

AN INTERVIEWEE'S GUIDE TO THE SDS RECRUITMENT FRAMEWORK

WHAT IS THE SDS RECRUITMENT FRAMEWORK?

The **SDS Recruitment Framework** comprises a broad range of criteria that we feel are applicable in varying degrees across all roles in the organisation. Our managers will select 4 or 5 of the criteria from the table below, which best align to the requirements of the job, and your interview and any secondary assessment tool will be focused on these areas.

The interview focuses on gathering clear evidence of your knowledge, skills, behaviours, and experience in relation to the role you are applying for.

SDS Recruitment Framework

Criteria	Definition
Analysis and Problem Solving	<p>The ability to understand complex issues by gathering, analysing and interpreting relevant information, identifying root causes, and evaluating options to reach sound, evidence-based decisions. This includes applying structured thinking, exercising professional judgement, and considering risks, impacts and constraints when solving problems.</p> <p>Effective analysis and problem solving also involves breaking down ambiguity, balancing competing priorities, and developing practical, proportionate solutions that are aligned to organisational objectives and customer needs.</p>
Innovation and Creativity	<p>The ability to think differently and generate new or improved ideas to enhance ways of working, services or outcomes. This includes questioning existing practices constructively, exploring opportunities for improvement, and applying creativity within organisational, regulatory and resource constraints.</p> <p>Innovation and creativity involve being open to change, experimenting with new approaches, learning from experience, and translating ideas into practical solutions that add value for customers, stakeholders and the organisation.</p>
Leadership and Managing People	<p>Demonstrates the ability to set clear direction and expectations, upholding the culture and ambitions of SDS. Motivates and develops others, manages performance and wellbeing, communicate effectively through change, and create an inclusive, accountable team culture that delivers results.</p>
Team Working	<p>Works collaboratively to achieve shared goals—actively contributes, shares information and resources, values diverse perspectives, builds effective working relationships across teams, and constructively addresses conflict to support collective success.</p>

Partnership Working	Builds and sustains effective relationships with external and internal partners—understanding differing priorities, engaging stakeholders early, communicating openly, and collaborating to deliver shared objectives and improved outcomes.
Networking	Proactively builds and maintains internal and external relationships to share information and ideas, access expertise and opportunities, influence outcomes, and enhance the organisation's profile.
Customer Focus	The ability to understand and respond to customer needs. To develop and/or deliver reliable services and solutions which are relevant to customers' needs. Utilises feedback to improve outcomes and customer experience.
Communication	Communicates clearly, confidently and appropriately tailoring message, style and channel to the audience. Actively listens and checks understanding; handles sensitive or challenging conversations professionally; and influences outcomes through timely, honest communication.
Quality	Consistently delivers high-quality outcomes, planning and prioritising effectively, applying standards and attention to detail, monitoring and evaluating performance, acting on feedback and learning, and addressing issues promptly to improve results and reduce errors.
Planning and Organisation	Plans and prioritises work effectively—setting clear objectives, organising resources and schedules, anticipating risks and dependencies, adapting plans when circumstances change. It also involves maintaining oversight of multiple tasks or competing demands. Monitoring and communicating progress to ensure delivery of outcomes on time and to required standards.
Integrity	Demonstrates open, honest and ethical behaviour—acting consistently with organisational values, maintaining confidentiality and professionalism, taking responsibility for decisions and actions, and appropriately challenging or escalating concerns when required.
Self Development	Demonstrates commitment to continuous learning—reflecting on performance, seeking and acting on feedback, identifying development needs, and proactively building knowledge and skills to improve current practice and prepare for future challenges.
Drive for Results	Demonstrates energy, accountability and resilience to achieve outcomes. It involves setting clear goals, maintaining momentum, and taking ownership for delivery—especially when priorities shift or obstacles arise. It includes monitoring progress, adapting plans when needed, and holding yourself (and where relevant, others) accountable for performance. It also reflects a commitment to quality and continuous improvement.

HOW CAN I PREPARE?

If you are invited to interview, we will advise you which of the above criteria you are being assessed against. We will also provide you with the questions in advance to allow you time to consider how your strengths, personal attributes, skills and experience can be demonstrated to evidence your suitability for the role.

The questions may be asked in a hypothetical, situational or competency style. You may also be asked to give specific examples of where you have demonstrated these attributes.

All interviewees for the same post are asked the same non-discriminatory questions, this ensures fairness and consistency across the selection process. These pre-disclosed questions form the main scored part of the interview (along with any secondary assessment tool). You should also be prepared for the manager to ask follow up or probing questions to further explore your initial response. You may also be asked job specific or technical questions relative to the requirements of the job.

You should spend some time reflecting on your best work achievements over recent times. You can use evidence from the workplace if you feel it better demonstrates your capability in a particular area – e.g. perhaps where you carry out voluntary work or sit on a committee. However, it is generally better to use work-based evidence where you can. Make a list of these situations and jot down some notes following the STAR technique described below.

HOW DO I ANSWER THE QUESTIONS?

You should pay particular attention to how the question is being asked to help shape your response. Are they asking a hypothetical question to explore your thoughts and ideas or have they asked for a specific example to showcase your experience? However, even if the initial question is asked in a hypothetical style, the panel may ask you to provide an example, so it is always best to be prepared.

It can be helpful to prepare a few bullet points for each question rather than memorising a full response. This allows you to speak more naturally and adapt your answer on the day, ensuring you respond fully to the panel's questions and any follow up prompts.

If asked to give an example a good way to structure your answer is by using the **STAR** technique:

S	Situation	(what was the situation you were in?)
T	Task	(what was the task you were faced with?)
A	Action	(what was the action you personally took? What were the challenges/obstacles you faced and how did you overcome them?)
R	Result	(what was the outcome following your intervention?)

When providing specific examples, focus on what **you** did by using 'I' statements. The interview panel wants to know what **you** did, not what you did as a team and will want to understand what changes happened as a result of **your** actions and what the effects of these actions were on others.

You may also be asked to **reflect** on your actions and could be asked questions such as 'if you had to deal with a similar situation again, what would you do differently?' 'What have you learned from this experience that would be relevant to this post?'

USE OF AI

We recognise that AI can be a useful aide in your preparation, however, your answers should genuinely represent your own knowledge, skills and experience. We value authenticity and want to hear your real story so that we can better understand your suitability for the role you are applying for. So please note that the interviewer may ask follow up or probing questions to get a better understanding of what you did. As a result, any candidate who is not giving a genuine and personal response may find it very difficult to provide enough detail to answer the questions fully.