



Martina Quinn
Finance Recruitment

Ireland Finance Salary & Benefits Trends Q2 2026

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Northern Ireland

What's Really Happening

Q2 has brought a more nuanced market. Demand remains strong for experienced accountants, but employers are more selective and candidates are weighing up security, flexibility and long-term progression more carefully.

At qualified and senior level, hiring is still candidate-led, but employers now expect clearer evidence of commercial impact, systems capability and long-term fit.

2.2%

NI
unemployment
Dec 2025 to
Feb 2026

71.2%

NI
employment
rate

10-12 wks

Typical fill time
for
transformation
roles

Key Trends Shaping the NI Finance Market

Hiring is active, but more selective

Employers are taking longer to define what they need, particularly for Finance Manager, Financial Controller and senior accountant roles. Hiring is now more strategic and tied more closely to business impact.

Transformation skills command a premium

Strong demand continues for ERP upgrades, automation, Power BI, reporting tools and AI-assisted forecasting. Candidates who can improve reporting and decision-making are among the hardest to find.

Pay pressure has not disappeared

Short-term pay indicators remain volatile, but salary benchmarking is still critical where employers are hiring scarce qualified, commercial or systems-focused finance talent.

Hybrid remains a core expectation

Most candidates expect flexibility, typically 2 to 3 office days depending on role, business needs and team structure. Rigid office policies are narrowing access to passive talent.

Sector hotspots

Shared services, manufacturing, financial services, regulatory reporting and technology-led transformation continue to drive demand for qualified accountants, analysts, team leads and audit-focused finance professionals.

Market Focus

Systems, reporting, automation and decision support are now central differentiators in NI hiring.



What This Means for Candidates

Be clear on your value

Employers want evidence of impact, not just technical competence.

Build systems confidence

Power BI, ERP exposure, automation and reporting improvement are increasingly valuable.

Look beyond salary

Flexibility, leadership quality, progression and wellbeing support are now central to decisions.



What This Means for Employers

Benchmark before going to market

The best finance talent remains highly aware of market value.

Move with purpose

Slow processes still lose strong candidates, especially in qualified and transformation-led roles.

Sell the full opportunity

Culture, flexibility, leadership, progression and project exposure matter as much as base salary.



The Outlook for 2026

Northern Ireland remains competitive, particularly for qualified accountants, finance managers, controllers and transformation-focused professionals.

Employers who combine competitive packages with flexibility, clarity and a strong EVP will continue to secure the best people.

Dublin

Insights for Candidates & Employers

The Dublin finance market remains competitive in Q2 2026, but the tone has shifted. Salary inflation has moderated, hiring is more measured, and employers are balancing growth ambitions with cost control.

For finance professionals, demand remains strong where skills are specialist, commercial or transformation-led.

4.9%

Unemployment
forecast
for Ireland in
2026

-7.6%

General job
postings
YoY in Feb
2026

2.2%

Employment
growth
in 2025

Key Trends Shaping the Dublin Finance Market

Salary growth has moderated

Average weekly earnings across Ireland rose 3.1% year on year in Q4 2025, while average weekly earnings in financial activities rose 6.2%. Specialist talent is still achieving stronger packages.

Newly qualified accountants remain in demand

Newly qualified accountants continue to have options across industry, practice and financial services, with Dublin salary data placing this group at approximately €60,000 to €65,000.

AI, automation and analytics are reshaping teams

Generative AI and automation are now mainstream hiring considerations, especially in reporting, forecasting, transaction processing, controls and FP&A.

Entry level hiring is more exposed to AI

Junior finance roles are changing as routine data processing, reconciliations and elements of reporting become automated. Data literacy and the ability to interpret outputs now matter earlier.

Sector-specific variation

Tech, fintech, pharma, life sciences, financial services, construction and real estate continue to show demand for FP&A, regulatory reporting, controls, transformation and senior finance capability.

Market Focus

Future-proof finance talent blends commercial judgement with strong systems and analytics fluency.



Candidate Guidance

Benchmark carefully

Dublin remains competitive, but salary growth is now more role-specific.

Invest in future-proof skills

FP&A, Power BI, automation, ERP systems and commercial analysis are clear differentiators.

Value total reward

Flexibility, bonus, pension, healthcare and progression can materially change the value of a role.



Employer Recommendations

Review compensation regularly

The strongest candidates remain well-informed and selective.

Move quickly for high-demand profiles

Good candidates in FP&A, transformation and commercial finance are unlikely to remain available for long.

Develop talent internally

AI is changing junior hiring patterns, increasing the need for structured early-career development.



The Outlook for 2026

Dublin remains competitive in Q2 2026, but it is more measured than the recent period.

Employers are hiring with greater care, while candidates are prioritising flexibility, progression and long-term career value.

Rest of Ireland

What Employers & Candidates Need to Know

Across Munster, Connacht, the Midlands and the wider regional market, finance recruitment remains steady in Q2 2026. Demand is strongest across industry, manufacturing, life sciences, med-tech, shared services and scaling SMEs.

Competition remains strong for qualified accountants, finance managers and commercially focused finance talent.

Q2

Steady regional finance demand

SMEs

Industry and indigenous sectors hiring

5 hubs

Cork, Limerick, Galway, Athlone and Midlands

Key Trends Shaping the Regional Finance Market

Industry and SME demand supports hiring

Regional employers are hiring where finance roles directly support growth, cost control, reporting improvement and operational decision-making.

Life sciences and med-tech remain strong

Ireland's med-tech activity continues to create demand for cost accountants, project finance professionals, commercial analysts, controllers and FP&A talent across Cork, Limerick and Galway.

Commercial and systems skills are essential

Strong demand continues for ERP upgrades, automation, data analytics, Power BI, reporting, cost control, business partnering and process improvement. Accountancy Ireland recently reported that skills shortages continue to affect transformation, with CFO's citing a lack of digital and analytical talent as a barrier to scaling AI and automation.

Hybrid is established, but varies regionally

Two days from home is common, SMEs may prefer more onsite collaboration, fully remote finance roles remain limited, and shorter commutes are a strong advantage.

Sector hotspots

Med-tech, pharma, manufacturing, engineering, shared services, global business centres and scaling indigenous businesses continue to create opportunities for qualified and commercially minded finance professionals.

Market Focus

Regional hiring is strongest where finance directly supports transformation, growth and operating performance.



What This Means for Candidates

Know your local market

Salary expectations vary significantly by location, sector and company size.

Build commercial value

Employers want finance professionals who can influence decisions, not just produce numbers.

Prioritise skills development

FP&A, automation, analytics, ERP and business partnering remain strong progression levers.



What This Means for Employers

Benchmark locally and nationally

Regional candidates often compare local roles with Dublin, hybrid and multinational opportunities.

Be clear on flexibility

Ambiguous hybrid policies weaken candidate interest.

Invest in development

Progression, mentoring, study support and clear routes to leadership matter.



The Outlook for 2026

The wider Irish regional finance market remains steady, competitive and candidate-driven for qualified and senior roles.

Hiring is strongest where finance supports transformation, growth, cost control and better decision-making.

At Martina Quinn Finance Recruitment, we support employers and finance professionals across the Island of Ireland with market insights, salary benchmarking and specialist recruitment support. Whether you are exploring a new role or hiring into your growing finance team, we are here to help you navigate the market with confidence.



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