



HM Prison &  
Probation Service

# CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK





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# ABOUT THE AGENCY



# What is HM Prison and Probation Service?

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is the agency responsible for delivering the Government's vision and investment to make prisons places of safety and reform, and to continue to transform our work in the community.

It replaced the National Offender Management Service on 1 April 2017.

Our work is about people: reforming those sentenced by the courts; keeping the public safe; and giving our staff – working across probation, prison and headquarters – the tools and support they need to do this.

## What is our purpose?

Our main purpose is  
to protect the public and to  
*‘prevent victims by changing lives’*

## PURPOSE

Prevent Victims by Changing Lives – we work to make a real difference to the lives of others and, in doing so, protect the public.

## HUMANITY

Our job is to deliver the sentence and orders of the courts safely and securely, within a culture of decency and respect that enables rehabilitation.

As an employer and as colleagues we respect and value everyone and look to motivate everyone to be the best they can be.

## OPENNESS

All of must exercise our authority wisely and with integrity, with decisions that are fair and consistent.

As colleagues we innovate, share and learn as we develop and improve our professional practice with investment and trust in the skills of our staff to do their jobs well.

## TOGETHER

We work as a team to protect the public and reduce reoffending.

# What is HMPPS Responsible For?

The Agency is responsible for:

- the National Probation Service
- Public Sector Prisons (inc. Young Offender Institutions and Women's Prisons)
- Private Prisons
- Community Rehabilitation Companies and
- all operational contracts relating to Prisons, Probation and Community Interventions (including Prisoner Escort and Court Services and Electronic Monitoring)



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# ABOUT HMP NOTTINGHAM



# Our Vision



We are changing HMP & YOI Nottingham to provide a decent, safe, clean, place in which to live and work. We will instil security and order to ensure that Nottingham is a safe and calm prison. Our staff are confident and consistent in both the delivery of our regimes and their own decisions. We will effectively communicate with our staff, prisoners and stakeholders. Our compassionate and professional staff will build positive relationships with prisoners to reduce reoffending and support successful resettlement.







# Our Mission



## **CHANGING**

We will manage change effectively, getting the best outcomes we can and improving continuously

## **CLEAN**

We will ensure that the environment is free from dirt, clutter and graffiti.

## **CALM**

We will maintain a calm, safe, stable environment. This will give prisoners the opportunity to have the headspace to think about personal transformation.

## **CONFIDENT**

Through training and support, our staff will have confidence in their own abilities to manage prisoners and to deal with conflict. They will make good decisions and learn from mistakes.

## **COMPASSIONATE**

We will be compassionate in our dealings with each other, understanding the pressures that we face and doing whatever we can to alleviate those pressures. We will try to make our colleagues' job easier wherever we can.

## **CONSISTENT**

We will deliver the regime consistently and predictably ensuring prisoners have access to the facilities they should expect. Our decisions will be consistently applied without 'fear or favour' but will be responsive to the situation.

## **COMMUNICATE**

We will be authentic in our communication and will ensure our messages are clear and direct. We will listen and pay attention remaining open to other points of view.



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# ABOUT THE SELECTION PROCESS



# Civil Service Code

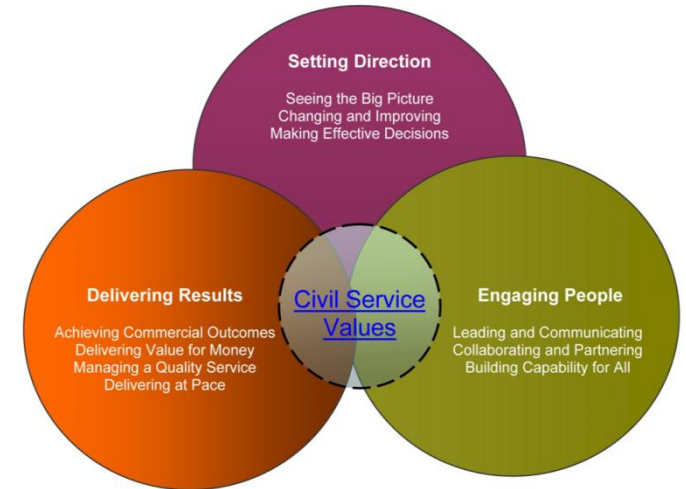
Civil Servants are appointed on merit on the basis of fair and open competition and are expected to carry out their roles with dedication and a commitment to the Civil Service and its core values: integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality. In this code:

- ‘integrity’ is putting the obligations of public service above your own personal interests
- ‘honesty’ is being truthful and open
- ‘objectivity’ is basing your advice and decisions on rigorous analysis of the evidence
- ‘impartiality’ is acting solely according to the merits of the case and serving equally well governments of different political persuasions

These core values support good government and ensure the achievement of the highest possible standards in all that the Civil Service does. This in turn helps the Civil Service to gain and retain the respect of ministers, Parliament, the public and its customers.

# Civil Service Competency Framework

The Competency Framework sets out how we want people in the Civil Service to work. The framework outlines competencies which are grouped under 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.



The full framework is available online at the following link:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/497684/NOM\\_S\\_competency\\_framework.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/497684/NOM_S_competency_framework.pdf)

**Competencies are used to establish suitability for a post because if you have done something well in the past then its expected that you can do it again in the future.**

# Civil Service Competency Framework

Competencies are short statements, up to a maximum of 250 words, defining the behaviour and actions needed to perform well in a particular job.

If you apply for a job in HMPPS you will be asked to provide competency examples from the Civil Service Competency Framework.

Getting your competency statements right is essential as sift and interview panels will use them to assess your suitability for the job and to compare you against the other applicants.

There are some general guidelines for preparing competency statements.

Your examples should be:

- truthful and based on fact
- grammatically correct
- spelled correctly
- detailed enough to explain what you personally did

# Preparing 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 1<sup>st</sup> person singular ('I' not 'we') taking account of any word count rule.

You are advised to use the **STAR** model:

- **S**ituation (what was the setting and conditions, and what was your role)
- **T**ask (what specifically needed to be done – when, why, etc.)
- **A**ction (what did you do, how you did it and why)
- **R**esult (What the outcome was and how you contributed to it)

# Your Application – Key Points

The application form is your first opportunity to say why you'd be the best person for the job.

It is a competition so you really need to ensure that you give your best and strongest competency-based examples to reflect what the post requires.

Make it as easy as possible for the sift panel to assess your suitability for the job. This means thinking about the relevance of your examples and how you set them out in your application form.

Unless told otherwise, use one example per competency.

Stick to the word count rule if it's in place.

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

# Preparing Your Application - Your 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 your 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 you are referring to)?
- ☐ 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 purpose of the sift panel is to assess and score the evidence provided by the applicants and to determine who has the evidence strongest for each competency.

The sift panel, which is made up of two or three representatives of the business, will discuss and agree standards against which they assess each application and ensure that sifts are in line with equal opportunities.

You may find that on occasions you are sifted in or sifted out with the same evidence. This could happen because each exercise is a separate competition with different standards being set.

Each panel member will read the evidence provided by individuals and then rate the evidence against the required competency level.

Every application is rated by all panel members who then discuss their individual scores before agreeing on a final score.

HM Prison & Probation Service 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.

# The 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 of 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.

# Other Assessment Activity

All interview panels test candidates on 3 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
- Group role play
- Presentation (which may involve a follow up question and answer session)
- Situational judgement test

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

# Preparing for an Interview – Your 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.



# Reserve Lists



- HM Prison & Probation Service reserves the right to create a reserve list where a competition identifies more appointable candidates than there are available vacancies.
- Any reserve lists may be used for up to 12 months to fill the same role or other similar roles with the same essential criteria without further testing of merit.
- If you are eligible for inclusion on a reserve list, you will receive an e-mail to that effect at the end of the process, containing further information on the conditions of the list.

# 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.

The following conditions will affect your security clearance and therefore may affect your eligibility for our vacancies

- Criminal record: If you have criminal records
- Nationality and Immigration status: Particularly relevant if there are specific nationality and residency requirements for the advertised role.
- Address History: If you have lived at numerous addresses in the UK in the last 5 years.
- Lived outside UK: You should have been resident in the United Kingdom for the last 3 years and for 5 years or more for higher security roles.
- Employment History: If you have had multiple employers in the last 5 years.
- Credit Reference Check: If there any financial concerns that could lead to potential vulnerability. The 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.



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# Good Luck!

