**TIPS AND TOOLS FOR APPLYING FOR A VACANCY**

Each organisation will have slightly different selection approaches. Make sure you read and become familiar with these on the organisation’s web site or application instructions.

There are some common principles and best practice you should consider when applying for any role however.

**Applications**

1. Read carefully and follow the local processes and application instructions in the advert.
2. Do your research on the organisation and the role.
3. Have an up-to-date CV, tailored if necessary for the role you are applying for (see guidance for writing a CV *(insert link on CV writing)*).
4. Think carefully about the skills, knowledge and experience outlined in the job description and person specification.
5. Cover letters should address the key requirements of the role and demonstrate how your skills, knowledge and experience is relevant to those requirements.
6. Do not exceed the required word count or length of your cover letter – any additional length won’t get read!

**Interviews**

1. In addition to the specific requirements of the role, be familiar with any competencies, values and/or behaviours expected to be displayed in the job. Make sure you address these in your responses
2. Talk about real and specific examples that actually happened to you.
3. Don’t talk in general terms about how you would generally tackle those sorts of situations
4. If you are given the competencies in advance, prepare by thinking about your relevant experience against each competency
5. Competency-based questions usually take the form of:
	1. Tell us about a time when…
	2. Give an example of a situation where…
	3. Describe a scenario…
6. The **STAR** technique is an effective way to structure interview questions

**Other things to consider:**

1. The panel may ask supplementary questions to understand a more about what happen, and the impact you had.
2. You may be asked to present on a specific question or scenario. These can be either seen in advanced or unseen until the interview. Planning and preparation are key to success
3. There will be time at the end of the interview for you to ask questions. Think and prepare these beforehand. Questions you could ask include:
	1. Who you will be working for?
	2. Where you’ll work from, and what are the expectations around hybrid working?
	3. What are the key priorities for the team/senior leader right now?
	4. What would they want this role to achieve in the first 6 months?
	5. What would the panel say are the best things to working in the team/organisation?

**STAR model**

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| **S**ituation | Briefly describe the background to the situation. This should make up approximately 10% of your answer. Ensures your example provides a context or background to the specific situation. Think about how you will set the scene and introduce your example |
| **T**ask  | Specifically describe your responsibilities. This may also form part of the ‘Situation’ but you want to include some general information around overall objective or task in the example. |
| **A**ction | Describe what you did. This should take up 80% of your answer. Tell the panel specifically **what** actions you took, **how** you went about them and **why** you took those actions. Avoid general statements e.g. I have excellent communication skills. Instead include specific evidence of **what** you communicated, **how** you communicated and **why** you communicated it. |
| **R**esult | Describe the outcome of your actions. This should take approximately 10% of your answer. Tell the panel the overall outcome as a result of your actions you took. Include the impact on the business, team and/or individuals as appropriate. Be as specific as you can, using data where you can. |