Application guidance

Throughout the recruitment process, candidates will be assessed using competency-based questions (CBQs). This page provides guidance on getting the most out of your answers.

Application forms and interviews

On most application forms and interviews, we will ask candidates to provide evidence against the 'Personal Qualities', 'National Occupational Standards' and 'Essential Criteria' for the position they are applying for. For competency-based questions we are looking for candidates to provide us with a real-life example of a situation they have experienced and dealt with. Read the 'Role Profile' (attached to the advert) and 'Job Description' (attached to the bottom of the role profile) for the position; these will contain a breakdown of the criteria your answers will be marked against - ensure you understand the key points we are looking for.

Choosing your example

Identify the correct example to use in your situation, choose one which clearly demonstrates the relevant competency and provides you with the opportunity to describe your own personal contribution.

Structuring your answer

We would advise using the STAR technique to get the most out of your examples.

- **Situation**—What was the situation?
- **Task**—What needed to be done?
- **Action**—What did you do?
- **Result**—What was the outcome?

Hints and tips

- Use 'I' to show your clear contribution
- Use active verbs
- Be truthful, factual and use your own words
- Concentrate on what you did and keep everything else to a minimum
- Stick to the word count, successful applicants make the most of this
- Use the spell check facility in English (UK)

Don't say...

A meeting was set up to show where delays were occurring.

Say this instead...

I arranged a meeting and compiled data so I could identify where delays were occurring.

Don't say...

Feedback showed that delays were occurring at the same times each week, so we discussed this during a problem solve.

Say this instead...

After collecting and analysing relevant feedback, I identified a pattern of delays. I assessed the impact and invited key colleagues to discuss and agree an action plan.

Don't say...

I took a lead role in dealing with the problems and we brought up lots of possible issues. Because the right people had been invited, we were able to come up with solutions for most of them quite easily.

Say this instead...

I took a lead role by managing the process and ensuring everyone had the opportunity to contribute. Having identified the key stakeholders, I documented all the issues and assessed and agreed the necessary actions.

Don't say...

After problem solving, we recorded the outcomes and made some recommendations for change. There was one area that we couldn't resolve, so we escalated it up the management chain.

Say this instead...

I ensured the outcomes were collected and after careful analysis, I made some recommendations to our team leader. I recognised that one of the solutions proposed needed to be discussed further, so I escalated this to the management team along with my analysis of the risks involved and my recommended solution.