employer Insights:** We explore the changing priorities of both candidates and employers within Private Equity, covering everything from transitioning into the sector, salary expectations, and landing a senior role.
- **Salary Tables:** Annual base salary ranges for permanent and FTC roles, as well as day-rate ranges for interim positions, according to company size.

Please get in touch should you wish to discuss your specific hiring requirements or specific job opportunities. Or indeed if there are any other areas or roles we may not have covered, our experts will be delighted to help. Let's dive in!

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RECRUITING TRENDS 2025

Market Overview: From Uncertainty to Opportunity?

A Year In Reflection

The first half of 2024 witnessed a notable decline in exit values, dropping 71% compared to the second half of 2023, with fewer large exits over £2.5 billion, and a significant shift towards smaller deals under £25 million. This mirrors the trend seen since 2022, where PE-backed companies have extended their holding periods due to unfavourable market conditions - particularly high interest rates and inflation - making CFOs even more pivotal in securing favourable financing terms and managing cash flow to sustain growth.

On the deal flow side, Private Equity activity is picking up, especially in larger buyouts and take-private deals. The first half of 2024 saw a 59% increase in buyouts compared to 2023. A major driver is the expected decrease in interest rates, which should help unlock more capital and ease transaction financing.

While 2023 was marked by slowed activity due to economic uncertainty and a pronounced gap in valuation expectations between buyers and sellers, this gap is starting to narrow, which is contributing to increased deal-making confidence. Sectors such as technology, healthcare, and consumer goods are expected to see more focused activity, with Private Equity firms increasingly using bolt-on acquisitions to drive growth.

Looking Ahead

Overall, 2025 presents a cautiously optimistic outlook for the UK Private Equity market, with a more favorable environment for deal-making compared to the last couple of years, as macroeconomic conditions stabilise and the market adjusts to new interest rate levels.

However, the latest government budget introduces new challenges, including an increase in employers' National Insurance contributions, which will drive up employment costs. As a result, PE-backed companies may need to reassess their staffing strategies and operational budgets to ensure they can balance these rising overheads with their ongoing goals for value creation and profitability.

How U.S. Election Results Could Impact UK Private Equity in 2025

As Donald Trump returns to the U.S. presidency, the resulting policy shifts are anticipated to bring significant implications for UK Private Equity firms and their portfolio companies. With potential changes in the regulatory, tax, and trade landscapes, as well as effects on interest rates and market volatility, UK PE firms will need to assess these factors and consider strategic adjustments to navigate the new environment effectively.

1. Regulatory Environment

The Trump administration is expected to pursue extensive deregulation in the U.S, which could make American investments more attractive and stimulate cross-border investment activity. This may lead to increased competition in the UK market as U.S. based PE firms expand their reach. UK PE firms may need to adopt more competitive strategies and possibly more flexible deal structures to attract capital and secure opportunities amidst heightened competition.

2. Tax Policies

Proposed corporate tax cuts in the U.S. may make American investments more tax-efficient, drawing capital flows to the U.S. market. This shift could affect capital availability for UK PE firms, as the U.S. becomes a more attractive destination for investors seeking optimal after-tax returns. Additionally, UK portfolio companies with U.S. operations may benefit from these tax cuts, but they will need to address the complexities of international tax compliance. UK PE firms may need to revisit tax strategies for U.S. exposed assets and consider restructuring options to ensure tax efficiency.

3. Trade Policies
The anticipated protectionist stance of the Trump administration, including potential tariffs and renegotiated trade agreements, could impact UK portfolio companies that rely on U.S. markets or have supply chains connected to the U.S. Increased tariffs could raise operational costs for UK-based manufacturers and exporters. UK PE firms with portfolio companies dependent on U.S. imports or exports may need to conduct risk assessments and explore alternative supply chain options or localised production to manage these risks.

4. Interest Rates & Inflation
Potential fiscal policies, including increased government spending, may drive inflation and lead to higher interest rates in the U.S, potentially influencing global capital markets. For UK PE firms, this may increase financing costs for leveraged buyouts and impact valuation models for both new and existing investments. UK portfolio companies that rely on debt financing could face higher interest expenses, requiring robust cash flow management and planning to maintain financial stability.

5. Market Volatility
Policy changes and potential geopolitical tensions under the new U.S. administration could lead to increased market volatility. For UK PE firms, this volatility presents both risks and opportunities, especially when timing exits or determining valuations. UK PE firms may need to reassess their valuation methodologies, consider the timing of exits more carefully, and ensure that portfolio companies have robust risk management strategies in place to adapt to demand fluctuations and currency volatility tied to U.S. market exposure.

In light of these anticipated changes, hiring trends for senior finance professionals in Private Equity are likely to evolve. With increased competition, regulatory shifts, and a focus on tax-efficient structures, demand for finance leaders with strong cross-border tax expertise, regulatory knowledge, and strategic risk management skills will likely grow.

Furthermore, as UK PE firms seek to adapt their financing and exit strategies in response to market volatility, there will be a heightened need for CFOs and Finance Directors who can effectively navigate complex valuation models and ensure robust cash flow management within portfolio companies.

Senior Finance: Key Trends in Private Equity 2025

Growing Demand for Transactional Expertise

With Private Equity continuing to focus on growth through mergers and acquisitions (M&A), there is a rising demand for finance professionals with expertise in transaction-related roles. Positions such as Financial Controllers, Finance Directors, and CFOs are now responsible for overseeing due diligence, post-acquisition integration, and financial restructuring. The scope of their work extends beyond standard financial oversight, requiring the ability to manage the complexities of leveraged buyouts (LBOs) and ensure smooth post-acquisition transitions.

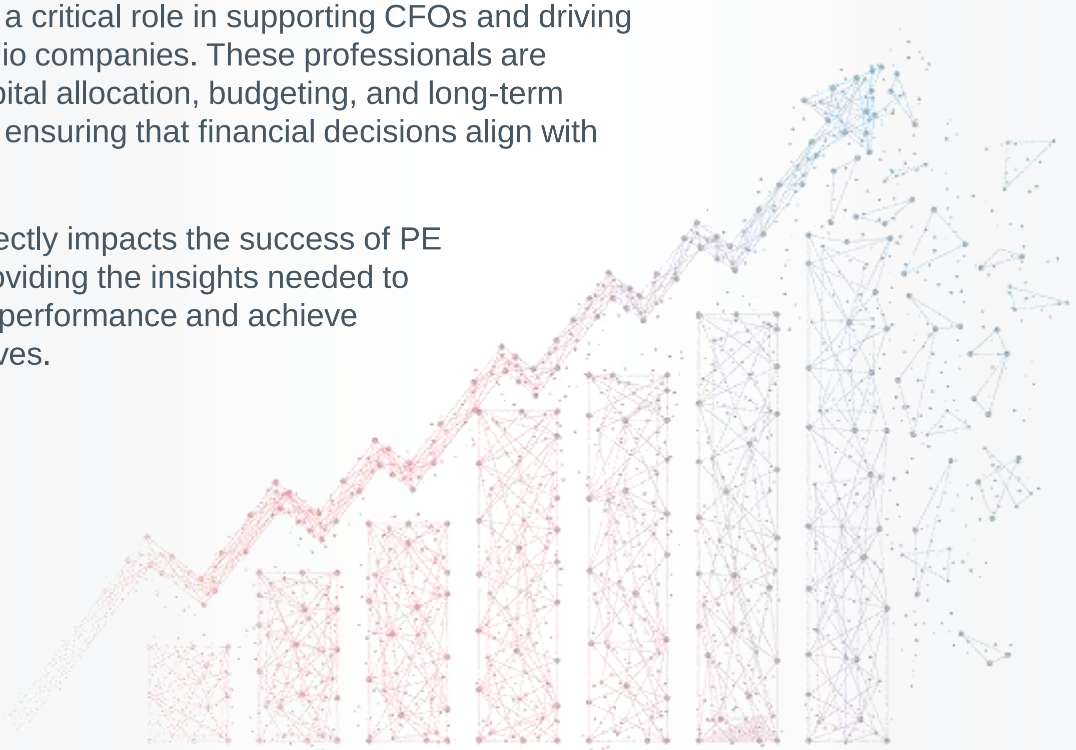
CFOs as Strategic Leaders in PE-backed Companies

In Private Equity, CFOs are no longer just responsible for financial reporting and compliance; they are now viewed as strategic leaders who drive value creation within portfolio companies. They now take an active role in strategic decision-making, influencing everything from growth strategies to technology adoption. CFOs work closely with PE sponsors and portfolio leadership teams to optimise capital structures, improve operational efficiency, and execute growth strategies. They are expected to have strong financial modelling skills, experience in restructuring, and the ability to manage relationships with investors, making them key figures in shaping the company’s future.

Corporate Finance Teams Focused on Value Creation & Exits

Senior-level corporate finance professionals, such as those in financial planning and analysis (FP&A) and corporate development, play a critical role in supporting CFOs and driving value within portfolio companies. These professionals are responsible for capital allocation, budgeting, and long-term strategic planning, ensuring that financial decisions align with growth targets.

Their expertise directly impacts the success of PE investments by providing the insights needed to improve company performance and achieve investment objectives.



Expertise in Exit Planning & IPO Preparation

As portfolio companies approach the exit phase, CFOs and corporate finance teams are central to preparing for a successful sale, merger, or initial public offering (IPO). CFOs lead efforts to ensure financials are audit-ready and optimised for maximum valuation, while corporate finance professionals handle the intricate details of financial projections, capital structure optimisation, and regulatory compliance to facilitate a seamless transition and achieve the desired returns for investors.

The introduction of higher capital gains tax rates for share disposals in the last UK government budget adds another layer of complexity. With basic rate taxpayers now facing an increase from 10% to 18%, and higher rate taxpayers from 20% to 24%, these changes may influence exit strategies. As a result, CFOs and finance teams must carefully assess the timing and structure of asset disposals to optimise returns and minimise tax liabilities.

International Considerations

Companies backed by Private Equity must often account for international regulatory and tax factors, particularly when recruiting global talent or handling investments that span multiple countries. The abolition of the non-dom tax regime, effective April 2025, will subject long-term UK residents to taxation on their global income and gains. This change could influence where international PE professionals choose to live and work, potentially impacting talent attraction and the strategic deployment of capital. Private Equity firms will need to evaluate their compensation packages and tax planning strategies to maintain competitiveness in a global market.

Sector Priorities

CFOs in PE-backed technology firms are increasingly focused on scaling operations quickly and optimising for efficiency, while those in industrial sectors may emphasise cost management and supply chain resilience.

Senior Finance: Priorities, Roles & Skills in Demand

1. Fundraising

Priorities: For a PE-backed business, fundraising is an ongoing effort, with the finance team continually working to secure capital to support growth and strategic initiatives. The objective is to attract new investors while maintaining strong relationships with existing stakeholders.

This involves crafting compelling narratives about the company's progress, potential, and value proposition, and clearly communicating how additional funding will drive further growth. Establishing credibility and demonstrating a track record of successful execution are essential, as is aligning the company's strategy with the risk and return expectations of prospective investors.

Roles: Key roles in this context include CFOs, Finance Directors, and Investor Relations Managers. These professionals are responsible for managing communication with current and potential investors, presenting financial performance data, and supporting capital raises. They must also ensure the business remains investor-ready by maintaining financial transparency and robust governance.

Skills in Demand:

- **Investor Relations**: The ability to cultivate and manage relationships with investors, including providing timely updates and addressing investor concerns.
- **Financial Modelling & Reporting**: Developing and presenting detailed financial models and performance reports that clearly convey the company's past success and future potential.
- **Regulatory Knowledge**: Expertise in legal and compliance matters relevant to fundraising, such as ensuring that financial disclosures meet investor and regulatory expectations.
- **Storytelling & Pitching**: The skill to articulate the company's strategic vision and growth story persuasively, emphasising how investment will translate into value creation and returns.

Fundraising Podcast Spotlight:

Check out our interview with Wil Wadsworth, who shares his journey from a young man with aspirations in boxing to becoming the CFO of Netomnia and YouFibre.

He discusses his early career in finance, the transition to Private Equity, and the pivotal experiences that shaped his career. Wil elaborates on the challenges and successes of fundraising **over £1 billion over 4 years**, the importance of data and relationships in the process, and the skills necessary for a CFO in today's market.

He also shares insights into the specific skills needed in fundraising and the increasing complexity as your company grows.

Key Takeaways:

- Wil's journey into finance was driven by family responsibilities.
- Transitioning from large corporations to PE provided Wil with broad business insights.
- Experiences in Private Equity were pivotal for Wil's career growth.
- Fundraising is a critical skill for CFOs, especially in capital-intensive industries.
- Data quality and analysis are crucial for successful fundraising.
- Building strong relationships with investors is essential for capital raising.
- Preparation for fundraising should include setting up a data room.
- CFOs need strong analytical and storytelling skills to succeed.

Watch the full interview here.

2. Transactions

Priorities: At this stage, senior finance professionals focus on identifying and executing deals, including mergers, acquisitions, and buyouts. Ensuring the financial soundness of potential investments through due diligence is a priority, along with aligning financing structures to optimise returns.

Roles: Transaction-focused roles include CFOs, M&A Directors, and Deal Structuring Experts. These roles are responsible for performing due diligence, negotiating terms, and overseeing transaction execution.

Skills in Demand:

- **Due Diligence:** The ability to thoroughly assess the financial health of target companies, uncover potential risks, and ensure alignment with the investment thesis.
- **Financial Structuring:** Expertise in structuring transactions, including financing options like debt/equity splits, to maximise return on investment.
- **Negotiation:** Senior finance professionals need strong negotiation skills to structure favourable terms during deal-making.
- **Risk Management:** Identifying and mitigating financial risks associated with transactions is crucial in protecting value.

3. Value Creation

Priorities: Once an investment is made, the focus shifts to maximising the value of the portfolio company. Senior finance professionals need to drive operational improvements, enhance financial performance, and ensure alignment with strategic goals. This phase is about implementing efficiencies and preparing the company for eventual sale or exit.

Roles: CFOs, Transformation Officers, and Value Creation Analysts are key here. These roles are focused on optimising financial performance, driving profitability, and improving governance.

Skills in Demand:

- **Operational Finance:** Knowledge of how to drive improvements in working capital, cost structure, and cash flow.
- **Strategic Planning:** Senior finance professionals must help shape the long-term strategy of portfolio companies, ensuring alignment with investor goals.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Leveraging financial and operational data to identify areas for improvement.
- **Change Management:** Skills in leading and managing organisational changes that foster value creation, including implementing new systems, processes, or teams.

4. Exits

Priorities: The goal at the exit stage is to maximise the return on investment through a sale, IPO, or secondary buyout. Senior finance professionals must ensure that the financials are in order, create compelling exit narratives, and negotiate terms with potential buyers.

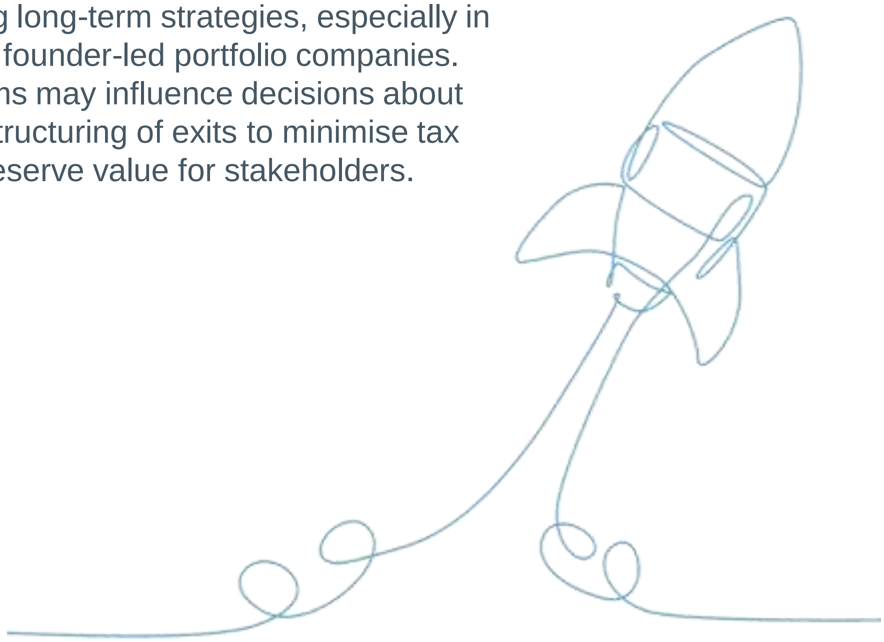
Roles: Exit-focused roles include CFOs, Financial Controllers, and Exit Strategy Consultants. These professionals are responsible for overseeing financial audits, managing exit due diligence, and preparing the company for sale.

Skills in Demand:

- **Exit Strategy Planning:** Expertise in timing and structuring exits for maximum return, including navigating IPO processes or negotiating sales.
- **Financial Audits:** Ensuring the company's financials are pristine and attractive to buyers or public markets.
- **Valuation Expertise:** Determining the optimal valuation and sale price based on market conditions and company performance.
- **Tax Optimisation:** Senior finance professionals must understand the tax implications of different exit strategies and structure deals to minimise tax liabilities.

  The recent reforms to inheritance tax (IHT) reliefs, including limiting exemptions for agricultural and business properties to £1 million, introduce new complexities for succession planning.

  CFOs and finance teams must consider these changes when developing long-term strategies, especially in family-owned or founder-led portfolio companies. These tax reforms may influence decisions about the timing and structuring of exits to minimise tax liabilities and preserve value for stakeholders.



The Diversity Deficit: Private Equity's Inclusion Crisis

Start-ups and large corporations encounter similar hurdles when it comes to hiring and developing their workforce. One significant challenge they share is the construction and preservation of a unified leadership team - where Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) are recognised as the crucial ingredients for success.

Yet within Private Equity, an industry known for its strategic investments and high-stakes deals, the push for greater Diversity and Inclusion has only recently started to gain momentum. PE funds and their portfolio companies still have significant ground to cover in terms of their people representation across gender, ethnicity, and social backgrounds.

In 2024 we had the pleasure of interviewing Elizabeth Wallace, a seasoned Chief People Officer and VP of People at Superbet, a Blackstone Portfolio Company. We discussed the state of Diversity and Inclusion in the PE sector, delving into the distinct challenges encountered, and discussed actionable steps for employers in this domain to foster meaningful change. Here are some takeaways from the conversation…

The Diversity Landscape in Private Equity

Elizabeth highlighted that similar to many industries, the PE sector lacks proportional representation from minorities and is far from equitable, especially at the senior level. Contrasting it with sectors like Banking, she emphasised that PE funds and their portfolio companies arguably lag furthest behind in both D&I comprehension and implementation of affirmative action measures.

> ***"Private Equity's model is still very old-fashioned, you either fit into it or you don't. PE firms are generally made up of people who are very similar to each other, they all went to the same universities. There's no role modelling from different backgrounds because you look up at the top and it's predominantly white and male."***

And she's right. According to McKinsey's 2023 report, women hold only 24% of senior roles in Private Equity firms globally. The same report indicates that Black professionals occupy just 3% of senior positions in PE, while Hispanic professionals hold 4%. These figures underscore the persistent underrepresentation of females and ethnic minorities in leadership roles within the industry.

Moreover, this lack of diversity extends to portfolio companies, where leadership teams often lack representation from diverse genders and ethnicities. Recent research into portfolio-level diversity has shown a slight improvement in female representation. According to a report from Invest Europe in 2022, 38% of full-time equivalent employees in PE/VC-backed companies were female, up from 36% in 2021. A 2024 report by Level 20 indicates that female representation in Europe's PE sector increased from 20% in 2022 to 24% in 2024, however at the senior level, women hold only 14% of roles, up from 10% in 2022.

Although going in the right direction, these small percentage increases hardly constitute any major shift!

Interestingly, research has found that *socioeconomic background* is even more likely to impact a person's route to success in financial services than either gender or ethnicity. The Progress Together Data Report 2023 has revealed:

- Those from higher socio-economic backgrounds are more than twice as likely to be found in senior roles, compared with those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.
- Women from working-class backgrounds experience a significant 'double disadvantage', progressing 21% more slowly into senior roles than women from more advantaged families.
- White men from higher socio-economic backgrounds are 30 times more likely to be found in senior positions than working-class women from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- 20% of those in senior roles attended an independent school – more than triple the national percentage of pupils at these schools (6.4%).
- In the UK, more than 70% of venture capital partners come from affluent families.

Inclusion Challenges Heightened in Private Equity

We asked Elizbeth what she thought the specific D&I challenges were for those in the PE space and whether these challenges differed from those encountered in other organisations.

She pointed to the industry's historical lack of diversity, which has created a cycle of exclusion and limited access to opportunities for underrepresented groups. She spoke of the 'risk-adverse' mindset among General Partners, which has led to a self-perpetuating process of consciously (not even unconsciously!) hiring candidates who resemble themselves or fit traditional stereotypes of leadership.

"For investors, unfamiliarity with candidates outside of their industry or lacking a recognisable track record can be perceived as risky. Consequently, there's a tendency to maintain the status quo by primarily hiring from familiar circles."

Moreover, the demanding nature of the Private Equity industry, characterised by long hours and intense deal-making, can pose barriers to individuals with caregiving responsibilities, disproportionately affecting women. The lack of visible role models and mentors from diverse backgrounds further compounds these challenges, making it difficult for aspiring professionals to envision themselves succeeding in the industry.

PE Investors Influence Change Downstream

So, it's clear there is much work still to do. Thankfully, Elizabeth says that influence from Private Equity investors is expediting change further downstream.

Investors are increasingly prioritising Diversity and Inclusion when selecting PE partners. Institutional investors, such as pension funds and endowments, are incorporating diversity metrics into their due diligence processes and using their influence to push for greater transparency and accountability on diversity initiatives from fund managers.

Additionally, in the next few decades, we will see the largest generational wealth transfer in history with an estimated USD30 trillion from Baby Boomers to Millennials. This will mark an important milestone for investment where millennials filter through a sense of responsibility to concentrate investments on companies that are socially, ethically and environmentally responsible. This includes having a diverse workforce and an inclusive workplace.

"***What we are starting to see, is that increasingly investors are making D&I a requirement and they won't invest in companies that don't have a diverse workforce. This is a trend which started in the US and is now filtering to the UK."***

The Path Forward

Despite these challenges, there are signs of progress and a growing commitment to Diversity and Inclusion within Private Equity. Many firms have launched initiatives aimed at increasing the representation of women and ethnic minorities in senior roles. These initiatives include targeted recruitment efforts, diversity training programs, and mentorship initiatives designed to support the career advancement of underrepresented groups.

Elizabeth recommends starting with education and raising awareness. Simple actionable things like celebrating diversity awareness days, setting up D&I Committees (involving and including senior leadership/investors), and carrying out inclusion surveys. It is important that hiring managers focus on 'potential, not prestige', being mindful of bias towards prestigious universities that may exclude talented individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Diversity & Inclusion Podcast Spotlight:

Stanton House interviews Chief People Officer, Elizabeth Wallace in a quickfire Q&A to discuss the state of Diversity & Inclusion within the world of Private Equity.

Key Takeaways:

- Elizabeth recounts how she got into Private Equity and how she found the transition from the Corporate world of BlackRock to PE firm HG Capital.
- Elizabeth shares her view on the state of Diversity & Inclusion within Private Equity and the specific challenges faced.
- Elizabeth shares some top tips to help employers in this space.

Watch the full interview **here**

How to Successfully Transition into Private Equity

Private Equity firms focus on maximising the value of their portfolio companies, often with a defined exit strategy in mind. PE firms aim to enhance profitability, growth, and operational efficiency, typically within a set timeframe. If you're looking to transition into a Private Equity job, it's essential to understand these fundamentals. PE-backed businesses often require finance professionals who can operate under tight deadlines, while keeping a sharp focus on driving business value and delivering financial results. Here are some strategies to help you stand out:

1. Understand How the Role of CFO Differs

A PE-backed CFO must be a dynamic, strategic leader who thrives in a fast-paced, high-pressure environment. The focus is on creating value quickly, often within a 3–5-year investment horizon. This means driving aggressive growth, making swift, decisive actions, and constantly looking for ways to enhance the company's value through revenues and EBITDA.

Moreover, PE firms are typically more involved in the day-to-day operations of their portfolio companies. This requires proactive CFO who can work closely with the PE fund, understanding their expectations, drive strategy and deliver. This relationship is more collaborative and hands-on, with frequent reporting and regular updates on performance metrics.

2. Highlight Your Performance-Driven Mindset

One thing that consistently comes up in our conversations with hiring managers is the need for finance professionals who are results driven. In PE-backed companies, delivering measurable financial outcomes is key. When applying for Private Equity finance jobs, make sure your CV and interviews emphasise how you've contributed to profitability, cost reductions, and business growth in previous roles. Private Equity employers want to see that you can drive value in a high-performance environment.

3. Develop Strong Commercial Acumen

Private Equity firms don’t just look for finance professionals who understand numbers - they want candidates who can grasp the bigger commercial picture. It’s important to develop the ability to interpret financial data in the context of business strategy, market trends, and operational goals. This broader understanding is particularly valued in Private Equity finance jobs, where you may need to act as a key business partner, advising on decisions that impact the company’s overall direction.

4. Refine Your Stakeholder Management Skills

In Private Equity-backed companies, finance professionals often work closely with multiple stakeholders, including the Private Equity firm's partners and the portfolio company's executive team. Strong communication and stakeholder management skills are essential in these roles. You'll need to manage expectations, present financial information clearly, and engage with senior stakeholders to keep everyone aligned. If you're looking to land a job in Private Equity, demonstrating your ability to manage relationships at this level will be crucial.

5. Gain Exposure to Private Equity Reporting Standards

Private Equity firms often have specific and complex reporting requirements, including performance metrics, financial analysis, and progress toward an exit strategy. If you're new to the Private Equity space, gaining exposure to these reporting standards can give you a competitive edge. This might include seeking out projects or roles that involve PE firms or investing in training. Understanding Private Equity reporting standards is a key skill for professionals looking to secure Private Equity finance jobs.

6. Demonstrate Change Management Experience

Private Equity-backed businesses are frequently undergoing change - whether it's restructuring, launching growth initiatives, or implementing cost-saving measures. If you have experience in change management, highlight this in your application. PE firms look for finance professionals who can help steer their portfolio companies through periods of transition while maintaining financial stability. Demonstrating your ability to manage change will make you a valuable asset in any Private Equity job.

7. Show Adaptability to High-Pressure Environments

The fast-paced nature of Private Equity means you'll often find yourself working in high-pressure environments with tight deadlines and significant performance expectations. If you're someone who thrives under pressure, can adapt quickly, and consistently delivers high-quality work, you're likely to excel in a Private Equity-backed business. Make sure to highlight this adaptability when applying for Private Equity finance roles, as PE firms often seek candidates with a proven track record of working effectively in demanding conditions.

8. Leverage Your Network

Networking is critical in the Private Equity space. Many Private Equity jobs aren't advertised publicly, so leveraging your professional network is key to finding new opportunities. Engage with people who are already working in Private Equity, attend industry events, and make use of platforms like LinkedIn to expand your connections. Building relationships in the Private Equity industry can help you uncover opportunities and make your transition smoother.

Tips for Landing a Senior Finance Role in PE

When we speak to hiring managers in PE-backed firms, the same themes keep coming up. They're looking for senior finance leaders who bring not only technical expertise but also a strategic mindset capable of driving change. These businesses need finance professionals who can go beyond the numbers, making tangible improvements to the way the company operates. Teams are often lean and therefore it is important that each individual delivers impact. Here are some top tips to help you land a senior finance role in Private Equity:

1. Showcase Your Strategic Financial Skills

If you're aiming for a senior role in a PE-backed company, it's essential to showcase how your financial decisions have driven business performance. It's not just about financial reporting - hiring managers want to know how you've improved profitability, optimised EBITDA, or enhanced cash flow in a previous role.

From our experience, candidates who can point to specific examples where they've taken a strategic role in steering a company's financial direction often stand out. Be prepared to highlight these stories during the interview process.

2. Highlight Operational Experience

Another common theme we hear from PE-backed businesses is the need for finance leaders who can drive operational improvement. PE investors are hands-on, and they want to see results - whether that's in cutting costs, improving efficiency, or implementing new systems.

If you’ve worked in a VC-backed company, you might be used to focusing on growth at all costs. But in PE, the focus shifts to optimising operations and delivering value. We often advise candidates to highlight any experience they have in process improvement, performance tracking, or working closely with operational teams to achieve broader business objectives.

When preparing for interviews, think about times where you’ve contributed to making a business more efficient or driven operational changes that improved financial performance.

3. Adapt Your Leadership Style

One of the most important points we hear from finance professionals already working in Private Equity is how different the leadership expectations can be. PE-backed businesses expect results, often within tight timeframes, and they need leaders who are decisive and can execute a plan.

If you’re coming from a more flexible, growth-oriented VC-backed environment, this can be a big adjustment. In our conversations with hiring managers, they often stress the need for leaders who can manage both the expectations of investors and the demands of the business.

When you’re applying for roles in PE-backed companies, it’s important to demonstrate that you can take a more structured approach to leadership. Talk about how you’ve delivered against financial targets or executed on a strategic plan in previous roles. The ability to manage high levels of accountability will set you apart from other candidates.

4. Understand Private Equity Metrics

From the daily conversations we have with candidates and hiring managers, one of the biggest differences between VC and PE-backed companies is the financial metrics that matter. In Private Equity, the focus is on EBITDA, cash flow, and profitability - not just top-line revenue growth.

If you’re moving into a senior finance role in a PE-backed firm, you need to be fluent in these metrics. Many candidates we work with have strong financial skills but aren’t as familiar with the specific demands of Private Equity. Make sure you can confidently speak to topics like debt structuring, working capital management, and cost optimisation.

Being able to talk about how you’ve improved these key metrics in previous roles will give you a real advantage in the recruitment process.

5. Leverage Your Network

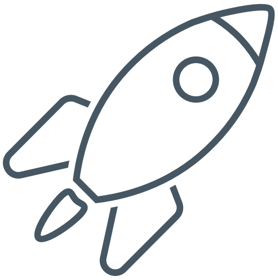
We can't stress enough how important networking is when looking to land a role in Private Equity. Private Equity is a close-knit world, and often, the best opportunities are found through personal connections or specialist recruitment consultancies like Stanton House.

Many of the senior finance professionals we speak to have made key career moves through their network. If you're looking to transition into a PE-backed business, take the time to build relationships with people who are already in the sector. Reach out to mentors, attend industry events, and engage with recruiters who specialise in Private Equity.

At Stanton House, we spend every day building relationships with PE-backed firms, so we know exactly what they're looking for in candidates. Lean on your network - it can open doors that you might not find on job boards.

6. Prepare for a Rigorous Recruitment Process

PE-backed companies are highly selective when it comes to senior hires, and the recruitment process can be intense. One common theme from hiring managers we work with is the expectation that candidates will be ready to hit the ground running.



In interviews, expect to be asked detailed questions about your experience in financial management, operational improvement, and working with investors. You'll need to demonstrate that you have a deep understanding of the unique challenges facing PE-backed businesses and show how you've delivered results in high-pressure environments.

Our advice is to come prepared with concrete examples of how you've driven financial performance, led teams, and managed relationships with stakeholders. The more specific you can be, the better your chances of standing out.

Navigating Equity in PE Job Offers

Understanding the nuances of compensation structures and effectively negotiating equity stakes can significantly impact your financial future. Whether you're a seasoned finance professional looking to transition into the Private Equity realm or an established player seeking to optimise your compensation package, grasping the intricacies of remuneration in this industry is crucial. In this blog post, we delve into the remuneration differences within the PE industry and provide insights into negotiating equity packages.

Understanding Remuneration Structures

Senior Finance professionals and the employers hiring them always ask for our advice when it comes to compensation. Private Equity compensation is multifaceted, comprising various components such as base salary, bonuses, carried interest, and co-investment opportunities. The distribution of these components differs based on roles (e.g., investment professionals, senior executives) and stages of career progression. Additionally, factors like fund size, performance, industry specialisation, and geographic location influence compensation levels.

Negotiating Equity Stakes

Equity compensation is a cornerstone of Private Equity remuneration, aligning the interests of professionals with those of the firm and its investors. Successfully negotiating equity stakes requires a nuanced approach, including considerations of vesting schedules, ownership dilution, and exit rights.

The UK government's last budget increased the capital gains tax rate on carried interest from 28% to 32%, effective April 2025. This change affects the personal profits of PE dealmakers, potentially influencing compensation structures and investment strategies within the industry. PE firms may need to reassess the attractiveness of carried interest and consider alternative incentives to remain competitive.

Understanding Key Terms

- **Vesting Schedules:** Vesting schedules dictate when equity grants become fully owned by the recipient. Typically, equity vests over a specified period, often subject to a cliff period followed by gradual vesting. For instance, a four-year vesting schedule with a one-year cliff means that after one year of service, 25% of the equity becomes vested, with the remaining equity vesting monthly or quarterly over the subsequent three years. Understanding the vesting schedule is essential for professionals to evaluate their long-term commitment to the firm and the associated benefits.
- **Ownership Dilution:** As Private Equity firms raise additional funds or issue equity to new stakeholders, existing equity holders may experience ownership dilution. This dilution occurs when the percentage ownership of existing shareholders decreases due to the issuance of new equity. Professionals negotiating equity stakes should consider the potential for dilution over time and seek mechanisms to mitigate its impact, such as anti-dilution provisions or pre-emptive rights.
- **Exit Rights:** Exit rights govern how and when equity holders can realise their investment. Common exit mechanisms in Private Equity include initial public offerings (IPOs), mergers and acquisitions (M&A), and secondary buyouts. Professionals should carefully review the terms governing exit rights, including any restrictions on liquidity events, rights of first refusal, or drag-along provisions. Understanding exit rights is crucial for aligning personal liquidity preferences with the firm's investment horizon.

Additional Considerations & Tips

Due Diligence: Conduct thorough due diligence on the firm's track record, investment strategy, and culture before negotiating equity stakes.

Seek Professional Advice: Consider engaging legal and financial advisors to review equity agreements and provide guidance on negotiation tactics.

Performance Metrics: Negotiate equity stakes based on performance metrics tied to fund performance, portfolio company growth, or individual contributions.

Clarity on Terms: Ensure clarity on the terms of equity agreements, including voting rights, preferences in distributions, and restrictions on transferability.

Long-Term Perspective: Take a long-term perspective when evaluating equity stakes, considering potential value creation over the investment horizon.

Alignment of Interests: Align equity incentives with the firm's strategic objectives and ensure congruence with personal career aspirations.

In Conclusion

Navigating compensation and negotiating equity stakes in Private Equity requires a blend of industry knowledge, strategic foresight, and negotiation prowess. By equipping yourself with insights into remuneration differences and negotiation techniques, you can position yourself for success in the dynamic world of Private Equity.

Remember, each negotiation presents a unique opportunity to shape your financial future and advance your career within this thriving industry. As you embark on your Private Equity journey or seek to optimise your current position, leverage the expertise and resources available to you.

With the right mindset and preparation, you can unlock lucrative compensation packages and chart a course toward professional fulfilment and financial prosperity in the realm of Private Equity.

CFO Compensation in Portfolio Companies

Equity compensation tends to be more significant in large-cap companies, offering CFOs the potential for a substantial payout upon a successful exit, often dwarfing base salary and bonuses. Conversely, CFOs in small-cap companies often receive a larger share of performance-based bonuses to incentivise hands-on involvement.

Here's how CFO compensation in Private Equity portfolio companies typically breaks down in the UK:

1. Small-Cap PE Portfolio Company

- **Revenue:** <£50M
- **Enterprise Value:** <£100M
- **Base Salary:** £150K – £180k
- **Bonus/Variable Pay:** 20% – 50% of base salary
- **Equity/Carried Interest:** Limited; around 0.5% – 1.5% stake
- **Context:** CFOs in small-cap companies are expected to play a hands-on role in operations and finance. They often oversee multiple functions and are deeply involved in the company's day-to-day running. Base salaries are lower compared to larger companies, but equity could provide an upside upon a successful exit.

The introduction of the 20% Family Business Tax poses new challenges for family-owned portfolio companies. This tax could significantly impact succession planning, affecting both the financial outlook and strategic valuation of these companies. As a result, CFOs and finance teams will need to evaluate and implement effective strategies to mitigate these potential financial burdens and ensure the business's long-term stability and growth.

2. Mid-Cap PE Portfolio Company

- **Revenue:** £50M – £500M
- **Enterprise Value:** £100M – £500M
- **Base Salary:** £180K – £250K
- **Bonus/Variable Pay:** 30% – 70% of base salary
- **Equity/Carried Interest:** Moderate; typically, 1% – 3% of the company
- **Context:** Mid-cap CFOs typically take on a more strategic role, focusing on scaling the business, driving financial performance, and managing capital structure. They may also be involved in fundraising and acquisitions. Compensation reflects the added complexity, with bonuses tied to company growth or exit milestones.

3. Large-Cap PE Portfolio Company

- **Revenue:** >£500M
- **Enterprise Value:** >£500M
- **Base Salary:** £250k+
- **Bonus/Variable Pay:** 50% – 100%+ of base salary
- **Equity/Carried Interest:** Significant; often 3% – 5% or more of the company
- **Context:** In large-cap companies, CFOs are primarily involved in strategic decision-making, financial structuring, and high-level transactions such as IPOs, mergers, and acquisitions. They manage large finance teams and often have extensive experience in capital markets. Their compensation includes a sizable bonus and carried interest, providing a substantial upside upon exit.

PRIVATE EQUITY
SENIOR FINANCE SALARY GUIDE 2025

About Our Salary Guide

Our in-depth understanding of the Private Equity market enables us to provide salary guidance, for different senior finance roles, across small, mid, and large-cap companies in the UK. Our guide provides salary ranges based on actual job listings, job offers, placements, and candidate registrations for Stanton House over the last year.

In the tables that follow, you will find annual base salary ranges for permanent and FTC roles, as well as day-rate ranges for interim positions, according to company size:

- **Small Cap**: Typically, under £50 million per year. Small-cap companies are often startups or early-stage businesses. They may operate in niche markets or emerging industries and are generally viewed as higher risk but with greater growth potential
- **Mid Cap**: Between £50 million and £200 million per year. Mid-cap companies are generally more established than small caps, with a stable revenue stream and a stronger market position. These firms often have a more diversified product or service offering, making them attractive targets for Private Equity investment aimed at further growth or expansion
- **Large Cap**: Over £200 million per year, often exceeding £500 million or more. Large-cap companies are typically well-established, often publicly traded, and possess a significant market share in their industry. Private equity firms investing in large caps usually focus on strategic growth, operational efficiencies, or restructuring initiatives to enhance value

Please note that the day-rate data shown for each role is based on an 'outside IR35' determination. For ‘Inside IR35’ positions, the cost will likely increase by around 20% to compensate for the PAYE deductions, including employer and employee NI, pension and apprenticeship levy and tax.

If you are looking to find salary information for a position not shown in our guide, or want to discuss specific salary variances, please get in touch as we can provide further guidance.

Permanent & FTC Positions

Role	Small cap	Mid cap	Large cap
CFO	£150,000 - £180,000	£180,000 - £250,000	£250,000+
Finance Director	£120,000 - £150,000	£150,000 – £200,000	£200,000+
FP&A Director/Head of FP&A	£120,000 – £140,000	£140,000 – £180,000	£180,000+
Head of Finance	£90,000 – £120,000	£120,000 – £140,000	£140,000+
Group Financial Controller	£90,000 – £120,000	£120,000 – £140,000	£140,000+
Group Finance Manager	£70,000 – £80,000	£70,000 – £80,000	£70,000 – £100,000
Financial Accountant/ Group Accountant	£60,000 – £70,000	£60,000 – £70,000	£60,000 – £80,000
Head of Treasury	£90,000 – £140,000	£140,000 – £160,000	£160,000+
Head of Tax	£90,000 – £140,000	£140,000 – £160,000	£160,000+
Head of M&A/Corporate Finance	£90,000 – £120,000	£120,000 – £150,000	£150,000+
Finance Business Partner	£65,000 – £85,000	£65,000 – £90,000	£65,000 – £100,000
FP&A Manager	£70,000 – £90,000	£70,000 – £90,000	£70,000 – £100,000
Finance Manager	£60,000 – £80,000	£60,000 – £80,000	£70,000 – £90,000

Day-Rate Contract Positions

Role	Small cap	Mid cap	Large cap
CFO	£850 – £1,100	£1,000 – £1,600	£1,500 – £2,500
Finance Director	£550 – £800	£750 – £1,000	£900 – £1,500
FP&A Director/Head of FP&A	£500 – £700	£700 – £900	£900 – £1,500
Head of Finance	£500 – £650	£650 – £850	£850 – £1,200
Group Financial Controller	£500 – £800	£800 – £1000	£1000 – £1,250
Group Reporting Manager	£350 – £450	£450 – £600	£550 – £800
Financial Accountant/ Group Accountant	£300 – £500	£400 – £700	£500 – £800
Head of Treasury	£500 – £700	£700 – £900	£900 – £1,200
Head of Tax	£500 – £600	£600 – £800	£800 – £1,100
Head of M&A/M&A Consultant	£600 – £750	£750 – £900	£900 – £1,500
Finance Business Partner	£300 – £450	£450 – £550	£550 – £750
FP&A Manager /Consultant	£350 – £450	£450 – £750	£600 – £800
Finance Manager	£300 – £400	£400 – £500	£500 – £650

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Sharna Barrett

SEE WHAT OUR CUSTOMERS SAY…

Stanton House supported us in hiring an Interim Finance Director for one of our portfolio companies. The candidate has been brought in to provide additional capacity for the Finance function and help deliver an exit later in the year. Stanton House provided a strong shortlist of suitable candidates and provided honesty about their suitability. We would happily work with Stanton House on other leadership appointments moving forward.

Investment Director, Mid-Market PE Fund

I recently engaged Stanton House on a M&A Director position, a key direct report of mine. They were excellent to work with, providing a range of strong candidates. Stanton House communicated clearly throughout the process and provided feedback on the market. I shall continue to work with Stanton House and would highly recommend them to any other PE-backed business due to the strength of their candidates and knowledge of the PE market.

CFO, TA Associates Portfolio Business

I have been in touch with Stanton House for a number of months from a candidate perspective but after recently joining a new client as the Interim CFO, I reached out to the team to assist with an important hire for the business. Stanton House showed great tenacity with the search and provided a strong shortlist for us to review. They knew exactly what our needs were and moved quickly to find a solution. They managed the offer process expertly which ultimately resulted in a successful outcome for the business

CFO, Pollen Street Capital Portfolio Business

I've worked exclusively with Stanton House to place two direct reports, a Group Financial Controller and Head of FP&A, as well as a senior member of the finance team. Throughout all processes, they have been brilliant to work with, providing exceptionally strong shortlists and making my decision on which candidates to go with difficult, a great position to be in. I would highly recommend Stanton House to any other PE-backed business due to their market knowledge, clear communication and strong candidate network.

CFO, GTCR Portfolio Business

The Private Equity team at Stanton House has been very professional and great to work with over the last 6 months, from the initial brief/search for our interim CFO, through to deployment and ongoing management. They are pretty niche in the CFO field which is underpinned by the highly skilled talent pool they can pull on. I would certainly have no hesitation in using their services again.

CEO, Epiris Portfolio Business

Stanton House assisted us in appointing an Interim FP&A Consultant for a financial modelling project. Our business is located in the Southwest of the UK, making it challenging to find candidates. Despite this, Stanton House quickly identified individuals that matched our requirements. The team provided valuable advice on securing the talent we needed. If I have a future need in the team, I will not hesitate to use Stanton House again as they have a network of PE-specific resources who are geographically mobile.

CFO, KPS Portfolio Business

Stanton House moved more quickly than other recruitment companies I have worked with - within 3 days of contacting me, we had a more informal chat and then an interview from which they gave me immediate feedback on my style and my CV. Stanton House is definitely one of the top recruiters I have dealt with in terms of being professional and helping me with my search.

PE Head of Commercial Finance

My meeting with Stanton House was excellent. It was undoubtedly the most refreshing call that I had had with a recruitment consultant in a very long time. They took the time to understand my background, current situation, and requirements for my next professional challenge. Additionally, they shared a couple of tips to improve my marketability. All in all, I am incredibly pleased to have had my meeting with Stanton House.

PE CFO

Stanton House made clear their approach is relationship-based not transactional. My consultant willingly provided general advice not just that which would benefit Stanton House, which was appreciated and made him very credible. Also, this is the first time I have been asked to provide customer feedback, which reflects well. I look forward to working with Stanton House.

PE CFO

Read more testimonials from our customers in Private Equity here

ABOUT US

Stanton House is an award-winning, specialist recruitment consultancy. We deliver permanent and interim solutions and deliver projects across the UK and North America.

Since launching in 2010, we have developed a customer-focused proposition that has laid the foundations for consistent success.

We offer deep technical and local market expertise, finding exceptional senior talent from across the globe that help organisations innovate, transform and grow.

In the UK we have established offices in London and Reading and deliver permanent and interim recruitment solutions within:

- **Accountancy & Finance**
- **Transformation (Data, Digital, Finance)**
- **Private Equity**

Our customers range from the most exciting start-ups at the beginning of their growth, to the world's largest organisations. Many tell us that we are exceptional in the *lengths we go to in order to add value to them.*

Our commitment to our values truly differentiates Stanton House from the competition and our Purpose of *creating exceptional customer experiences* is central to all that we do.

We are creative in how we add value to our customers, and we build trusting, long-term relationships with clients and candidates. This enables us to fully understand motivations and objectives and deliver exceptional outcomes.

INSIGHTS

More Insight From Stanton House

HOW TO BUILD YOUR PROFESSIONAL BRAND: YOUR GUIDE TO LINKEDIN

What you'll find inside:

Time is always of the essence when a new role presents itself and you don't want to be scrabbling to get your LinkedIn profile updated at the very last minute. So, if you're searching for new opportunities, be sure to invest time in crafting your profile so that it effectively showcases your skills, experience and achievements. Discover how to:

- ✓ Optimise your LinkedIn profile
- ✓ Build audiences on LinkedIn
- ✓ Post and engage with content on LinkedIn

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5 BIGGEST CHALLENGES OF A CFO: AND HOW TO SOLVE THEM

What you'll find inside:

We explore five major challenges that CFOs face today and provide solutions for overcoming them. These challenges include:

- ✓ Automation of key finance processes
- ✓ Leveraging the Cloud
- ✓ Unlocking value through faster closing processes
- ✓ Dealing with an overwhelming amount of spreadsheets
- ✓ Obtaining actionable insights in real-time

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TRANSITIONING TO PROFESSIONAL INTERIM WORK: WHAT DOES IT TAKE?

What you'll find inside:

Are you a senior finance professional eager to explore the world of interim work? Increased earning potential, diverse projects, and increased flexibility can make interim work an attractive proposition.

Drawing on over a decade of experience, this guide arms you with everything you need to know to make the transition to interim work as smooth as possible. Inside you'll discover the expectations placed on interims as well as the advantages and challenges you might face.

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WOMEN IN FINANCE: ADVICE FROM FEMALE LEADERS

What you'll find inside:

This paper captures the insight from four successful female CFOs – Carolyn Bedford (CFO at Nominet), Helen Shaw (UK & Europe CFO at Serco), Lindsey Roberts (UK&I CFO at Pladis) and Maria Denny (UK CFO at Signify). They provide guidance on how to:

- ✓ Break down barriers to have a voice at the table
- ✓ Build your personal brand
- ✓ Gain sponsorship and mentorship
- ✓ Take ownership of your professional development

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NEURODIVERSITY AT WORK: A GUIDE FOR HIRING MANAGERS

What you'll find inside:

- ✓ What is neurodiversity and what does it mean to be neurodivergent?
- ✓ The strengths and challenges of those with neurodevelopmental conditions such as Dyslexia, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD)
- ✓ Why education and understanding on this topic is important for all employers
- ✓ Practical advice on how to become more neuroinclusive throughout the employee lifecycle - from job design through to interviewing and onboarding

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