

eXactitude

Salary & Market Report 2026

Accountancy & Finance | Hampshire & Surrounding Major Towns



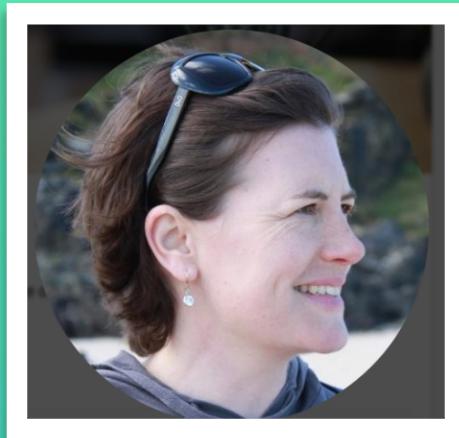
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The data & information contained in this report is produced from a mix of director market knowledge, factual information from applicants, vacancies, online news reports & readily available salary surveys online. Compiled Jan 2026.

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Executive Summary: The 2026 Hampshire Landscape

The accountancy and finance market in Hampshire and its surrounding towns has entered a distinct new phase in 2026. The post-pandemic adjustments have settled, and we are now seeing a market defined by a "fight for quality." While salary inflation has moderated from the peaks of recent years, employers looking for senior finance staff are aggressively competing for a specific profile of candidate: one who combines core technical competence with technological fluency and advisory capabilities.

Key market drivers for 2026 include:

The Office Evolution (The “3-Day Tug-of-War”)

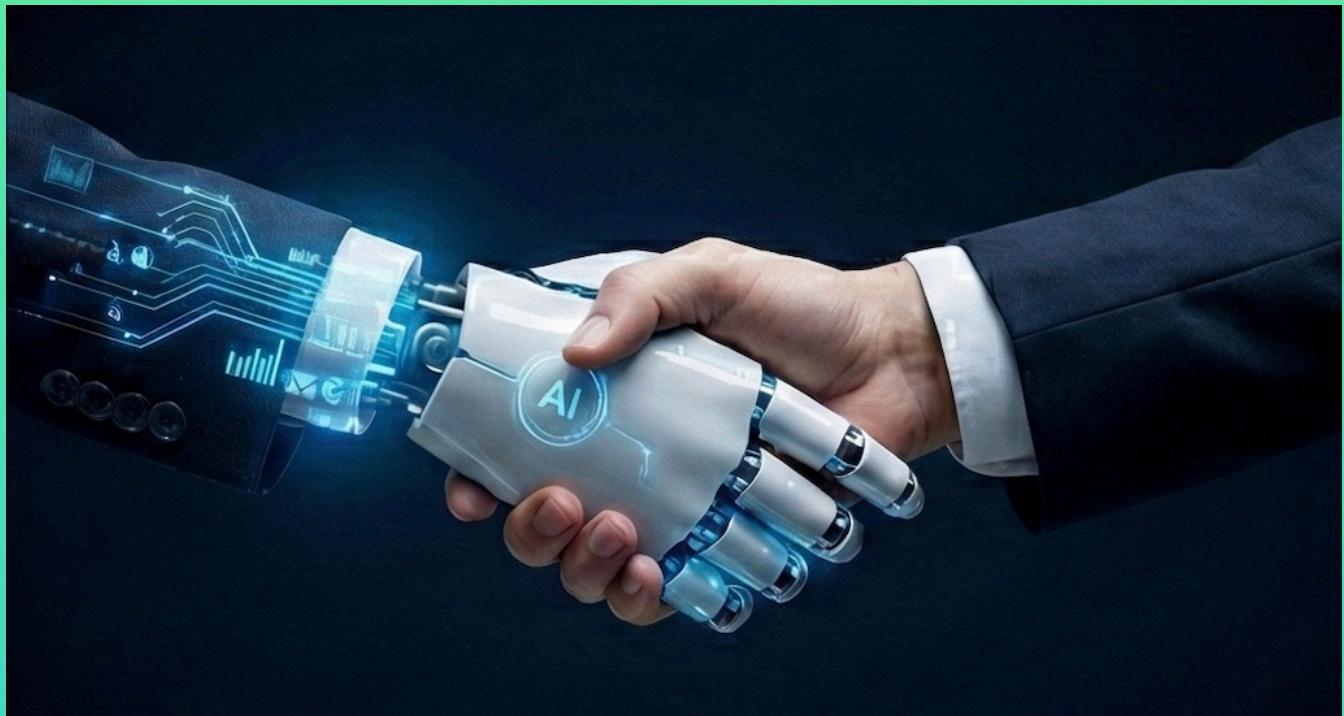
While hybrid working remains a baseline expectation, 2026 has seen a definitive shift towards three days in the office more popular with employers. This has emerged as a significant point of strategic friction between employers and talent.

While regional hubs like Basingstoke, Winchester and Farnborough are successfully retaining talent by keeping salaries within 10–15% of London rates, the “commuter correction” is now being tested by a candidate base that remains protective of their remote flexibility.



Firms that can balance this increased office presence with genuine autonomy are winning the talent war, while those mandating rigid schedules risk losing the best finance talent to more agile competitors.

The AI-Enhanced Strategic Advisor Technical compliance has shifted from a competitive advantage to a baseline requirement. Today, the most progressive senior finance salary growth and career trajectories are reserved for those who can bridge the gap between traditional finance and data science. We are seeing a significant premium placed on candidates capable of spearheading **AI implementation** for predictive forecasting and real-time business storytelling—effectively evolving the finance function from a back-office reporting role into **a valued business partner to facilitate growth for Hampshire employers**.



Hiring for Value, Not Just Need Employers are taking longer to hire, prioritising cultural fit and long-term value addition over quick fixes. This has created a highly competitive environment for top-tier talent, especially at the part-qualified and mid-management levels.

Commerce & Industry Qualifieds

SME's & Divisional Roles in Medium size PLCs

Role	Salary Range (2026)	Market Trends
Finance Director / CFO (SME)	£98,000 - £165,000+	Wage inflation in last 3 years high. Large number of interims. Very candidate competitive.
Financial Controller	£78,000 – £115,000	Stable CV's in the £90-100k bracket in high demand.
Finance Manager	£55,000 – £75,000	Variable market - stable CV's in high demand.
Qualified Management / Financial Accountant	£52,000 – £68,000	Less demand in SMEs more a large Co. Hire. - Compete with Newly Qs.

Recently Qualifieds (0-2 yrs PQE)

Role	Salary Range (2026)	Market Trends
CIMA	£48,000 to £62,000	Steady demand.
ACCA	£48,000 to £62,000	Steady demand.
Top 6 ACA	£56,000 - £74,000	Premium wage as qualification lots of employers value.
ACA Other	£50,000 – £62,000	Steady demand.

Non qualified accountancy support

Role	Salary Range 2026	Market Trends
Bookkeeper	£36,800 – £52,000	Higher end competes with FMs.
Payroll / Credit Manager	£43,500 – £70,400	Larger Cos.
QBE (Qualified by Experience)	£39,300 – £67,300	Value v qualifieds for many SME's.
PQ ACCA or ACMA	£28,500 – £48,000	Wide range as 3 Yr's study.
Assistant Accountant (Maybe AAT Q)	£29,000 – £38,300	Steady demand - some AI pressure.
Accounts Assistant (Maybe PQ AAT)	£25,900 – £33,100	AI Pressure - stable CV's rare.
Sales / Purchase Ledger	£25,900 – £30,000	Steady demand.
Graduate	£24,800 – £30,700	Tough market for candidates. Competition for quality schemes very high.

“For these roles, a significant salary shift has resulted from the April 2026 National Living Wage increase to approximately £24,784. AI use is also starting to reduce entry level demand.”

Professional Practice - Advisory

Small / Mid Tier & Large Regional Firms

Role	Salary Range 2026	Market Trends
Partner/ Director	£72,500 – £155,300+	Total compensation is often profit-linked. Retirement & mergers main movement driver.
Senior Manager	£57,800 – £78,800	High demand for audit specialists with fee-earning ability.
Manager	£52,500 – £68,300	The most "at-risk" group for moving into commercial roles.
Qualified Senior (ACA or ACCA)	£42,000 – £50,400	ACA/ACCA newly qualifieds are seeing high-demand premiums.
Senior (Studier ACCA or AAT Qual)	£25,200 – £35,700	Adjusted to reflect study support costs and the rising minimum wage floor.
Semi-Senior (AAT PQ)	£24,800 – £33,300	Focus on retention for those in the "middle" of their training.
Graduate (Practice)	£24,800 – £28,400	The 2025 £22k starting wage is now below the 2026 minimum wage floor.

*"In Practice, the biggest driver is **Audit Retention**. Firms are paying a significant premium at the Senior Manager and Qualified Senior levels to prevent talent from jumping to "Industry" roles."*

Professional Practice - Tax

Small / Mid Tier & Large Regional Firms

Role	2026 Salary Range (Updated)	Market Trends
Tax Partner/Director	£72,500 – £155,300++	Steady market - hires mainly retirement or succession planning.
Tax Senior Manager	£57,800 – £78,800	Steady demand.
Tax Manager	£57,800 – £78,800	High demand.
CTA Recently Qualified	£47,300 – £63,000	Steady demand.
Personal Tax QBE	£31,500 – £47,300	High demand.
ATT Qual	£26,300 – £42,000	Steady demand.
Tax Graduate	£25,200 – £31,500	Steady demand.
ATT PQ / Trainee	£24,800 – £31,500	Steady demand.

“Demand for tax professionals who can combine technical CTA-level knowledge with AI-driven strategic planning is outstripping supply, driving significant salary premiums at the Manager and Senior Manager levels.”

POPULAR SME BENEFITS 2026

FINANCIAL WELL-BEING



Profit Share Scheme

Annual bonus linked to company performance.

FLEXIBLE WORKING



Working From Home

Still very popular: 2 to 3 days remote per week.

HEALTH & WELLNESS



Wellness Allowance

Annual stipend for gym, therapy, or wellness apps.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH



AI & Tech Upskilling

Dedicated programs for future-ready skills.

HOLIDAYS



Buy Extra Days or Birthday Off

Popular options for more time off and celebrating your special day.