



# Information for candidates

We are an equal opportunities employer that values the importance of diversity and positively welcomes applications from all members of the community.



Applying for a new job can be a daunting process especially when you do not know the recruitment and selection process of the organisation.

This booklet explains the entry requirements for the CRB and provides guidance on how to complete the application form. It also endeavours to answer any questions that you may have. You must you read this document **before** you apply.

## **1. Am I eligible to apply?**

### **1.1 New Entrants**

Posts are open to UK Nationals, British Protected Persons, Commonwealth citizens, EEA Nationals of other member states and certain non-EEA family members. There must be no employment restriction or time limit on your permitted stay in the UK. You should normally have been resident in the United Kingdom for 3 years immediately preceding your application.

### **1.2 Existing Civil Servants**

- ◆ Existing civil servants must have successfully completed their probation period before applying.
- ◆ CRB staff must have completed 12 months in their current position unless applying on promotion.

### **1.3 Period of Posting**

After taking up posting with the CRB, staff are required to complete a minimum posting period of 12 months before applying for another position of the same grade. This posting period is not applicable if you are applying elsewhere on promotion.

## **2. How do I apply?**

Application forms can be downloaded from our website and should be completed in their entirety. CVs are not accepted unless stated otherwise on the job advert. Surplus or redeployable staff can apply by downloading the standard application form which is on the CSVacs website ([www.csvacs.gov.uk](http://www.csvacs.gov.uk)).

### **2.1 Section one – personal information**

The first part of the application form deals with general information about yourself; when listing your current and previous employment, please ensure that dates are correct and in date order with the most recent first. Remember to explain any gaps in your employment history. The front page of your application will be removed before it is shortlisted. This is to ensure that the application is considered without any reference being made to irrelevant criteria such as age, sex etc.

## 2.2 Section two - the skills and behaviours

The CRB uses skills and behaviours to fill advertised vacancies. Section two of the application form focuses on the skills and behaviours the successful candidate will need to do the job well. The objectives of this process are: -

- ◆ to get the best possible fit between the published person specification for the vacancy and the successful candidate(s)
- ◆ to have a fair and transparent process which complies with equality legislation and keeps best practice to the fore throughout the various stages.

Read the Job Specification carefully to make sure you fully understand what you are expected to provide examples on.

## 2.3 Section three – line manager’s comments

This section applies to existing Civil Servants only. Once you have completed your examples your line manager needs to provide comments that support your application against each skills and behaviour statement. Failure to provide line manager’s comments will result in your application being rejected. Each line manager has a different style of writing but their comments usually fall into similar categories:

Highly suitable	Where you believe strong evidence is demonstrated across all statements in the person specification and this has been clearly presented in the application form
Suitable	Where some strong evidence is presented but the bulk is of an acceptable standard against the statements in the person specification
Not suitable	Where you feel that the evidence presented does not demonstrate the statements of competence against the person specification
Unable to judge	Where you feel you have not seen evidence of competence displayed; this could be due to them only working for you a short time or that the examples of evidence are related to outside work

In order to write their comments, your line manager will consider the evidence provided against the person specification and will then make clear specific comments stating where they feel the evidence is strongly presented. They may also add other examples to support your application. They should only comment on what you are able to do not what they think you might be able to do. In situations whereby the line manager is unable to comment, as they have only worked with you for a short time, they may consider seeking input from others and should state where this is the case.

## **2.4 Section four – Equal Opportunities**

The Criminal Records Bureau is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all its staff, regardless of ethnic origin, religious belief, political affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, disability or other irrelevant factor. Selection for the post will be based on merit. The only criteria for advancement in the agency are the individual's ability, qualifications or suitability for the work. Positive assistance will be given to develop the individual's full potential in the agency wherever possible.

To help us monitor equal opportunities in the recruitment process please complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Questionnaire.

## **2.5 Section Five – the Guaranteed Interview Scheme**

As an Equal Opportunities employer the Criminal Records Bureau actively encourages applications from people with disabilities. If you have a disability and if you meet the minimum requirements for the job that you have applied for, you will be guaranteed an interview. Minimum criteria mean the essential qualifications, experience and skills required for the role. The job advertisement tells you what these requirements are. Telling us about a disability is your decision and entirely voluntary.

If you are applying under the Guaranteed Interview Scheme, please complete the Guaranteed Interview Scheme form enclosed in this application form, together with the question on the Equal Opportunities Monitoring form, about any special requirements you may have for the interview.

## **3. How do I write a skills and behaviour example?**

### **3.1 What is an example?**

These examples can be taken from any aspect of your life which you consider relevant i.e. any experience you have gained either from any employment (paid or unpaid), at home, in the community or through voluntary, leisure or school activities. The main thing is that they relate specifically to the skills and behaviours specified. If you do not tell us, we cannot make assumptions about your experience or ability.

There are 4 main parts to an example – what the task/issue was, what you did (if it was a team task, tell us what activities you as an individual member of the team did), how you did it, and what the outcome or results were.

You should provide 1 example per statement. Each example should not exceed 200 words. The word count should be clearly stated at the end of each example. Any examples exceeding 200 words will automatically be rejected.

### 3.2 Is there anything I can do to make sure my example is good enough?

The final decision, as to whether your examples match the statement well enough to proceed to interview stage, rests with the shortlist panel. However there are several elements you can check against:

Check point	Example of unsuitable statements
Is my example too general?	"I am always courteous to customers"
Does it read more like a job description rather than provide specific evidence on a specific example?	"My job/role involves..." "I have to ensure that..."
Have I used a process rather than what I actually did?	"First I input the customer details then the computer..."
Is my example more of an assertion?	"It is very important to deal with complaints promptly...."
Is it theoretical?	"I would deal with the complaint by first..."
Have I been too passive in explaining the task?	"A meeting was called...." "Having finalised the details it was decided..."
Have I been specific about my role in the task?	"We decided to adopt the last option...."
Have I provided more of a 'pen picture' of the task?	"She is a very loyal and committed member of the team..."
Have I provided too many unnecessary technical details?	"Considered case suitable for OC to enable Decree and Inhibition..."
Have I paraphrased the criteria?	"I displayed tact and diplomacy..."
Have I been specific about the action taken?	"When I receive this I intend to...."

It is important to avoid making statements such as those quoted in the table above. The shortlist panel is interested in the specific task and what **you** did so you should always use 'I' not 'we'.

Once you have completed your examples, it is important to check how close your examples are to the specific selection criteria. As you have 200 words to address the statement it is important to ensure that you have not provided information that isn't relevant. The majority of your examples should focus on how you match the criteria.

Below is an illustration of a good example:

*Whilst working on a customer service section, I received a phone call from an individual who was unhappy with the service provided. She was clearly distressed and I was unsure what the problem was.*

*I calmed her down and advised her that in order to resolve her query I would have to obtain some information from her. It was essential, that I had the correct information as lack of this could result in her query being dealt with incorrectly so I asked her the appropriate questions to establish who she was and what the problem was whilst*

*ensuring that I was being empathetic. To ensure I had the full picture and had fully understood, I reiterated back to the customer what she had told me. She agreed with my understanding. Having collated and understood all facts, I advised her that I would look into her query and contact her later that day with an update.*

*By using appropriate questions and checking that I had understood the issue, I was able to resolve her query speedily and avoid causing any further distress.*

This clearly sets out what the issue was, how it was dealt with and what the outcome was. Please remember to tailor your evidence to the actual skills and behaviours statement relevant to the position and as advertised in the person specification.

#### **4. I have completed my application form – what happens next?**

##### **4.1 Existing Civil Servants**

Before submitting the application you must provide 3 copies of the following information

- Appraisal reports from the last 2 years
- Application form
- Equal Opportunities monitoring form

All documentation must be received by the closing date.

##### **4.2 Non-civil Servants (new entrants)**

You do not need to get comments from your current line manager nor do you need to supply your appraisal reports as these will be addressed through the pre-appointment stage. You must however provide 3 copies of your application form by the closing date.

#### **5. How is my application assessed?**

The CRB uses a transparent scoring system (shown below) at both shortlist and final selection. In order to be successful, candidates will normally need to score at least 2 against every skills and behaviours statement in order to pass and be considered for the next stage:

*Very strong evidence = 3*

Individual clearly evidences and demonstrates high level achievement of the competency (normally including pro-activity and/or innovation etc).

*Good evidence = 2*

Individual evidences and demonstrates achievement of the competency to the appropriate level for the job.

*Some positive evidence but falls short = 1*

Individual demonstrates some evidence of the competency although the panel assesses it to be falling a little short of the required level.

*Little or no evidence = 0*

Individual fails to demonstrate the competency required for the job (no evidence for a competency statement or insufficient to satisfy the panel).

For some vacancies, there may be additional requirements such as specific qualifications or skills. These will be marked either 'essential' or desirable'. For those that are essential, you will fail the shortlist if you do not have those skills. Desirable criteria will be used as a differentiator if candidates score equally on skills and behaviours statements. Please address essential/desirable requirements clearly in the "reasons for applying" section of the applications form.

Furthermore in some cases, as part of the selection process you may have to undergo a test such as a presentation or an aptitude test. Details of these will be communicated to you during the selection stage.

## **6. I have failed the shortlist – why and how can I address this?**

### **6.1 Reasons for lack of success**

If you have failed the shortlist stage there could several reasons

1. you have exceeded 200 words in 1 or more of your examples
2. you have not provided line manager's comment (existing Civil Servants only)
3. the application form was incomplete
4. the application was received after the closing date
5. your examples did not meet the selection criteria

The reasons will be clearly set out in the letter you receive. If your application was passed though for shortlist and was not successful, you will automatically be provided with feedback on your form.

### **6.2 Appeals process**

If you are not satisfied with the feedback or outcome, you have the right to appeal against the decision. However before progressing to appeal we recommend that you request further feedback. This will explore the result in more depth.

If you are still not content with the outcome an appeal, in writing, should be addressed to the CRB Recruitment Manager who will register your appeal with the Senior HR Business Adviser. They will review your form and consider whether all the evidence and information has been taken into account and if there were any irregularities in the recruitment and selection process. They will provide their response to you in writing.

This right of appeal also applies should you fail the interview stage following the same process.

## **7. Complaints Procedure**

The department's recruitment processes are underpinned by the principle of selection for appointment on merit and on the basis of fair and open competition as outlined in the Civil Service Commissioners' Code which can be found at <http://www.civilservicecommissioners.org/> If you feel your application has not been treated in accordance with the Code and you wish to make a complaint, you should contact the CRB Recruitment Manager, HR, Criminal Records Bureau, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor West Wing, Shannon Court, 10 Princes Parade, Princes Dock, Liverpool L3 1QY in the first instance. If you are not satisfied with the response you receive from the Department, you can contact the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners.

## **8. Additional information about the recruitment process**

### **8.1 Data Protection Act**

The information you provide in your application may be processed by a computer but will be used for recruitment and selection and equality monitoring purposes only. If your application is successful, and you become an employee, some of the information may be put onto our computerised staff records. The information will be kept in the strictest of confidence at all times.

## **9. I have been offered a position with the CRB – what can I expect?**

### **9.1 Former Civil Servants – Reinstatement cases**

If you are a former civil servant and are offered an appointment, you may wish to apply for reinstatement. Please contact, via letter, the HR Business Advisers requesting reinstatement and providing evidence of your previous service and employment status. You will need to include your civil service start/leaving date, your previous grade and any periods of non-reckonable service. There is no automatic right to reinstatement. Employees who have been reinstated need not serve a period of probation as set out below.

### **9.2 Probation**

All new entrants to the Civil Service are required to complete a period of probation. This can last up to a maximum period of 9 months. Your appointment with the CRB may be confirmed after 6 months. This is dependant on various aspects of your employment such as performance, attendance or conduct. During the probation period, you may not be able to apply for other CRB vacancies.

## **9.3 Leave**

### **9.3.1 Annual Leave**

Your annual leave allowance will be 25 days, rising to 30 days after 6 years of eligible civil service employment. In addition, all staff receive 8 days bank and public holidays and 2½ privilege days to be taken at fixed times of the year.

### **9.3.2 Maternity/Maternity Support Leave**

All employees providing they have been employed by the Civil Service one year ending with the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the baby is due will benefit from 26 weeks paid Maternity Leave on full pay. With a further 13 weeks leave at statutory maternity pay.

The CRB offers Maternity Support Leave of up to ten days for all employees who have responsibility for a baby's upbringing and who are either the biological father of the baby or the mother's husband or partner. The provision applies to same sex partners and already exists for adoptive parents. Maternity Support leave will be given to all employees providing they have been employed by CRB for 26 weeks ending with the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the baby is due and are taking the time off either to support the mother or to care for the new baby.

## **9.4 Pensions**

The Civil Service offers a choice of pensions, giving you the flexibility to choose the pension that suits you the best. For more information regarding civil service pensions please go to [www.civilservice-pensions.gov.uk](http://www.civilservice-pensions.gov.uk)

## **9.5 Childcare Vouchers**

The CRB is keen to support family issues and has introduced the Childcare voucher scheme as one of its family-friendly initiatives. Childcare vouchers can be exchanged for childcare provision. The CRB will provide a voucher for a set value for a predetermined period. You then present the voucher to the childcarer, who is subsequently reimbursed by the Voucher Company.

## **9.6 Age**

The retirement age for all employees is 65. Employees who choose to work after the age of 60 will continue to remain subject to the same performance management, attendance and disciplinary requirements applicable to all staff irrespective of age.

### **9.7 Maximum age of retirement**

Extensions of service beyond age 65 are likely to be in exceptional circumstances and will continue to remain subject to performance management, attendance and disciplinary requirements which are applicable to all staff irrespective of age; each case will be reviewed subject to the business needs of the Department. Staff will not be allowed to remain in service beyond age 70 unless there is a statutory obligation to retain him/her or retention is essential to meet the over-riding needs of the service.