**Welsh Government**

**External Candidate Recruitment Guidance**

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If you have any questions relating to the information contained in this guidance or with the application process, please email the Shared Service Centre at SharedServiceHelpdesk@gov.wales.

1. **Welcome**

Thank you for your interest in working for the Welsh Government team at this important time. Our aim is to help the First Minister and Welsh Ministers to build a fairer, more equal and greener Wales as we continue to face new challenges.

Team working is at the heart of everything we do so our jobs will suit people who are capable of developing collaborative relationships with a mix of people at all levels. You will need to be open to ideas from a range of sources, building strong partnerships across public services, the third sector, the trade unions and business in Wales. The First Minister has set a framework of social partnership: working together with our partners to solve problems and find solutions to the challenges facing Wales. The Welsh Government has an excellent track record of working in partnership with its trade unions. We support staff to join a recognised trade union as an important mechanism for making sure their voice is heard in the workplace.

The Welsh Government is accountable to the people of Wales through the Senedd Cymru/Welsh Parliament. We aim to meet high standards of transparency and openness, and demonstrate honesty, objectivity, integrity and impartiality in everything we do. We aim to create a working environment which is stimulating, supportive, diverse, challenging and adaptable

We work hard to create a supportive and inclusive environment for all staff to grow and perform to the best of their ability.

This candidate guidance has been developed to assist you in applying for an opportunity to work in the Welsh Government. It includes useful advice on:

* The Assessment Process
* How to evidence your skills, experience and ability against the criteria listed on the Job Advert
* Terms of Appointment
1. **Points to Note**
* **Diversity and Equality**

The Welsh Government is committed to providing services which embrace diversity and which promote equality of opportunity. This is underpinned by the Equality Act 2010 and will be adhered to at each stage of the recruitment process. Our goal is to ensure that these commitments are also embedded in our day-to-day working practices with all our customers, colleagues and partners.

We are committed to being an anti-racist organisation and increasing diversity in the Welsh Government by removing barriers and supporting all our staff to reach their potential. We are committed to recruiting Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people and disabled people who are currently under-represented in Welsh Government.

We welcome applications from everyone regardless of age, marriage and civil partnership (both same sex and opposite sex), impairment or health condition, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender identity or gender expression.

We are a Stonewall Diversity Champion and a Disability Confident Level 3 (Leader) organisation. Key to supporting this work and providing peer support are five Board sponsored Staff Networks (Disability Awareness and Support (DAAS); Minority Ethnic Support Network (MESN); Mind Matters (Mental health and well-being); PRISM (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex +) and Women Together.

* **Disability Confident**

The Welsh Government has adopted the social definition of disability, in which it is recognised that barriers in society act to disable people who have impairments or health conditions, who are neurodivergent or who use British Sign Language. We are committed to removing barriers so that all (or potential new staff) can perform at their best.

We guarantee to interview any disabled person who meets the minimum criteria for the post. By ‘minimum criteria’ we mean that you must provide us with evidence, at each stage of the assessment process before interview, which demonstrates you generally meet the job description requirements. We are committed to the employment and career development of disabled people.

If you have an impairment or health condition, if you are neurodivergent or use British Sign Language and need to discuss reasonable adjustments for any part of this recruitment process, or wish to discuss how we will put in place any adjustments if you were to be successful, please email SharedServiceHelpdesk@gov.wales as soon as possible and a member of the team will contact you to discuss requirements and any questions you may have.

* **Welsh Language**

The Welsh Government acknowledges the importance of developing and growing its bilingual workforce. Applications for any post can be submitted in either Welsh or English. Applications submitted in Welsh will not be treated less favourably than applications submitted in English

* **A Great Place to work for Veterans**

We offer veterans who meet the minimum standard on each of the job’s essential criteria the opportunity to go directly to the next stage of selection. If you have completed at least one year in her Majesty’s Armed Forces (as a regular or Reserve) and are in transition from the Armed Forces, or no longer a member, you can apply for roles in the Civil Service under the Great Place to Work Veterans initiative: (<http://www.gov.wales/greatplacetowork>).

* **Eligibility**

Posts that are recruited to as part of this recruitment campaign are broadly open to UK nationals, those with right to remain and work in the UK and those that meet the Civil Service Nationality Rules only. Check your eligibility here:

* + [**UK Visas and Immigration - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)**](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration)
	+ [**Nationality rules - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nationality-rules)

Prior to appointment, all successful applicants will be required to produce original, acceptable documents as part of the pre-employment cheks. If it becomes apparent at a later stage in the process that you aren’t eligible to apply, your application will be withdrawn, or offer retracted.

**iv) Planning your Application**

Before you make an application you should carefully read the Job Advert and assure yourself that you can provide sufficient evidence against each of the criteria listed. Only candidates who are deemed to have provided sufficient evidence, may progress beyond the application sift stage.

You should plan the completion of your application being mindful of the closing date for the vacancy, as this is a fixed date that will not be negotiated (except where a reasonable adjustment is appropriate and has been agreed beforehand).

**v) How to Apply**

To apply, you will be asked to register for an account on the Welsh Government on-line recruitment system using an email address. It is recommended that you select an email address to which only you have access to and one which you can access at all times, as this will be our main method of communication with you during the selection process.

If you have an impairment or health condition, if you are neurodivergent or use British Sign Language and need to discuss reasonable adjustments for any part of this recruitment process, or wish to discuss how we will put in place any adjustments if you were to be successful, please email SharedServiceHelpdesk@gov.wales as soon as possible and a member of the team will contact you to discuss requirements and any questions you may have.

We welcome applications in Welsh and English for most adverts however for some Welsh Essential roles, only applications in Welsh will be accepted. Please ensure you have understood what is required of you from the advert. Where applications in either language are accepted, they will be treated on the same basis. To access the Welsh version of a vacancy, simply click on the ‘Change Language / Newid Iaith’ toggle button at the top right hand of the page. If you would like to apply in Welsh, simply click on the ‘Gwneud cais’ button at the bottom of this page. Please note, once you start an application in Welsh, you aren’t then able to switch to an English application for that post, using the same user account. If you experience any difficulties, or have any questions regarding the process, please contact SharedServiceHelpdesk@gov.wales.

**vi) Assessment Process**

The Welsh Government is currently transitioning from the use of ‘Civil Service Competencies’ to ‘Success Profiles’ as the basis for our recruitment assessment process. This means you may be asked to provide evidence against either of these frameworks as part of your application.

Please carefully read the advert you are applying for. This will ensure you fully understand what the assessment process is and what criteria you will be assessed against. It is the assessment process listed in the advert that will be followed.

To assist you, we have included some additional information about the Civil Service Competency Framework and Success Profiles below.

***Civil Service Competency Framework***

Competencies are the skills, knowledge and behaviours that lead to successful performance. There are 10 competencies grouped into 3 areas. Further details can be found via this link: [Civil Service Competency Framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-competency-framework)

***Success Profiles:***

This is the new Government wide framework that uses a number of different “elements” (Experience, Strengths, Ability, Technical and Behaviours) to determine our recruitment selection methods. Further details can be found via this link: [Success Profiles](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/success-profiles#history).

We strongly recommend that you read all information relating to the assessment process before starting your application.

Often an assessment process will comprise of two stages; an initial application, on which a sift is completed, followed by an interview or other type of assessment. However, there could be a number of different stages depending on the requirements of the role or grade being advertised.

The Job Advert will provide you with specific details of each stage of the assessment process, however, the following provides you with advice on the potential information you may be asked for.

***Application Form***

When completing an Application Form you will be asked to provide a range of information regarding your eligibility, education, employment history etc. You may also be asked to provide evidence, in the form of real examples, of your skills, experience and ability in line with the criteria listed within the Job Advert. This is the most important part of your Application Form as it will be assessed by a recruitment panel at the sift stage of the assessment process.

When choosing what examples will best evidence the criteria required, consider the following advice:

* Base your examples on a previous experience, you may want to think about your achievements from the last 2/3 years.
* You can use examples from as wide a range of experiences as you need. Outside of work, this might be experience from education settings or volunteering etc.
* When you have picked your strongest examples, ensure they meet the full requirements of the criteria you are seeking to evidence. When drafting your examples, allow yourself plenty of time to refine your example/s in line with the criteria you are evidencing.
* Ensure the evidence is presented as succinctly as possible and does not go over the word count.
* Remember, a recruitment panel cannot assume what is not included in the example, they can only assess what you have actually written.
* Use ‘I’ not ‘we’.Evidenceyour role and how you affected the outcome.
* Don’t get caught up telling a story or setting a scene in your example. Your example should include a brief statement regarding the situation/context of your example, then focus on how you went about the task, what actions you instigated/undertook/lead on etc. Explain why you undertook these actions, any obstacles you encountered. Finally include results, using short statements to demonstrate why your actions were effective and/or why they added value. If the result was not entirely successful describe what you learned from this
* Some candidates find it helpful to use the **STAR** approach when presenting evidence as it provides structure and focus to examples in both the application form and the interview.
* **Situation** – briefly describe the context and your role
* **Task** – the specific challenge, task or job that you faced
* **Action** – what you did, how and why you did it
* **Result** – the outcomes and what you achieved through your actions.

*Keep the* ***situation*** *and* ***task*** *parts brief. Concentrate on the* ***action*** *and the* ***result****.*

* If you need a reasonable adjustment to be made as part of the application process, you should contact SharedServiceHelpdesk@gov.wales as soon as possible and a member of the team will contact you to discuss.

***Sift***

The evidence you provide in your Application Form against the criteria listed within the Job Advert will be assessed by a recruitment panel. If the panel agree that you have provided sufficient evidence against the criteria, your application will progress to the next stage.

You will be given a minimum of five working days’ notice for any further stages (this can be extended if you are a disabled person and need a longer time-scale to be put in place as a reasonable adjustment).

If you fail at the sift stage unfortunately your application will not progress to the following stages. Notification of the outcomes of sift, will be issued to all candidates by email to their registered email address. Brief written feedback may also be provided at this stage.

***Technical Tests or Exercises***

Some assessment processes may involve a test or exercise. These may be stand-alone stages within the assessment process or form part of the interview process.

Failure to pass a test or exercise, and/or failure to complete by the deadline given, will mean you will not progress to the next stage.

If an advert states you will be, or might be, required to undertake a test or exercise, further guidance on the process will be provided at the point you are invited to undertake the test/exercise.

If you need a reasonable adjustment to be made (for example, if your assistive technology is not compatible with the test) you should contact SharedServiceHelpdesk@gov.wales as soon as possible and a member of the team will contact you to discuss.

***Interview***

***Disability Confident*:** We will guarantee an interview to disabled people who have

* selected in their application form that they wish to be given a guaranteed interview under the guaranteed interview scheme and
* meet the minimum criteria required throughout the assessment stages prior to interview

***Interview Questions:***

An Online Interview will most likely take place over Microsoft Teams and involve a blend of questions based on the criteria you are being assessed against.

You will be provided with information regarding the interview in advance of it taking place. However, for information, the interview may include the following types of questions:

***Behaviour or Competency Questions:***

Behaviour and Competency questions explore in detail what you are capable of and will be in line with the Behaviours or Competencies listed on the Job Advert.

The aim is to find out how you have behaved and used your skills in the past to deal with challenges and problems, on the premise that this is likely to be a predictor of how you will perform in the future.

The questions at interview will be designed to allow you to provide evidence of the required Behaviours or Competencies, through the use of relevant examples from your experience.

Please remember however, even though the panel will be looking for evidence of a specific Behaviour or Competency, you need to ensure that you answer the specific question that they ask you at Interview. It is important to listen carefully to the question, and then use the most appropriate example to evidence that question.

***Strengths Questions:***

Strengths questions will be in line with the Strengths listed within the Job Advert. Their purpose is to explore what you enjoy and what motivates you. There is no expectation for you to prepare for Strengths questions in advance of the interview, though you may find it helpful to spend some time reflecting on what you enjoy doing and what you do well.

***Technical or Experience Based Questions:***

These are designed to explore in detail your professional skills, technical knowledge and understanding, and experience within a bespoke context. These may include questions relating to specific professional competency frameworks or explore your qualifications or professional knowledge.

***Interview Panel***

At interview, there will be a recruitment panel of two or three people. They hope to see you at your best at the interview and will do all they can to give you the opportunity to evidence that you can meet the criteria required for the role/grade.

Interviews will follow the structure below:

* The Chair will introduce the panel and explain the format and timing of the interview. You will be given the opportunity to ask any questions about the format and be asked if there may be any extenuating circumstances which may affect your performance at interview i.e. a recent bereavement, car accident etc. This is to ensure that there is nothing which may inhibit your performance. In the event that something has occurred, you will be provided with the opportunity to reschedule your interview. However, if you do choose to go ahead with the interview, you will not be able to reschedule for another time if afterwards you feel you did not perform at your best.
* Each member of the panel will then take it in turns to ask questions.
* At the end of the interview, the Chair will give you the chance to ask any questions you may have.

***Interview duration***

Typically the interview will last anything between 45-70 minutes depending on the grade/role applied for or the type of assessment required

***Interview Language***

We will endeavour to ensure that your interview is conducted in your preferred language, English or Welsh (based on the preference you indicated in your application form). In some cases where a full Welsh-speaking panel cannot be convened, simultaneous translation from Welsh to English may need to be provided for the benefit of any panel members who don’t speak Welsh. In such cases, you will be informed of the arrangements prior to the interview.

***Purpose of the Interview***

The purpose of an interview is to

* Test a candidate’s suitability for the requirements of the role/grade
* Give all candidates an opportunity to present their evidence
* Recommend which candidates should be offered roles and produce an order of merit based on scores achieved

At interview, the Panel will be trying to find out how you meet the criteria listed in the Job Advert. You need to be prepared to give answers demonstrating how you meet them.

Useful tips in preparing for interview:

* Try to arrange a ‘mock interview’ with a friend, family member or colleague
* Prepare more examples than you provided on your application. The panel may ask you for more details and/or other examples if it helps you to provide the evidence required to meet the Behaviours.
* Remember the ‘‘STAR” model may be helpful to you when preparing for the interview, as well as during the interview when responding to questions, by giving a clear structure to your responses. See page 8 for more information on STAR.

***After Interview***

Following the interview, outcomes will be issued at the earliest opportunity via the email you have registered with. Candidates will only receive brief written feedback regarding their interview but we do hope it will be helpful if considering future applications.

1. **Terms of Appointment**

Job Adverts will state what type of appointment/s is on offer; Permanent Contract, Fixed Term Appointment, Secondment, Loan etc. We are only able to offer successful candidates the type of appointment that is stated in the Job Advert. See below further information on the terms of the different types of appointments which may be advertised.

* **Permanent Contract and Fixed Term Appointment**

Working Hours

Unless exceptional circumstances prevent it, all posts are available on a part-time, job-share and full-time basis. We welcome applications from people who work part-time.

Leave

You will be entitled to annual leave and time off in accordance with the Welsh Government’s Annual Leave Policy, Public and Privilege Holiday Policy and family leave policies. Full-time employees are entitled to 31 days annual leave, plus 10 public and privilege days’ leave, pro rata for part time employees.

You will be eligible for sick pay, holiday pay and any absence entitlements in accordance with Welsh Governments Terms and Conditions.

Welsh Government also offers a range of family friendly and flexible working arrangements, which support modern working families. We have designed our policies to enable employees to combine work and family life so that we can retain their valuable skills in the workplace and they can fulfil their potential.

Performance and Training

Objectives will be agreed between you and the line manager at the start of your appointment with regular reviews carried out at agreed intervals. The line manager will arrange an induction programme/training as appropriate.

Everyone in Welsh Government is supported to develop their skills and capabilities, which includes access to learning and development. We are committed to Learning and Development and ensure our staff have a minimum of 5 days learning per year.

Location

The majority of posts in Welsh Government are classed as 'Pan Wales'. This means that the location in which the vacancy can be based is flexible, subject to the needs of the business.  Please note it may not always be possible to accommodate a preference for a specific office location, but requests will be taken into consideration.

Currently there are Welsh Government Offices in Aberystwyth, Bedwas, Caernarfon, Cardiff, Carmarthen, Llandrindod Wells, Llandudno Junction, Merthyr Tydfil, Newtown and Swansea.

We are supportive of flexible working and tailoring working patterns to individual circumstances where business need can accommodate. Depending upon the nature of the role, it may be possible for successful candidates to agree to work some of their working hours from home through an informal arrangement with their line manager. All roles must be worked in the UK, not overseas.

Smart Working

The Welsh Government actively encourages Smart Working. This means focusing on how you use your time, and where and how you work, to meet business needs in the most productive way. This provides staff with considerable flexibility with location and hours worked. Smart, flexible working is becoming a permanent feature of working life in Wales and the Welsh Government will lead the way in this.

* **Secondments**

A Secondee is required to remain employed by their current employer for the entire secondment period. A Secondee therefore retains their terms and conditions (as specified in the Employment Contract with their employer) and remain on their employers Pay Roll. The employer will then invoice the Welsh Government for the provision of the Secondee's Services on a quarterly arrears basis for actual salary (inc. Pension, NI etc.).

As a secondee remains on their terms and conditions, they will transfer on their current salary and are not eligible for our salaries or benefits. It is only in exceptional cases, e.g. where a secondment opportunity would equate to a temporary promotion in terms of pay, that there may be flexibility. In this situation Welsh Government may be prepared for the Secondee to be paid at the minimum of the Pay Band for the Grade being appointed to, however, the Secondee’s employer would need to be in agreement with the terms of the appointment and the temporary increase in their employees pay for the period of the secondment. Where an individual is classed as a lower grade in their home organisation but currently earns within the pay range we have advertised on the advert, they will remain on their current salary for the duration of the secondment.

Our secondee policy/agreement can be shared with candidates applying on a secondment basis on request.

* **Loans**

Loans are only open to existing Civil Servants, recruited to the Civil Service via fair, open and on merit competition. Individuals moving on Loan will be subject to the Civil Service Transfer Principles [(How to Move Jobs Between Departments and Agencies](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fpublications%2Fguidance-for-civil-servants-how-to-move-jobs-between-departments-and-agencies&data=04%7C01%7CDarina.Davies19%40gov.wales%7C27c3360c7f93459f31a408d9ade61ab6%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637732026057980223%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=OE7PqS2RchooVykWRq87SjbILatIz5iA72tOTOhjpso%3D&reserved=0)). Unless the agreement is for less than 6 months, successful individuals will move to the Welsh Government’s terms and conditions.

Unless otherwise stated in the Job Advert, Loans are not expected to gain a permanent transfer or permanent promotion to Welsh Government (this is subject to the ongoing need for the role and funding being confirmed at the end of the loan period) and unless otherwise stated in the advert, only those applying laterally are eligible to apply.

Individuals on loan will be expected to return to their home department at the end of the agreement and to their substantive grade.

**APPENDICES**

**Appendix A: Working for the Civil Service**

**Principles for Recruitment into the Civil Service and the Civil Service Code**

The Welsh Government'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](https://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/02a_RECRUITMENT-PRINCIPLES-April-2018-FINAL-.pdf).

The [Civil Service Code](http://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk/code/) sets out the standards of behaviour expected of civil servants

**Appendix B: Grievance and Complaints**

Anyone who believes they have been treated unfairly, or has a grievance or complaint, about how the process was conducted should either write to the Head of Resourcing, Welsh Government, Cathays Park 2, Cardiff CF10 3NQ or email SharedServiceHelpdesk@gov.wales. If you are unhappy with the outcome of the complaint raised with the Welsh Government and feel that the principles of appointment on merit through fair and open competition have not been met you have the right to pursue your grievance with the Civil Service Commission ([https://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk/contact-us/](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fcivilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk%2Fcontact-us%2F&data=04%7C01%7CJennifer.Dean%40gov.wales%7C022b4cd5780e48a0c72a08d9c55d615c%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637757827111349491%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=cztV%2BNvruhN1yvRKtEuJwDpEUFXbQ64fHxzfBdluQPE%3D&reserved=0)).