

# Candidate Pack

## Higher Statistical Officer

### Welcome

I'm delighted you're interested in a career in statistics in the Welsh Government.

The Welsh Government is the devolved government for Wales. It is responsible for developing and implementing national policies for Wales on topics such as health, education, communities and the environment.



Most statisticians in the Welsh Government are in a central department called Knowledge and Analytical Services, and around a third work in teams based in policy departments. Wherever they are based, statisticians produce data and analysis that is used every day by Ministers, businesses, charities and the public to help make decisions.

A career in the Welsh Government is highly rewarding. You'll have opportunities to work closely with policy makers to inform the development of key policies and monitor their impact. As producers of official statistics, we are proud to produce analysis that is trusted, high quality and of public value. You will regularly work with analysts across the UK and with users of our statistics to keep driving improvements.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are core values of the Welsh Government and I have a strong personal commitment to make the statistics profession a truly inclusive place to work. I welcome applications from people of all backgrounds, especially those who are underrepresented in the public sector. The Welsh Government is a bilingual organisation and a career in statistics provides a great opportunity to use Welsh in the workplace.

With offices across Wales, as an organisation we can be flexible on where you work from. The First Minister has set a target for Wales that 30% of the workforce works remotely, so hybrid working will remain part of our approach in future.

Our People Survey results show that colleagues find statistics in the Welsh Government an engaging and valued career. If you have the right skills, I look forward to you joining us.

**Stephanie Howarth – Chief Statistician, Welsh Government**

## About the Government Statistical Service

Professional statisticians in Welsh Government are part of the Government Statistician Group (GSG) which is the civil service profession for statistician and data scientists. Their influence extends from data collection and publications to providing an unbiased evidence base for effective decision making. Statisticians' analysis and skills are essential to improving the operational services government provides. In today's constantly evolving data landscape the need for professional statisticians is greater than ever. Statisticians' skills are in high demand in government as analysts, producers of official statistics and data scientists. In all of their job roles they use their recognised professional standards to ensure the quality and integrity of their work. The profession works within the Government Statistical Service (GSS), the community for all civil servants working in the collection, production and communication of official statistics. You can find out more about the GSS here: <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk>

## About the Higher Statistical Officer role

You will join a team of data experts who collect, process and analyse the data underpinning our society and economy. From education to transport, to health, the environment and the Welsh language, you can expect to see your analysis hitting the headlines and being used by decision-makers in government and industry at the highest level. You may often give expert statistical advice to the non-statistical communities in your department. You may be interested to see some of the statistics Welsh Government statisticians produce by browsing our webpages:

[www.gov.wales/statistics](http://www.gov.wales/statistics)

The role will require you to apply your statistical skills to innovate and solve problems in data management and analysis, and you will be using a range of software packages and analytical techniques. The ability to explain and communicate your findings will also be essential.

Here are some examples of the types of roles you can expect to carry out as a Higher Statistical Officer (HStO) in Welsh Government.

### **HStO, Trade Statistics Team**

An overarching objective for the team is to enhance Welsh Government's overall understanding of trade flows between Wales and the rest of the UK and internationally to inform strategic decision-making. The policy interest in this area is continuously evolving, giving rise to opportunities to explore the available data in different ways, for example through the application of applied statistical and data science techniques.

The HStO in this team leads on the publication of statistics from the team's flagship product, the [Trade Survey for Wales](#) (TSW), the only direct data collection on trade activity with the UK and the rest of the world from businesses in Wales. The HStO also undertakes significant ad hoc analysis of TSW data to meet user requirements.

### **HStO, Higher Education and Student Finance Statistics Team**

The Higher Statistical Officer in this team is responsible for maintaining analytical models used to forecast the costs of providing loans and grants to students and disseminating data on student finance, primarily using the wealth of administrative data collected by the Student Loans Company (SLC).

Being situated within the policy area, the post holder has the opportunity to work closely with policy colleagues, ensuring statistics and analysis are used to support the high-profile area of higher education and student finance. This post offers opportunities to develop a range of analytical and technical skills, including modelling and dissemination of analysis to non-technical audiences.

### **HStO Food Statistician, Economy & Labour Market Statistics Team**

Our food statistician post works directly with various policy teams allowing the postholder to see the direct impact the statistical reports and information they produce has, and how these are used to inform policy decisions.

The role produces quarterly and annual reports covering a wide range of key topics, such as business turnover, employment, pay, awards, trade and more across the Welsh food industry, with opportunities to present findings through multiple channels.

Alongside the key reports, the role also produces and maintains dashboards covering high level industry metrics, as well as providing ad-hoc information and reports to policy colleagues and ministers, allowing for significant development and innovation in how this work is created and shared.

## Application process

### Eligibility criteria

You must have one of the following in order to apply:

- A first or second class honours degree in a subject containing formal statistical training (e.g. Statistics, Mathematics, Economics, Sciences, Business Studies, Psychology, Geography Data Science or similar); or
- A higher degree, e.g. an MSc or PhD, in a subject containing formal statistical training (e.g. Statistics, Mathematics, Economics, Sciences, Business Studies, Data Science, Psychology, Geography or similar).
- Applications from candidates who do not have a degree are welcomed, but they must demonstrate that they have worked in a statistics/data science related field. Candidates without a relevant degree will be required to demonstrate their continuous professional development (via a CPD Log Book) in statistics/data science to demonstrate knowledge at the same level as a foundation degree/HND (Level 5).

### Application form

Please apply by submitting a CV and personal statement via our online application system. You may apply in either Welsh or English. Your CV should cover details of education and professional qualifications, employment history and relevant skills and experience.

Your personal statement should reflect the person specification outlined below. It must include details of your technical and professional achievements and should be no more than 1250 words.

When looking at applications, the assessors will be looking for clear evidence of your statistical knowledge and experience and how you meet the Person Specification criteria; so you are advised to tailor it accordingly.

## Person specification

- Proven analytical experience, including a track record in the practical application of analysis or research with an in-depth knowledge of data sources
- Good communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to communicate complex analysis to non-specialists and communicate effectively with stakeholders
- Ability to deliver analysis outputs to tight deadlines contributing to statistical production
- Leadership experience, with the ability to overcome challenges to deliver quality business outcomes

## Multiple choice test

If your application demonstrates the skills and experience required for the role, you will be invited to undertake an online multiple choice test, designed to test your numeracy and statistical knowledge. You will have one week to complete the test. It is a timed test and must be completed and submitted by midday on the date specified in the email in order to be considered for the next stage of the process.

If you are already a member of the Government Statistician Group, you are exempt from sitting the test. Please email [Rebecca.Gillard@gov.wales](mailto:Rebecca.Gillard@gov.wales) with your GSG membership number who will confirm if you do not need to complete the test. You will then be moved onto the next stage (interview).

## Online interview & dissemination test

If you pass the multiple choice test, you will be invited to an online interview. The online interview will take place over Microsoft Teams. The interview will be using various assessment techniques aligned to the Civil Service **Success Profiles** framework. Questioning styles include Situational and Past Experience types. This gives us the best possible chance of finding the right person for the job. In addition, you will also be asked competency style questions on the Government Statistician Group **Technical competencies**. During which you will be expected to demonstrate

understanding of two statistical techniques (e.g. ANOVA, regression, time series, hypothesis testing etc.) Before the interview you will be given 30 minutes to sit a short test, which will form a presentation to be delivered to the panel at the beginning of the interview. The presentation should last no more than 5 minutes and you will remain seated during the presentation. If you are already a member of the Government Statistician Group, you are exempt from sitting this test.

### **Technical Competencies:**

- Statisticians-Presenting and Disseminating Data Effectively
- Statisticians-Data Analysis
- Statisticians-Acquiring data/Understanding Customer Needs

### **Civil Service Behaviours:**

- Managing a Quality Service
- Seeing the big picture
- Leadership

## **Advice on how to apply**

### Getting started

- Write down examples of tasks that you have done well over the past 2 years (or longer). Use evidence from work if you can, though your examples don't need to be work related. For each of these things note down how you achieved what you did, what skills and behaviours did you use?
- Look at the effective competency indicators and for each bit of work, note which competencies/behaviours it might cover.
- Gather your evidence together and review it before you start writing examples – you probably have more evidence than you think!
- A second or third pair of eyes is always useful.

## Completing the Application

### What is The Success Profile Framework?

Success profiles moves recruitment away from using 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 will give the best possible chance of finding the right person for the job and also improve diversity and inclusivity. You will be assessed against areas such as your ability and your behaviours (formally named competencies).

The Criteria that can be assessed to determine the best candidate for the role are:

**Behaviours** – the actions and activities that people do that result in the effective performance in that job

**Ability** – general mental ability, cognitive ability or aptitude. Tests are used to predict future performance.

**Experience** – Knowledge of an activity or subject gained through involvement in or exposure to it.

**Technical** – Specific skills, or experience or qualifications needed for the role

### Choosing your examples

- When deciding which examples to use, keep referring back to the job advert, the 2021 [GSG competency framework](#) and Level 3 of civil service [Success Profile behaviours](#) for effective behaviour indicators. Try to fit your examples to the advertised post.
- Tailor your competencies to the job that you are applying for. There are different levels of the competency framework for different grades – use the Higher Statistical Officer (HStO) level.
- Underline any key words and phrases in the job advert to include in your examples. If you have any doubts about the advert please speak to the contact point named in the advert to find out more about the advertised post.
- Allow yourself plenty of time for writing your examples - avoid leaving them until the last minute.

- Choose your most powerful examples - demanding/challenging situations that have lots of substance.
- Focus on the 'how' throughout your competency. For example "I worked collaboratively across teams, establishing relationships and encouraging cross team working".
- Use 'I' not 'we'. This is about your role in the task and how you affected the outcome.
- Use your own words. Consider using active verbs to create greater impact.
- Don't assume the sift panel has any knowledge of the situation or context.
- It's all down to you. The sift panel cannot infer what is not included in the example and can only assess what you have actually written.
- Ensure that there is a clear outcome stated.
- Don't get caught up telling a story in your example. Just give enough to show how you went about the task, why you did it the way you did and describe any obstacles you encountered.

Within the Civil Service, the most common approach is: The STAR method

Using the STAR method, allows you to set the scene, show what and how you did and the overall outcome. The job holder (and later the interviewer) will use this method to gather all the relevant information about a specific capability that the job requires.

**Situation** - Describe the situation you found yourself in. You must describe a specific event or situation. Be sure to give enough detail for the job holder to understand.

- Where are you?
- Who was there with you?
- What had happened?

**Task** - The job holder will want to understand what you tried to achieve from the situation you found yourself in.

- What was the task that you had to complete and why?
- What did you have to achieve?



**Actions** - What did you do? The job holder will be looking for information of what you did, how you did it and why. Keep the focus on you. What specific steps did you take and what was your contribution? Remember to include how you did it, and the behaviours you used. Try to use “I” rather than “we” to explain your actions that lead to the result. Be careful not to take credit of something that you did not do.

**Results** - Don't be shy about taking credit for your behaviour. Quote specific facts and figures easily understandable.

- What results did the actions produce?
- What did you achieve through your actions and did you meet your goals?
- Was it a successful outcome? If not what did you learn from the experience?
- When writing your example make sure you cover both ‘what’ you did and ‘how’ you did it. In most examples you should focus more words on the ‘how’ than the ‘what’.
- Follow this by a brief summary of the ‘outcome’.

Keep the situation and task parts brief. Concentrate on the action and the result. If the result was not entirely successful describe what you learned from this and what you would do differently next time. Make sure you focus on your strengths.

### **Interview - Hints and tips**

A good interview requires excellent preparation, good listening skills and the ability to answer the question that is asked. Practice before the interview by preparing and rehearsing answers to possible questions.

Here are some useful tips.

- Try to arrange a ‘mock interview’ with your career centre.
- Research the GSS, what they do and who their customers are.
- Remember to apply the ‘STAR’ model when relating your examples to the questions.

We want to know about your own experience, skills and behaviours. Your answers should focus on telling us your own actions rather than actions completing as a

whole group. When working in a team or group, we would like to know what you personally did.

Part 1 of the interview will start by assessing your technical competence. This will cover three Statistical Competencies:

- Presenting and Disseminating Data
- Acquiring Data /Understanding Customer Needs
- Data Analysis

Part 2 of the interview will assess you against three Success Profile behaviours using Situational and Past Evidence style questioning. This will cover three Behaviours:

- Managing a Quality Service
- Seeing the big picture
- Leadership

## Contact

Thank you for your interest in this position. If you have any questions about the role or the recruitment process, please contact [Rebecca.Gillard@gov.wales](mailto:Rebecca.Gillard@gov.wales) or [StatsCareers1@gov.wales](mailto:StatsCareers1@gov.wales)