

## **Notes for candidates – HMICFRS associates**

### **What's included in this pack?**

Within this pack you will find both information and advice on applying for a role within HMICFRS. This includes:

- Who we are and what we do.
- An introduction to the role.
- Associate information.
- Details of the application and selection process.
- Pre-employment procedures and security clearance.
- Additional information regarding our processes, policies and procedures.

It is important that you read all the information in this pack and in the web pages thoroughly before you complete your application.

Annex A – competency statement guidance notes.

## Introduction and welcome



Thank you for your interest in Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). This is an exciting time to join us as we grow our new organisation with an even broader remit to help protect the public and improve public safety.

For more than 160 years, our mandate has been to inspect police forces in England and Wales, promoting improvements in policing to make people safer.

Now, we have taken on responsibility for inspecting England's fire & rescue services (FRS). We continue to approach this with the same dedication and determination, striving to ensure the police services and FRSs across the country are efficient and effective in their work.

With our programme of regular inspections of police services and FRSs and will report to the public on each service's effectiveness, efficiency and policing for the police services and leadership for FRSs. We will ask the questions which the public would ask and publish the answers in accessible form. We will use our expertise to interpret the evidence, promote best practice and make recommendations to help improve the service every member of the public would and should be able to expect wherever they live.

To support us to deliver this remit we have a variety of interesting roles across a range of disciplines. We are looking for skilled and dedicated people with a depth of knowledge to help us continue to develop our fire inspection regime to become as strong as our police one.

We would particularly like to encourage people from diverse backgrounds and with a broad range of experiences across police services and FRSs depending on role.

By joining us, you could help play a significant role in helping us define how the new inspectorate goes forward. This is a challenging, but unique opportunity, which will help bring benefits to the public for years to come.

I wish you all the best in your application.

**Zoë Billingham Her Majesty's Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services**

## About us

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services independently assesses and reports its findings to the public. We ask the questions the public would ask, and publish the answers in accessible form, using our expertise to interpret the evidence and make recommendations for improvement. We provide authoritative information to allow the public to compare the performance of their police force – and, in future, their fire & rescue services – against others. Our evidence is used to guide improvements in the service to the public.

## Independence

HMICFRS is independent of government, the police service and fire & rescue authorities:

- HM inspectors of fire & rescue services are appointed by the Crown. They undertake these responsibilities alongside their responsibilities as HM inspectors of constabulary. They are not employees of the police service, the fire & rescue service or the government.
- HM Chief Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services will report to the Home Secretary and parliament on the efficiency and effectiveness of fire & rescue services in England.
- HM inspectors may be called to give evidence before committees of parliament, and must account for their actions to the public also through the media. As is the case with all public bodies, HM inspectors are also susceptible to judicial review.
- Although HMICFRS' budget is set by the government, and the inspection programme requires the Home Secretary's approval, no minister, police and crime commissioner or fire authority can interfere with the contents of an HMICFRS report or the judgment of HM inspectors.

## Powers

HMICFRS is an inspectorate, not a regulator. Regulators have powers of intervention, direction and enforcement. Inspectorates have powers to secure information, but no powers to give orders for change. Recommendations are not orders.

## Our purpose, values and objectives

HMICFRS is a rewarding place to work. We set ourselves high standards, taking great pride in the quality of the work we achieve and the opportunities we create for our staff.

HMICFRS' purpose, values and objectives are central to this.

### Our purpose

To promote improvements in policing and fire & rescue services to make everyone safer.

### Our values

- **Respect** – we respect and value all those we work with, and the contribution that they make.
- **Honesty** – we are truthful at all times.
- **Independence** – we are objective in all we do, without bias towards or against anyone; we are independent of the police service, fire & rescue authorities and government, and act only in the public interest.
- **Integrity** – we act ethically and openly in all we do.
- **Fairness** – we treat everyone – both within and outside HMICFRS – fairly.

### Our objectives

- Demonstrate our values in everything we do.
- Conduct informed, independent and evidence-based inspections.
- Provide value for money.
- Work with others to promote improvements in policing and fire & rescue services.
- Report our inspection findings/analysis in a clear and compelling way.
- Ensure that our staff have the skills, knowledge and support to do their jobs.

## Working at HMICFRS

Working with us means a chance to make a real difference to the quality of local police, fire & rescue services and the lives of the general public.

We seek to attract intelligent and confident people who are passionate about improving public services to join our team. We engage staff in a wide range of jobs – from inspectors to IT specialists, data analysts and administrators – based in or attached to, one of our three offices (London, Birmingham and Leeds).

We are a small but high-profile organisation, independent from policing, fire & rescue services and government.

We use our website ([www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/](http://www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/)) and Civil Service Jobs ([www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/csr/index.cgi](http://www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/csr/index.cgi)) to advertise vacancies.

### Why join our team?

In this role, you would:

- make a real difference to the quality of policing and fire & rescue services;
- learn valuable skills by being part of an organisation with high media interest;
- have opportunities to develop personal and transferable skills; and
- have the opportunity to improve public services in the UK and help to keep the public safe.

### What are we looking for?

We are looking for people to join us who:

- are committed to continuous improvement, in an environment where performance matters;
- are flexible, adaptive and creative in solving problems and dealing with change;
- have a strong sense of personal ethics and honesty;
- enjoy dealing with external and internal interested parties;
- can effectively organise and plan;
- are professional and customer-focused;
- think in an objective and analytical manner;

- can demonstrate sound interpersonal, communication and relationship-building skills and thrive working as part of a team;
- are able confidently to manage potentially difficult and challenging situations;
- have leadership potential or demonstrated leadership ability;
- understand the sensitivities around the work we do; and
- can interpret complex information and develop and write evidence-based reports.

## **Benefits to Individuals**

- No obligation to work every week;
- Travel expenses covered by HMICFRS;
- Flexible working arrangements;
- Manage work around other commitments and responsibilities;
- Put knowledge and skills developed over time to use and contribute to improving public services; and
- The feel good factor of doing something important and worthwhile.

## **Associate testimonials**

Previous associates have said:

“As an associate, I have been able to bring myself up to speed with recent developments and current thinking in both the police and fire services while enhancing my project management skills in a very interesting piece of work. It’s a nice place to work with a group of very professional colleagues who have a real interest in improving the service to the public.”

“I have been a public servant for most of my working life and all my experience and training over the years has not gone to waste as my associate role means that I can still add value and contribute to improving our services to the public. It is a very rewarding role with immense job satisfaction.”

“I get a lot out of continuing to do work within the public sector and applying some of the skills and experience I developed whilst working within the police service. I feel that I’m adding value which is important for me.”

“At the heart of inspection work is the desire to improve the service for the public and specifically victims. I’ve seen tangible improvements, both at a

force level and nationally, as a result of inspections I've been part of which shows we are making a difference."

## Equal opportunities



We are committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all staff. We will not discriminate on grounds of, gender, gender identity, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, caring responsibilities, part-time working, or any other factor irrelevant to a person's work.

We encourage a diverse workforce and aim to provide a working environment where all staff at all levels are valued and respected, and where discrimination, bullying, promotion of negative stereotyping and harassment are not tolerated.

Our human resources (HR) procedures (for example, for recruitment and selection, staff appraisals and career progression) are based on an assessment of an individual's ability and their suitability for the work. We are committed to providing all staff with opportunities to maximise their skills and achieve their potential, offering flexible working arrangements wherever possible.

As a public authority, HMICFRS has statutory duties placed on it under the Equality Act 2010 that state that it must have due regard of the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity, and
- foster good relations.

We expect all staff to assist the department in meeting these obligations.

We have concluded that membership of any group or organisation that promotes hatred in its philosophy, aims, principles or policies, based on gender, gender identity, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, is incompatible with the work and values of HMICFRS.

## Associate information

If you are successful, you will be registered as an associate and placed on Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) associate register for up to 24 months.

Registration as an associate is not a guarantee of employment. Nor is it a route to becoming a permanent civil servant. The register is simply a list of individuals whom HMICFRS has identified as possessing particular skills or experience that are currently valuable to HMICFRS, and who have successfully applied in a fair and open competition.

While you are on the register, HMICFRS may offer you short-term, project-based work. You will be appointed on duration-based contracts at a pre-agreed rate. We may also be able to offer you a fixed term contract where the piece of work is likely to be for more than 6 months but less than 2 years. When the period of the fixed term appointment comes to an end, you will return to the register provided you have not reached the 24 month limit.

Dependent on the skills required, HMICFRS reserves the right to remove an associate from the register at any point. The associate register is regularly reviewed in line with HMICFRS business need to ensure that the available skills and experience it provides remain focused on our priorities.

Full details will be as available in the associate contract.

## Location of post

Associates working within the inspection teams are categorised as either office-based or home-based workers. Associates who are office-based will be in one of three HMICFRS offices in Leeds, Birmingham or London.

HMICFRS is committed to balancing business needs with the wellbeing of staff and has developed a deployment policy to support this.

## Hours

You will be expected to work a minimum of 7 hours 24 minutes per day excluding meal breaks. From time to time the needs of the business may mean that associates are expected to work additional hours and the expectation is that, unless excessive, such hours will be considered to be included in the agreed daily rate.

## **Annual leave**

You will be eligible for 25 days annual leave, pro-rata, in line with the Home Office terms and conditions as set out in the associate contract.

## **Pension**

This appointment is non-pensionable. However if you are offered a fixed term contract you will be able to opt in to the Civil Service pension scheme.

## **Pay**

Pay is on a day rate, which will be taxed at source.

Rates are set by HMICFRS and are usually between £180 and £300, dependent on the requirements of the contract offered.

You will be paid six weekly in arrears by credit transfer.

If you are offered a fixed term appointment contract you will be engaged on the same fixed term contracts currently used for Home Office civil servants.

## **Travel**

HMICFRS will reimburse travel costs incurred actually and necessarily on its behalf in the course of your duties. All expense claims must be completed in line with Home Office policy. If office-based, associates may not claim for any home-to-office (or vice versa) travel.

## **Sick absence**

You will not be eligible for sick pay from HMICFRS.

## **Continuity of employment**

No employment with a previous employer (other than with a Government Department) will count towards this new appointment as a continuous period of employment for the purpose of employment protection legislation.

## **Notice**

If you have served less than one month continuously and the agreed duration of your contract is also less than one month then you will be entitled to a notice period up to, but not exceeding, the agreed end date of that contract. If you have served

continuously one month or more then you will receive a maximum of five weeks' notice, or the full term of your contract, whichever is the lesser.

## **Acceptance of outside appointments**

You are required to obtain the agreement of the government before accepting any offer of employment outside the Civil Service which would start within two years of leaving Crown employment. This applies if: your official duties in the two years before leaving Crown service (or earlier if the association has been of a continued or repeated nature) resulted in personal involvement with the company or other organisation making the offer; or to access to commercially sensitive information of competitors.

## **Training**

### **Inspection training**

All staff being deployed to fieldwork will be required to attend additional training packages. These are three-day events and are usually held in London, Birmingham and Leeds, although staff are expected to travel if necessary. Overnight accommodation and travel arrangements will be made if required.

### **Corporate Induction Programme**

New entrants are required to attend the mandatory one day corporate induction programme. This is a classroom-based training course aimed at providing non-inspection staff with an overview of the organisation and our main inspection programmes.

### **Organisational training**

Attendance is mandated dependent on an individual's role.

## HMICFRS recruitment process

For your application to be considered at the sift stage you must meet the minimum entry criteria:

You live either in England and Wales for associates working with police forces or England for fire rescue service, depending on the role.

The recruitment process is in three stages:

1. Completion and submission of the application form. Application forms will be assessed against the competencies outlined in the job description. HMICFRS reserve the right to sift on the first or the first and second competencies only dependent on number of applications.
2. If you pass this stage, you may be asked to undertake a timed exercise to assess your written skills. This test can be done remotely, wherever you have access to a computer. A sample written exercise is available on the HMICFRS website: [www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/about-us/working-at-hmicfrs/sample-written-exercise/](http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/about-us/working-at-hmicfrs/sample-written-exercise/) . Alternatively, you may be required to complete a different test, specific to the role for which you are applying. Test requirements will be stated within the job advert where applicable.
3. If you pass the written exercise, you will be invited to attend an interview. This will be a competency-based interview and will cover all competencies stated in the advert. You may be asked to give a presentation as part of your interview. Information will be provided nearer the time.

Once you have submitted your application it cannot be amended; so only submit your application when you have completely finished and answered all the relevant questions.

When you reach the declaration section of the application form you will be presented with a list of statements to read and agree to. If you tick to agree the statements then click the 'continue' button and your application will then be submitted.

Late applications will not be accepted.

Further information and guidance on completing the application questions can be found at Annex A at the end of these notes.

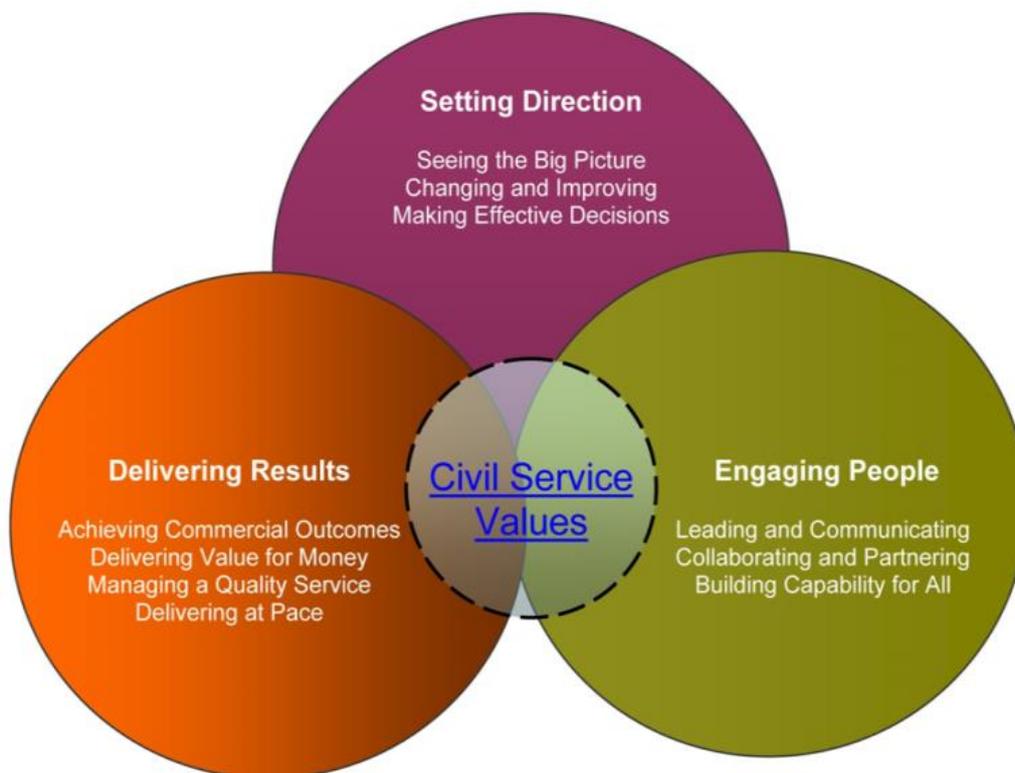
Only one application will be accepted for a vacancy. If multiple applications are submitted and identified at any stage of a campaign, we will only consider the first.

## The competency framework

The competency framework sets out how we want people in, or seconded to, the Civil Service to work. The framework outlines ten competencies which are grouped under the three leadership behaviours. These headings will be used in our vacancies to indicate essential and desirable candidate requirements. Candidates must use the selection process to demonstrate that they have, at the very least, all the essential requirements and, if possible some or all of the desirable ones.

You can access the competency framework on the gov.uk:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-competency-framework](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-competency-framework)



## Reserve list

We may also offer successful applicants a place on the reserve list. This means that we may contact applicants who meet the standard at interview any time in the following 12 months and offer a place on the associate register. We may notify applicants in merit order; this means that applicants obtaining the highest scores at interview may be offered places first.

## **Feedback**

Feedback will only be provided to candidates who reach the interview stage of the recruitment process.

## Pre-employment Procedures

Everyone who applies to work at HMICFRS (whether for a permanent, temporary or associate role) will be required to undertake pre-employment/secondment checks and national security (NSV) and police vetting clearances, which include checks on character and integrity.

You should bring a current, valid travel document (e.g. passport) with you to your interview. EEA citizens are entitled to produce a national identity card or a passport and should bring a residence card if they have one. Your interviewer will use the travel document to verify your identity and a photocopy of your document(s) will be taken to assist with other checks. If you are unable to provide a current, valid travel document, the Home Office will, in exceptional circumstances, consider your representations. If these are accepted, you will be subject to additional checks, based on other documentation. Non-EEA, Swiss, or Turkish nationals will have to demonstrate that they have no time limit or restrictions on their stay. If you are successful at interview, you might be required to produce your identity documents again before being offered a position.

We exercise vigilance and rigour in the recruitment of staff who will be working in sensitive areas of business or with vulnerable groups. For example, where a position involves regularly caring for, supervising, training or being in sole charge of children or vulnerable adults, we will seek enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS check).

All applicants are obliged to complete a security vetting questionnaire or criminal convictions declaration form when applying for a position within HMICFRS this includes checks against the Police Barred and Advisory List. All non-police candidates must undergo non-police personnel vetting (NPPV). Police officers and police staff must undergo force professional standards department checks. The type of form to be completed depends on the level of clearance required for the post. In order for security clearance to be considered, certain pre-employment enquiries will need to be undertaken, for example relating to identity, immigration, and some financial and recent background checks. The relevant security form can be sent under separate, confidential cover to authorised individuals and will normally only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment and vetting process.

Where pre-employment or vetting checks flag security or integrity concerns, the circumstances will be assessed against the Home Office's security vetting policy and HMICFRS' conduct and integrity policy. All information will be judged individually on its merits considering the type of post for which the individual is applying, the nature and seriousness of the offence, the length of time since the offence was committed and the relevance of the conviction or disciplinary finding.

Disclosures about disciplinary findings, convictions or criminal activities provided as part of the recruitment process will be treated in the strictest confidence. A criminal record or disciplinary finding will not necessarily prevent an individual from gaining security clearance or working for HMICFRS.

Failure by applicants to reveal information as part of vetting and pre-employment checks could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment/secondment or termination of a contract/agreement where employment/secondment has already started and then information subsequently comes to light.

## **Security Clearance**

All new recruits to the department must meet certain security standards. All offers of employment are conditional on successful completion of security clearance. New starters cannot be given an unescorted pass or access to HMICFRS assets (including IT systems) and information until their security clearance has been granted at the appropriate level.

A security check should consist of:

- Criminal record: a check against the National Collection of Criminal Records and relevant departmental and police records.
- Nationality and immigration status: particularly relevant if there are specific nationality and residency requirements for the advertised role.
- Security Service records: in accordance with the Security Service Act 1989, where it is necessary to protect national security, or to safeguard the economic well-being of the United Kingdom from threats posed by persons outside of the British Islands, a check against Security Service records will be made.
- Address history: if you have lived at numerous addresses in the UK in the last five years.
- Lived outside UK: you should have been resident in the United Kingdom for the last three years and for five years or more for higher security roles.
- Employment history: if you have had multiple employers in the last five years.
- Credit reference check: if there any financial concerns that could lead to potential vulnerability, a credit reference check is made to assess the financial state of the individual being vetted.
- Others factors: associated with, or have or lived in areas associated with, organisations seeking to disrupt the government, or have family who have associated with organisations and/or individuals known to security services. In

some circumstances further enquiries, including an interview with the subject, may be carried out.

## **Confidentiality**

You will be subject to the provisions of the Official Secrets Act and required to exercise care in the use of official information acquired in the course of official duties, and not to disclose information which is held in confidence.

## **Outside activities and conflicts of interest**

HMICFRS associates are expected to identify all actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest.

A conflict of interest can arise from a direct or professional or personal relationship. You may not take part in any activity which may negatively affect the reputation and/or integrity of HMICFRS. You may not engage in any occupation which may conflict with the interests of your department or be inconsistent with your official position.

You will also be subject to certain restrictions, depending on your grade and the nature of your work, on national and local political activities. These include standing as a candidate in parliamentary or local authority elections, or canvassing on behalf of candidates; and expressing views on matters of political controversy in public speeches or publications.

Associates will not be deployed to any organisation where they have a connection or link that may cause a conflict of interest or appear to do so. This includes, but is not limited to:

- current or former home police force or fire & rescue service;
- a police force or fire & rescue service where a close collaboration exists with your current or former home force/service;
- a police force or fire & rescue service with which you have/had a close association; for example, membership of a working group;
- a close personal relationship with an individual with a direct connection to a police force or fire & rescue service; for example, a partner, ex-partner, neighbour, relative, friend or someone you interact with through clubs/societies/hobbies;
- a police force or fire & rescue service for whom you have worked with in a private capacity, including voluntary or paid work;

- a police force or fire & rescue service in which you or a close associate has a personal interest - financial and/or non-financial;
- a police force or fire & rescue service against with whom you may have had a dispute – real or perceived;
- undertaking any work or role (paid or unpaid) which may contradict or overlap with HMICFRS inspection conclusions or functions;
- providing advice or opinion which may contradict or overlap with HMICFRS conclusions or functions;
- any connection to a police force, fire & rescue service, other body that HMICFRS inspects or organisation with remit over the police or the fire & rescue service which may impact on your, or HMICFRS's, integrity, independence and impartiality – actual, potential or perceived.

You will be asked to complete a declare concerning conflicts of interest as part of your pre-employment checks. It is the responsibility of the associate to highlight upon joining HMICFRS, and as they arise, any new conflict of interest regarding any force, organisation or service he or she cannot inspect. The information provided will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is current.

## **Health check**

If you are recommended for appointment, enquiries will be carried out on health and other matters, to ensure that you are qualified for appointment. To enable these enquiries to be completed, we will need to see your current valid passport. When the enquiries are completed satisfactorily, it will be for the department to make you a formal offer of appointment. We may also require other forms of identification which will be confirmed should you be invited to attend an interview.

## **Checks using personal data**

We will need to conduct checks using applicants personal data provided during the application process, which will include checks against Home Office databases. The personal data supplied will be managed confidentially, securely and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. By making an application you will be providing HMICFRS with consent to use this information.

## **Mandatory declarations scheme and non-police personnel vetting (NPPV)**

HMICFRS intends to introduce a mandatory self-declaration scheme and NPPV check for all HMICFRS staff which strengthens existing HMICFRS and Home Office policies and codes of conduct. Successful candidates will be provided with further details about the scheme once it comes in to effect.

## **Complaints under the Civil Service Commission's recruitment principles**

The department's recruitment processes are underpinned by the principle of selection for appointment on merit on the basis of fair and open competition as outlined in the Civil Service Commission's recruitment principles. If you feel your application has not been treated in accordance with the principles and you wish to make a complaint, you should firstly contact the recruitment inbox (<mailto:Recruitment@hmic.gsi.gov.uk>). Your complaint will be managed by the recruitment team in the first instance and will also be notified to the Home Office and HMICFRS resourcing teams. If you are not satisfied with the response you receive from us, you can contact the Office of the Civil Service Commission.

## Annex A – competency statement guidance notes

### What are competencies?

Competencies are the skills, knowledge and behaviours that lead to successful performance.

The competency framework sets out how we want people in the Civil Service to work. It puts the Civil Service values of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity at the heart of everything we do and is aligned to the three leadership behaviours that every Civil Servant needs to model: set direction, engage people and deliver results.

Civil Servants work in a range of jobs across the country and overseas. Their common thread is that they serve to support the elected government, providing advice to help shape its policies and ensuring seamless and practical implementation in line with those policies.

All of this information is available online. Please visit:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-competency-framework](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-competency-framework).

### Your application

You must show, through the application and interview process, that you have the appropriate level of knowledge, breadth of experience and, where appropriate, professional skill for the post.

In most cases, you will be asked to submit an application that sets out why you are suitable for the post using the essential competency headings as your guide.

Under each heading you should produce a short and snappy statement that describes one relevant example of your best achievement using 1st person singular ('I' not 'we') taking account of any word count rule.

You are advised to use the STAR model:

- **Situation** (what was the setting and conditions; what was your role?)
- **Task** (what specifically needed to be done – when, why, etc?)
- **Action** (what did you do – in terms of your own contribution and ensuring the contribution of others; how you did it and why?)
- **Result** (what was the outcome and did you contribute to it; what difference did you make?).

## Hints and tips

Keep the situation and task elements brief. Concentrate on the action and the result. If the result was not entirely successful, describe what you learned from this and what you would do differently next time.

- Do not use more than 250 words.
- Make sure you include how you overcame any problems or obstacles.
- Keep looking back at the competency indicators and cover the important points.
- Describe your thoughts, actions and feelings rather than just describing what happened.
- Don't forget to include results and show why your actions were effective and/or how you could have improved on what you did.
- Use 'I' not 'we'; this is about your role in the task and how you affected the outcome.
- Use short statements that show the value you added and use your own words.
- Choose your most powerful examples – situations that have lots of substance.

Failure to provide good evidence will not get you through a sift or an interview.

## Checklist

- Have you given yourself enough time to put together a well-thought-out application form?
- Have you reviewed the job description carefully so you have a clear understanding of the role?
- Have you got a copy of the competency framework handy whilst you're putting your examples together?
- Have you chosen your most powerful and relevant examples?
- Have you included the result and described your contribution/impact?
- Did you draft first then refine?
- Have you avoided jargon (assume that the sift panel will have no knowledge of the situation to which you are referring)?

- Have you checked for spelling and typos?
- Have you used the past tense, 'I' and not 'we' and active language such as: 'I organised', 'I accomplished', 'I calculated', etc?
- Have you stuck to the word count limit, where one has been set?
- Have you put yourself in the vacancy manager's shoes and read your application through from their perspective before submitting?

If the answer to each of these question is "yes" – well done!

## **The sift**

The purpose of the sift is to assess and score the evidence provided on the application form. The sift panel, which comprises two or three representatives of the business, will discuss and agree standards against which they assess each application.

There is a single rating scale used throughout government, which allows candidates to compare feedback from applications made to different departments. You must score at least four for each essential competency (minimum standard). If the competition is strong, achieving a score of four for each competency may not be enough to secure an interview.

HMICFRS operates the Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) which sees all GIS applicants meeting the minimum standard invited to interview. If applicants who consider themselves as having a disability meet the minimum criteria for the post, they get an interview automatically.

Other assessment activity

All HMICFRS interview panels test candidates on three levels:

- Suitability for the job.
- Suitability for technical/specialist skill (when appropriate).
- Suitability for the grade.

To help with this, some recruitment campaigns will include an additional assessment activity as part of the selection process. This could be:

- Written exercise.
- Work sample exercises.
- Group role play.

- Presentation (which may involve a follow up question and answer session).
- Situational judgment test.

If this is the case, candidates will be made aware beforehand.

## **Preparing for an interview**

If you have achieved the pass mark set by the sift panel, you will be invited to attend an interview. The purpose of the interview is to test your suitability for the requirements of the role and gives all candidates an opportunity to express their views and present their evidence

You need to prepare well for a good interview – fail to prepare, prepare to fail.

The interview will be based on the competencies that were defined in the vacancy advertisement and will last approximately 45 minutes, although this may vary depending on the role and the number competencies being assessed.

Don't be put off by the panel taking notes. It's important that they make a record of your answers so that they are able to score you at the end of the interview and provide feedback at the end of the process.

The interview, combined with any other selection activity, will inform the panel which candidate is right for the job based on their merit. The job will be offered to the person who would do it best.

## **Checklist**

- Read through your application form to refresh your memory of the evidence you provided.
- Think about how you might expand on the examples you gave at the interview.
- Think about other strong examples you could use.
- Arrange a practice interview with people your trust (friends, colleagues, current manager, etc) - practice makes perfect.
- Research the business and the business unit.
- Talk to the vacancy contact about the post (see the job description for details).
- Make sure you know where the interview is taking place and how to get there.
- Make sure you take along all requested ID documents.

- Think about what to wear, your posture and your non-verbal behaviour.
- Remember, it's not about being good enough for the job, it's being the best candidate for the job – interviews are competitions.
- Remember that pretty much everyone feels the same about interviews – they make you nervous; know what works best for you in terms of calming your nerves.