

## A guide to completing a competency based application form

This is a competency-based application form, so we'll be looking for evidence from your past actions, behaviours and experiences to see if you've got what it takes to work for Bedfordshire Police.

When you're filling out your application form there's one thing that you need to remember – we don't know you. Make your talents shine through by writing clear answers, backed up with lots of examples. For instance, saying that you're 'hard working' or 'a good communicator' isn't enough. Instead tell us a structured story and provide details on the specific competency that relates to the question. Please try and keep to one example for each competency and make sure you provide lots of in-depth detail.

We will check your application for spelling and grammatical errors, and if you have more than 10 this will cause your application to fail. Make sure this doesn't happen to you by using the spelling and grammar check on your computer or asking someone to read your application through. To this end we suggest that you prepare your evidence on a word-processing package such as MS Office Word, and then cut and paste into the application form.

Below you'll find some more helpful hints and tips - good luck.

### **Toolkit**

Use the acronym STAR to structure your story and provide one specific example for each of the questions:

**ST** – A brief description of the **Situation/Task**

**A** – Details of the **Actions** YOU took – use action verbs

**R** – The **Results / Outcome** achieved

What is good evidence?

- Give specific examples explaining 'how' not 'what'
- Your evidence should directly correlate to the competency being assessed. Please ensure that you have read and understand the competency before providing your example
- Do not use multiple examples
- Avoid being vague or ambiguous.
- It is important to describe what part you played in the example provided.
- Although we want details, please avoid writing at length without saying anything important or adding value to your evidence.
- Be careful of statements – 'it is important that we engage the community'... - the evidence should be around how you are engaging the community.
- Demonstrate your awareness of the various factors that needed to be taken into account during the situation you're writing about.

When writing about the results and outcomes remember to:

- Give clear examples
- Supply any facts or statistics that strengthen your answer
- Make sure you give a conclusion to your example, whether the outcome was good or bad.
- Consider what you may do different next time if the outcome was not positive.

Avoid jargon, words and phrases which are (or can be construed as) misleading or ambiguous such as:

- 'be aware of'
- 'have an awareness of'

Finally:

- Make sure that you check your spelling and grammar. If you have more than 10 spelling and/or grammatical errors your application will automatically fail.
- Provide the context for your example in a brief opening summary.
- Does your example flow? It is difficult for the assessor to mark your application if your example does not follow a logical format.
- Does your example make sense? Remember that the assessor does not know you or the background to your examples, so you need to ensure that you provide context and that your example is well structured.

**Police Officer Competencies**

<b>Serving the public</b>
Demonstrates a real belief in public service, focusing on what matters to the public and will best serve their interests. Understands the expectations, changing needs and concerns of different communities, and strives to address them. Builds public confidence by talking with people in local communities to explore their viewpoints and break down barriers between them and the police. Understands the impact and benefits of policing for different communities, and identifies the best way to deliver services to them. Works in partnership with other agencies to deliver the best possible overall service to the public.
<b>Openness to change</b>
Positive about change, adapting rapidly to different ways of working and putting effort into making them work. Flexible and open to alternative approaches to solving problems. Finds better, more cost-effective ways to do things, making suggestions for change and putting forward ideas for improvement. Takes an innovative and creative approach to solving problems.
<b>Service delivery</b>
Understands the organisation's objectives and priorities, and how own work fits into these. Plans and organises tasks effectively, taking a structured and methodical approach to achieving outcomes. Manages multiple tasks effectively by thinking things through in advance, prioritising and managing time well. Focuses on the outcomes to be achieved, working quickly and accurately and seeking guidance when appropriate.
<b>Professionalism</b>
Acts with integrity, in line with the values and ethical standards of the Police Service. Takes ownership for resolving problems, demonstrating courage and resilience in dealing with difficult and potentially volatile situations. Acts on own initiative to address issues, showing a strong work ethic and demonstrating extra effort when required. Upholds professional standards, acting honestly and ethically, and challenges unprofessional conduct or discriminatory behaviour. Asks for and acts on feedback, learning from experience and developing own professional skills and knowledge. Remains calm and professional under pressure, defusing conflict and being prepared to step forward and take control when required.
<b>Decision making</b>
Gathers, verifies and assesses all appropriate and available information to gain an accurate understanding of situations. Considers a range of possible options before making clear, timely, justifiable decisions. Reviews decisions in the light of new information and changing circumstances. Balances risks, costs and benefits, thinking about the wider impact of decisions. Exercises discretion and applies professional judgement, ensuring actions and decisions are proportionate and in the public interest.
<b>Working with others</b>
Works co-operatively with others to get things done, willingly giving help and support to colleagues. Is approachable, developing positive working relationships. Explains things well, focusing on the key points and talking to people using language they understand. Listens carefully and asks questions to clarify understanding, expressing own views positively and constructively. Persuades people by stressing the benefits of a particular approach, keeps them informed of progress and manages their expectations. Is courteous, polite and considerate, showing empathy and compassion. Deals with people as individuals and addresses their specific needs and concerns. Treats people with respect and dignity, dealing with them fairly and without prejudice regardless of their background or circumstances.