



HM Prison &
Probation Service

Success Profiles

Candidate guidance

May 2019 v1.0



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1. Prerequisite

The candidate guidance has been designed to provide individuals with:

- general information on the new Success Profiles Framework,
- an explanation of Success Profile elements and what HMPPS is looking for when assessing these,
- an overview of the Recruitment process,
- how Success Profile elements are assessed and what type of questions may be asked in interviews,
- links to further Success Profiles information and sources.

A wide variety of information, training and guidance on how to prepare for interviews and the assessments can be found online and are excluded from this toolkit as they apply in the same way as they have up until now. A CS Learning training can be found [here](#).

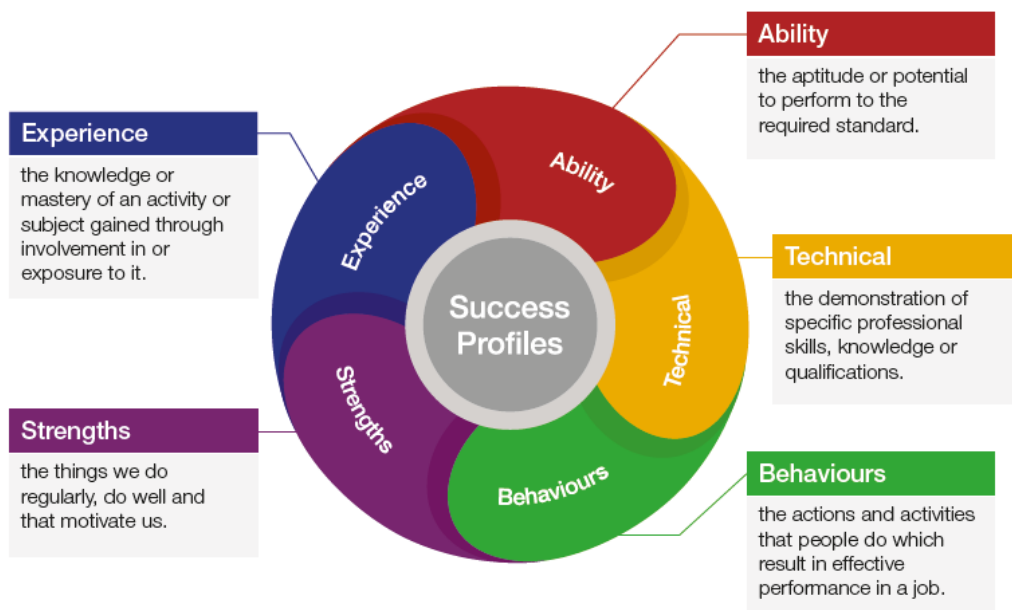


2. What is the Success Profile Framework?

The Success Profile Framework **moves recruitment away from using a purely competency based system** of assessment. It introduces a more flexible framework which assesses candidates against a range of elements using a variety of selection methods. This means for each role we advertise, we consider what you will need to demonstrate in order to be successful. This gives us the best possible chance of finding the right person for the job, drives up performance and improves diversity and inclusivity.

1. What are Success Profiles?

Our Success Profile is made up of five elements. The elements are **Behaviours**, **Experience**, **Ability**, **Strengths** and **Technical**. These form the basis of recruitment and selection. Below is an overview of the elements and their meaning:



Not all of the elements are relevant to every role, and will vary depending on the profession, level and type of role. You should ensure you read the job description carefully to see what elements are required for the specific job you are applying for.



1.1 Behaviours



When looking at behaviours, we want to get an understanding of the actions and activities that you have done (or would do) that result in effective performance in a job. As behaviours can be observed and measured, they can help us to predict what your performance in the role could be.

Behaviours are similar to competencies but they are not the same. The Behaviours are specific to the grade level of the job role. You will not be asked to demonstrate all Behaviours for one role. The Civil Service has defined a set of [behaviours](#) that, when demonstrated, are associated with job success.

The framework consists of the following which are defined below:



Seeing the Big Picture

- Understand how your role fits with and supports organisational objectives.
- Recognise the wider Civil Service priorities and ensure work is in the national interest.



Changing & Improving

- Seek out opportunities to create effective change and suggest innovative ideas for improvement.
- Review ways of working, including seeking and providing feedback.



Making effective Decisions

- Use evidence and knowledge to support accurate, expert decisions and advice.
- Carefully consider alternative options, implications and risks of decisions.



Leadership

- Show pride and passion for public service. Create and engage others in delivering a shared vision.
- Value difference, diversity and inclusion, ensuring fairness and opportunity for all.



Communicating & Influencing

- Communicate purpose and direction with clarity, integrity and enthusiasm.
- Respect the needs, responses and opinions of others.



Working together

- Form effective partnerships and relationships with people both internally and externally, from a range of diverse backgrounds, sharing information, resources and support.



Developing Self & Others

- Focus on continuous learning and development for self, others and the organisation as a whole.



Managing a Quality Service

- Deliver service objectives with professional excellence, expertise and efficiency, taking account of diverse customer needs.



Delivering at Pace

- Take responsibility for delivering timely and quality results with focus and drive.



1.2 Strengths



When looking at your strengths, we want to find out whether you and the organisation or job role are a good fit. We will look at what you enjoy doing and what you do well and often. By ensuring that the role is the right fit for you, you are more likely to enjoy it and perform well.

The Civil Service [Strengths Dictionary](#) is a set of defined strengths that are relevant to the culture and type of work that we do. Strengths are not defined by grade.

There are three elements which determine whether something is a strength:

- Performance:** •you can perform an activity/ behaviour to a high level of capability or proficiency.
- Engagement:** •you feel motivated, enthused and empowered when doing the activity.
- Use:** •you do the activity regularly and as often as possible.

The defined list of CS strengths¹ are below:

Adaptable	Analytical	Authentic	Catalyst
Challenger	Change Agent	Confident	Courageous
Decisive	Disciplined	Efficient	Emotionally Intelligent
Enabler	Explainer	Focussed	Inclusive
Influencer	Improver	Learner	Mediator
Mission	Motivator	Negotiator	Networker
Organiser	Precise	Preventer	Problem Solver
Relationship Builder	Resilient	Responsible	Service focussed
Strategic	Team Leader	Team Player	Visionary

The strengths are mapped to the most relevant Civil Service Behaviour(s) but any strength can be assessed if suitable for the role.

¹ Definitions of the strengths can be found here: [CS Strengths Dictionary \(CSL\)](#) or [gov.uk](#).



Below you can see how the strengths are mapped to the behaviours:

Seeing the Big Picture

- Challenger
- Mission
- Strategic
- Visionary

Making Effective Decisions

- Analytical
- Decisive
- Preventer
- Problem Solver

Communicating and Influencing

- Authentic
- Emotionally Intelligent
- Explainer
- Inclusive
- Influencer

Developing Self and Others

- Enabler
- Explainer
- Inclusive
- Learner

Delivering at Pace

- Adaptable
- Disciplined
- Catalyst
- Focussed
- Organiser
- Resilient
- Responsible

Changing and Improving

- Adaptable
- Courageous
- Change Agent
- Improver
- Problem Solver
- Resilient

Leadership

- Confident
- Change Agent
- Inclusive
- Motivator
- Team Leader
- Visionary

Working Together

- Challenger
- Emotionally Intelligent
- Inclusive
- Negotiator
- Networker
- Relationship Builder
- Team Player
- Mediator

Managing a Quality Service

- Disciplined
- Efficient
- Focussed
- Organiser
- Precise
- Preventer
- Service Focussed



1.3 Ability



When testing your ability we want to understand your aptitude for a particular type of work.

We assess ability to help predict future performance. This can help recruiting managers to get a real understanding of whether you have the skills required for the role and assess your suitability for the type of work the Civil Service does. This is usually done via psychometric tests.

1.4 Experience



When looking at your experience, we are looking for examples of things you have previously achieved or your knowledge in a particular field which are relevant to the job role.

We are not looking at how much time you have served in a particular field, but rather how you performed. Sometimes experience can be transferable from a non-work context. Skills gained through voluntary work or a hobby, such as teamwork or communication, can demonstrate the experience required for the role.

1.5 Technical



The roles within the professions are sometimes specialised and you may be asked to show that you have specific skills, knowledge or qualifications to be successful.

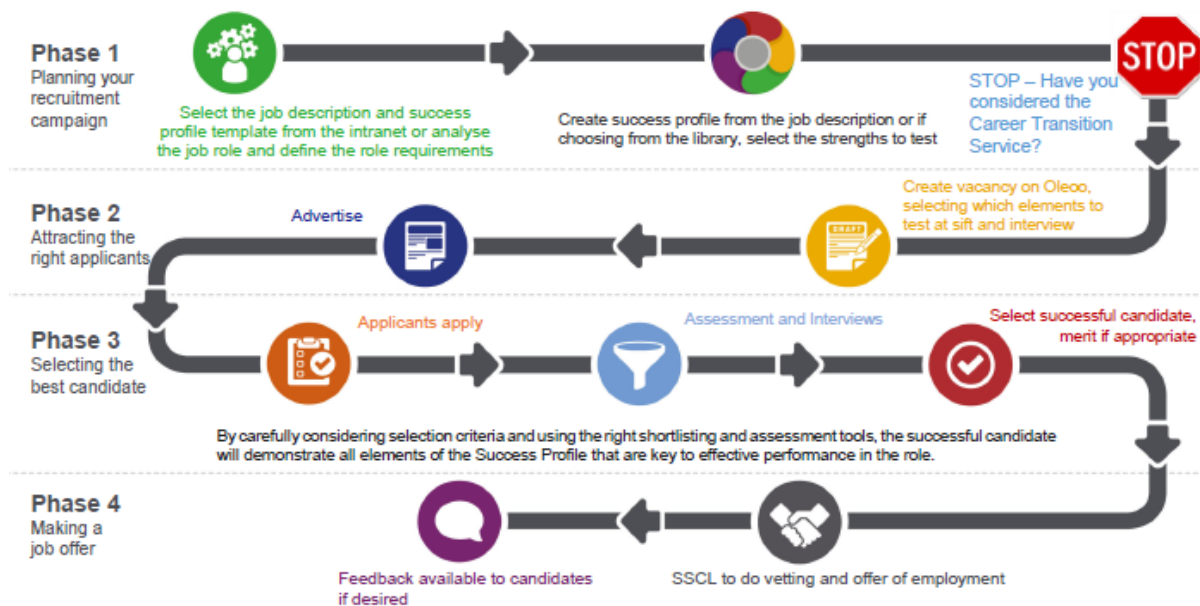
One example of a specialised role is a job in Government Finance, this may require candidates to have accountancy qualifications and knowledge of the way Finance is managed within Government.

Resources and further material: [CS Behaviours](#), [CS Ability](#), [CS Experience](#), [CS Technical](#), [CS Strengths](#), [CS Success Profile Introduction \(video\)](#); [You Tube CS Success Profile introduction](#)



2. Recruitment Process

This flowchart shows the typical end-to-end recruitment process and how this fits with the Success Profile Framework.



Phase 1

- The job advert and job description will explain in detail all relevant skills you will need for the job. It will also explain how the assessment will be conducted.
- Gov.uk, CS Learning, YouTube are a few examples where you can find information about Success profiles and how the selection process might work.

Phase 2

- After you have familiarised yourself with the job role, requirements, Success Profiles and the application process, the next step is to apply via justice jobs.

Phase 3

- Once your application is successful you will be invited for the interview and/or further assessments may take place.

Phase 4

- You will be informed if you have been successful.
- You may be placed on a merit list and contacted again once there is a vacancy.
- If you have been unsuccessful, you will be notified and you can request feedback from Shared Services.
- If you are successful you will receive a formal offer and the onboarding process will start.



3. Assessment & Interview

We assess candidates in a number of different ways, depending on the type of role and level you are applying for. Using a range of assessment methods helps us to more accurately match people to the essential requirements of the job. For example, you may be asked to complete an application form or to provide a CV and supporting statement, which may help us assess your experiences, technical qualifications and behaviours or you may be asked to attend an assessment centre or complete an online test to assess your abilities. Often a combination of these approaches will be used and more than one element may be tested within the same assessment method.

Details of which elements will be assessed and how we will assess you against these, are included in the job description and advertisement.

The table below sets out some of the most common assessment methods used in recruitment and selection. It shows the stage the assessment method is most likely to be used at and which element(s) of the Success Profile Framework it assesses. The colours used in the table correspond to the colours of each element of the Success Profile Framework.

Success Profile element	Sift					Assessment(s)					
	Application Form	CV/Statement of Suitability	Expression of Interest	Aptitude Tests	Telephone/Video Interview	Interview	Presentation	In-Tray Exercise	Written Analysis/Exercise	Personality Test	Assessment Centre
B	Green	Green	Green	Grey	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
E	Blue	Blue	Blue	Grey	Blue	Blue	Blue	Grey	Grey	Grey	Blue
A	Grey	Grey	Grey	Red	Grey	Grey	Red	Red	Red	Grey	Red
S	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Purple	Purple	Grey	Grey	Grey	Purple	Purple
T	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Grey	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Grey	Yellow

Part of the assessment process will usually involve an **interview**. Generally this will be face to face but we sometimes use telephone or video interviews.

The purpose of all the interviews is to assess your suitability for the role. It will usually last 30-60 minutes and you may be asked to describe specific occasions when you have demonstrated a certain skill or behaviour.

Before you attend an interview, look carefully at the job description and think about examples you can give of times when you have previously demonstrated the behaviours outlined. You may also wish to consider how you would handle similar situations in the future.

You may also be asked questions about what interests you and what you enjoy doing. These questions will help the interview panel assess your strengths and preferred style of working. The [Civil Service Strengths Dictionary](#) will give you an idea of the strengths we look for, although you will never be expected



to demonstrate all of these for one job role. Before the interview it would be helpful to reflect on what you feel are your personal strengths and preferred ways of working.

CS Learning provides supporting material, tips and in-depth training on [applying for jobs using success profiles](#).

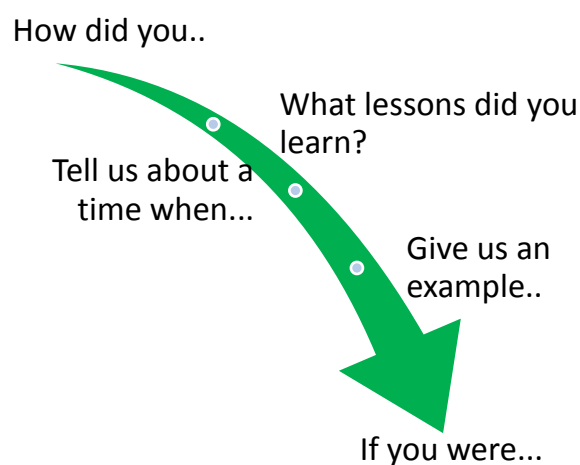
3.1 Behaviours

Behaviours can be assessed in a number of ways and at various stages of the recruitment process:



- Depending on the type of assessment, for example in an application form or at an interview, you may be asked to give examples of when you have demonstrated a particular behaviour (work experience, volunteer work, hobby).
- You may be asked how you would behave in a given situation, for example through situational interview questions.
- You could also be asked to demonstrate a behaviour in real-time, for example during a structured behavioural assessment.
- Your behaviours may be assessed alongside other elements of the Success Profile to get a more rounded picture of your suitability for the role.

The following are styles of behaviour related questions that could be used (but not limited to these):





3.2 Strengths

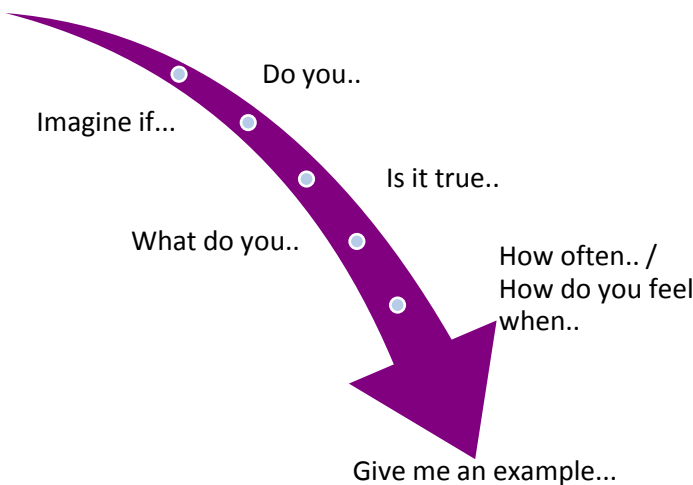


There won't be a list of the strengths being included within job adverts, as the idea of the assessment is to get a true indication of what the individuals' strengths are.

- If you attend an interview you may be asked questions to understand whether you have strengths relevant to the job role. It is important to remember that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions.
- Do not rehearse your answers because we are looking for your initial response. The qualities required for the role will be described in the job description.
- The best way to prepare is to reflect on what you feel your personal strengths are and your preferred ways of working.
- Your strengths may be assessed alongside other elements of the Success Profile to get a more rounded picture of your suitability for the role.
- Questions can be repeated, however they will not be reframed, rephrased or explained.
- Interviewers will not ask further probes.

The following are styles of strengths questions that could be used (but not limited to these):

What, when, how.....



Examples:

- How do you find it to embrace change?
- I am detail-oriented. How true is this of you?
- What are you most passionate about?

Once the behaviours that are being assessed have been chosen, we may choose strengths questions which will either explore **breadth** or **depth** of strengths connected to the role.

We may choose strengths questions that are different to the selected behaviours but are still relevant to the role, to measure **breadth**.



We may choose to drill down further into the behaviours and ask strengths questions that match the behaviour questions to explore your engagement with the behaviours (**depth**).





Take the example of the EO Compliance Caseworker. The Civil Service **Behaviours** that have been chosen are:

- Working Together (WT);
- Making Effective Decisions (MED),
- Managing a Quality Service (MQS)

As such the **strengths** could be as follows:

Breadth (different to the Behaviours chosen)	Depth (mapped to the Behaviours)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explainer (Communicating and Influencing) • Responsible (Delivering at Pace) • Problem Solver (Changing and Improving) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical (MED) • Decisive (MQS) • Team Player (WT)

3.3 Ability



Ability can be assessed at various stages of the recruitment process but is often done at the beginning.

- Ability can be for example assessed using tests, often in an online internet-based format.
- Your ability may be assessed alongside other elements of the Success Profile to get a more rounded picture of your suitability for the role.

3.4 Experience



We will be looking at your experience, career history and achievements that are relevant to the specific job role.

- Some of the assessment methods which may be used to understand your experience include: Application form, CV, Interview.
- Your experience may be assessed alongside other elements of the Success Profile to get a more rounded picture of your suitability.



3.5 Technical



A number of the professions have a professional framework which have been designed to assess the specific skills, qualifications and knowledge needed for roles within that profession.

- If the role you are applying for is within a profession, additional information about the technical requirements for that role will be included within the job description.
- If there is a requirement for a particular qualification or membership of a professional body, you may be asked to provide evidence of your qualification(s) or membership.
- Your technical/professional skills may be assessed alongside other elements of the Success Profile to get a more rounded picture of your suitability for the role.

4. Feedback

After the recruitment process you may wish to request feedback. Shared Services will provide you with that information.

