

Application and Interview Guidance

We want you to feel confident and prepared when applying for a role and interviewing with us. We have put together some tips to help you.

Before you apply

Read the job description and person specification carefully: it explains the main responsibilities and skills we're looking for.

Save a copy: keep copy of the recruitment pack and your application handy. They will be useful when preparing for interviews or assessments. Once the vacancy has closed the recruitment pack will no longer be available on our website.

If you are not eligible to work in the UK then we are unable to consider your application. We will ask you to provide proof of your eligibility to work in the UK as part of the recruitment process.

It is our policy not to consider applicants that were previously unsuccessful at interview and selection for the same job role.

Completing your application

We ask that all candidates complete our standard application form. This ensures that the information we receive is consistent for all applicants, is focused on the knowledge, skills and experience required for the role. It also enables the recruitment panel to fairly assess the information provided against the structured criteria.

Personal Details

The first page of the application form should be completed fully. This page is for HR use only and contains important information for us to process your application. It is not shared with the recruitment panel.

Education, Qualifications, Training and Employment History

You should complete all relevant sections detailing your relevant education, training, work experience and technology skills. You can add sections/continue on a separate sheet if needed.

Knowledge, Skills and Competencies

We also ask you to complete some further information to demonstrate your knowledge, skills and competency for the role. In this section, you should:

Answer the section fully: you will be asked to explain how you meet the skills, knowledge and experience required for the role. The recruitment panel will give your answers a score, so take your time and answer carefully. If we have lots of

applications that meet the essential criteria, we will look at whether your application meets the desirable criteria, including the competencies in this section, to create a shortlist for interview.

Use real examples: show us how you've used the skill or behaviour in real life. For example, for communication, describe a situation where you communicated effectively to solve a difficult issue. Use the [STAR \(situation, task, action, result\) method](#) to help structure your answer.

Be specific: focus on what you did as an individual, not just what the team achieved. Use plain English and avoid jargon to make your answers easier to understand. You should complete the boxes with no more than 200 words per answer.

Stay relevant: use examples that are relevant to the role you're applying for and the questions asked.

Preparing for interview

If your application is shortlisted for interview, you will be invited to complete an assessment and attend a competency-based interview (more details will be provided if you are selected). In preparation for your interview, you should:

Prepare examples: think of times you showed the skills, knowledge and experience listed in the job description. Use the STAR method (situation, task, action, result) to keep your answers clear.

Do your research: learn more about what we do. This shows genuine interest and helps you connect your experience to the role. We recommend reading through our [website](#) and [LinkedIn page](#).

Understand our values: at SPSO we base our actions on [our values](#). Read all about how we put our values into practice.

Demonstrate the right behaviours: the competencies on the person specification set out the behaviours that should be modelled in the job role. Be ready to explain how you have demonstrated similar behaviours in your work.

Have questions ready: at the end of your interview, you will have a chance to ask questions. Think of a few in advance.

Feedback

Due to the large volume of applications we receive, we are not able to provide feedback on individual applications that do not reach the interview and assessment stage of the recruitment process.

We will, however, ensure that, if requested, feedback is provided to candidates that have completed the interview and assessment.

Disability Confident

Under the Equality Act 2010, a disability is defined as a physical or mental condition which has a long-term and substantial effect on your daily life.

SPSO is a Disability Confident – Committed employer. This means that, in our recruitment practices, we commit to:

- Interviewing applicants with a disability who successfully evidence the essential criteria on a person specification and consider them on their abilities;
- Providing an inclusive and accessible recruitment process;
- Making reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process so disabled job applicants have the best opportunity to demonstrate that they can do the job.

You should indicate on the application form if you wish to submit your application as a Disability Confident applicant. This will ensure that your application is assessed against the essential criteria on the person specification and if it meets the essential criteria, you will be offered an interview. This section of the form is for HR use only and is not shared with the recruitment panel.

When we make arrangements for the interview and assessment, we will ask you to tell us if you require any reasonable adjustments to the process. For example, more time to complete and assessment, an adjustment to the location for the interview or to review the interview questions in advance. You should contact our HR team at recruitment@spsso.gov.scot for advice and guidance on how we can support disabled candidates during the recruitment process.

Further information and our full [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#) is available on our website.