

Job Title: Accountant

Location: South Downs Water, Windsor House, Clovelly Road, Southbourne, PO10 8PF

Contract Type: Full Time, Permanent

Reports to: Managing Director

Hours: 40 hours per week (Monday–Friday)

About the Role

We are looking for a proactive and forward-thinking Accountant to join our growing team. This role will support the financial operations of South Downs Water, South Downs Linen, and the development of our new venture – South Downs Logistics, a haulage company.

This is a unique opportunity for someone who not only thrives in traditional accounting responsibilities but is also excited to work with new technologies, support business set-up, help improve systems, and contribute to department-level budgeting and financial control. You'll be a key part of the leadership structure, helping ensure operational clarity and sound decision-making across the group.

Key Responsibilities

Financial Management

- Oversee day-to-day finance operations for all three businesses.
- Maintain accurate ledgers, manage intercompany reconciliations, and ensure up-to-date reporting.
- Produce monthly management accounts including P&L, balance sheets, and cash flow statements.
- Work with department heads to prepare and track budgets, forecasts, and project spend.

Payroll (BrightPay)

- Run payroll across all businesses using BrightPay (monthly & weekly where applicable).
- Ensure compliance with PAYE, pensions, and HMRC submissions.
- Maintain employee records for payroll and update in real-time with any changes.

Accounts Payable / Receivable

- Manage client invoicing, payment runs, and credit control.

- Set up and manage supplier and contractor payments across the group.
- Oversee bottle deposit and linen credit tracking systems.

Tax, VAT & Compliance

- Prepare and submit VAT returns for all businesses (Making Tax Digital compliant).
- Assist with end-of-year financial statements, audits, and tax submissions.
- Work with external accountants and advisors as needed.

Business & System Development

- Contribute to the setup and financial structure of South Downs Logistics, including banking, accounting software, and invoicing templates.
- Collaborate with management on selecting and rolling out a new operational system for Water and Linen.
- Recommend and implement automation tools, AI-powered solutions, or integrations to streamline finance and admin tasks.

HR & Admin Support

- Assist with HR documentation including contracts, policies, holiday tracking, and absence management.
- Liaise with HR solicitors to ensure all processes remain legally compliant.
- Support the internal team with ad-hoc admin queries related to staff records, pay, and benefits.

Reporting & Insight

- Deliver meaningful financial reports to the MD and department heads.
- Support decision-making through analysis, trend forecasting, and variance tracking.
- Provide insight on financial performance at weekly/monthly management meetings.

Ideal Candidate Profile

Qualifications

- AAT Level 4 (minimum) or part-qualified/qualified ACCA, CIMA, or equivalent.
- Strong understanding of UK accounting and tax compliance.

Experience

- 3–5+ years in a similar role within an SME, preferably multi-entity or service/product-based business.
- Experience running payroll independently (BrightPay experience preferred).
- Experience supporting business launches, new department setup, or financial transitions.

Skills

- Excellent working knowledge of Xero, QuickBooks, or Sage.
- Strong Excel/Google Sheets skills (pivot tables, formulas, data manipulation).
- Confident working with financial reporting, budgeting tools, and forecasting.
- Forward-thinking mindset: enthusiastic about automation, AI tools, and improving systems.
- Strong communication skills; able to liaise with internal staff, directors, external solicitors, and accountants.
- Organised, reliable, and calm under pressure.

What We Offer

- Full-time, permanent position with career progression opportunities
- Ability to influence and shape internal systems and processes
- Supportive leadership team and friendly office culture
- Opportunity to be part of the growth of three evolving businesses
- Free on-site parking and potential for hybrid flexibility over time