

Guidance Document

Thank you for your interest in working for Estyn.

This document provides advice to help you complete your application to Estyn and information on the selection process for the role. It is important that you read through these guidance notes carefully before you fill in the application form, as they will help you to demonstrate how you meet the requirements of the role.

Completing your application form

You should familiarise yourselves fully with the role summary and person specification which apply to the role as outlined in the 'Information for Applicants'. Throughout the selection process we will be exploring the degree to which applicants can demonstrate the knowledge, skills and experience required. Applicants will be expected to provide evidence of their suitability for the post and to illustrate fully how they meet the requirements of the role.

You are welcome to complete the application form in English, Welsh or both languages. An application submitted in Welsh will not be treated less favourably than an application submitted in English.

We would encourage you to complete the application form **electronically** in a Word document and submit it to: recruitment@estyn.gov.wales by the closing date and time. Alternatively you can print it and send it to the Human Resources team, Estyn, Anchor Court, Keen Road, Cardiff, CF24 5JW. If you return the form by post, please ensure you pay the correct postage as incorrect postage may delay your application.

We are unable to consider late or incomplete application forms. It is your responsibility to ensure that the application form is completed fully and correctly and received by the stated time on the closing date.

Use the Tab or arrow button to navigate between fields on the application form and complete the information requested. Please note that spell checking is only available on the supporting statement and continuation sheets.

Section One – This section of the application form will not be seen by the selection panel

Please enter the title of the post you are applying for and let us know where you heard about the vacancy. For Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) vacancies, please also indicate which specialism(s) you are applying for (NB only select those where you are able to demonstrate in your application that you have the relevant knowledge, skills and

experience). This helps us to ensure that your application is considered for the correct vacancy and measure the effectiveness of our recruitment advertising. The information you provide will be used to process the application you submit.

Applicant Details: Please provide us with full, up-to-date applicant details and complete all relevant sections, this information will be used for correspondence purposes. The Information for Applicants will detail if it is essential that you have your own car or access to a car as you will be expected to travel widely across Wales.

Nationality: To be eligible for employment in the Civil Service you will need to be aged 16 or over (please ensure you complete your age and date of birth in the applicant details section), and a UK national, have dual nationality with one part being British, or a Commonwealth citizen or a national from one any of the member states of the European Economic Area (EEA), or, in some cases, a family member of an EEA national. If you answer yes to any nationality questions please give details. For further information about eligibility to work in the Civil Service please refer to the Civil Service website www.civilservice.gov.uk/recruitment/background.

We must interpret strictly and impartially the prescribed conditions regarding nationality, but we cannot investigate the eligibility of every candidate before interview. You should therefore make sure that you are eligible to apply for employment in the Civil Service. If you are successful at interview we will carry out a thorough enquiry into your eligibility before offering you a post. If you are uncertain about any aspect of your eligibility please consult us.

Availability: Assessment and interview dates are normally included in the job specific information pack. If you are unavailable for one or more of the stated dates please specify these and we will try to accommodate your needs, although this may not always be possible. Applicants who are not available to attend for assessment or interview may not be considered.

Preferred Language for future correspondence, including interview/Translation of Application: Please confirm your preferred language for all future correspondence, including interview and confirm if you are happy for your application to be translated in to Welsh or English if required (this will depend on the majority language of the panel). If you request a Welsh interview, a simultaneous translator may be present to translate your responses for panel members for whom Welsh is not their first language. For roles where Welsh language skills are required your fluency will be tested throughout the selection process.

Section Two – This section is used by the selection panel to consider your application

Relevant education, vocational training and professional qualifications and relevant training, professional memberships and voluntary experience: Please give full details of any educational, vocational or professional qualifications or Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) you have obtained or are currently pursuing that are relevant to your application. If you have attended any work-related training courses or undertaken voluntary work that you think may be relevant to your application or are a member of a professional organisation, for example in the fields of accountancy or teaching, please provide details. You will be asked to provide the original certificates for any qualifications listed, if they are

relevant to the post. Please note we do not require you to provide dates in this section. The Institution in which the qualification was obtained will also be omitted prior to being submitted to the sift panel, in order to prevent bias.

Welsh Language: Estyn conducts its business in both Welsh and English and many of its customers and clients are bilingual. It is therefore desirable if your communication skills can be used to good effect in both Welsh and English. Where the ability to communicate in both Welsh and English is essential for a post, this will be stated in the advert and 'Information for Applicants'. Please indicate your current level of ability in the Welsh language.

Employment history: In this section we ask you to provide brief details of all relevant experience for the post (including self-employment). When listing your current and previous employment, please start with the most recent employer, and include the main duties of the job and your reason(s) for leaving. Please continue on an additional sheet if necessary. Your employment history will be verified over the last five years if you are successful, this will be completed by requesting references.

Additional information about any gaps in career history: It is important for us to understand the reason for any gaps in your career history. If any period during your career over the last 10 years is not covered in previous sections, please give full details here, including dates and reasons (e.g. raising a family, periods of unemployment, extended overseas travel, voluntary work etc). If you were overseas, please state the countries you visited. If you have just left or are about to leave education then this section may not apply to you.

Evidence of knowledge, skills and experience or a Supporting Statement

This is the most important part of the application form. It is essential that you get this part right and link your answers to the criteria for the role set out in the role summary and person specification. Failure to provide good evidence will not get you through a sift or an interview.

This section asks you to **answer questions or provide a supporting statement** within a specified word limit and gives you the opportunity to demonstrate that you have the required knowledge, skills, and experience for the role. The sift process will be based on whether you clearly evidence the criteria set out in the person specification in your responses to these questions. As there is a limit on the number of words it is essential that you use the space as effectively as possible. The word count may seem small but drafting statements that are comprehensive yet succinct is part of the skill being assessed.

The **STAR** approach may help you in providing a framework for answering each question and demonstrating the required knowledge, skills and experience for the role:

- **Situation** – briefly describe the situation/circumstances/context and your role;
- **Task** – what did you have to do, what specific challenge, task or job did you face;
- **Action** - what you did, how and why you did it; and
- **Result** – what you achieved through your actions / what was 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. **STAR** may help you to cover all the points you need to make. It

may help you approach drafting your application in a positive way and ensure that you cover what you personally have done.

If the 'Information for applicants' for the post you have applied for specifies that the ability to use your communications skills to good effect in both Welsh and English is essential, please state clearly on the front cover of your application whether you are able to work effectively in both Welsh and English. If you are applying for a Welsh essential role, you must complete at least one supporting evidence question in Welsh and one in English.

Your examples may be taken from current and previous employment, voluntary or community work, training and any other areas you think are relevant. Remember, we can only base our initial recruitment decisions on what you tell us so please complete this section as fully as possible.

Section Three – This section of the application form will not be seen by the selection panel

Equal opportunities: Estyn is an Equal Opportunities Employer. Estyn welcomes applications from all sectors of the community and does not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender identity (transgender), gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, responsibilities for dependents, working patterns (such as the need, or desire, to work part-time hours), or other irrelevant considerations. To do this we need to ask the questions detailed on the monitoring form. Your answers will be treated confidentially and will not affect your application in any way. The information you provide will also be used anonymously to complete our Strategic Equality Plan Annual Review which can be found [here](#).

This section will be used to monitor how Estyn compares nationally (and locally) with regard to equal opportunities in respect of recruitment and selection. Monitoring is considered good practice and recommended by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. We select all candidates for interview based on their knowledge, skills and experience.

For successful candidates the information you provide will be used for a personnel record, feed anonymously into Estyn's [Civil Service Commission](#) compliance return (who regulate our recruitment) and completion of the Office for National Statistics Annual Civil Service Employment Survey (ACSES).

This section also includes your consent to use the equality information anonymously, if you have provided such information.

Additional Information for disabled people: Estyn is recognised as a committed Disability Confident organisation. In particular we will:

- Ensure that our recruitment process is inclusive and accessible
- Anticipate and provide reasonable adjustments as required
- Support any existing employee who acquired a disability or long-term health condition, enabling them to stay in work
- Guarantee to offer an interview to all applicants with a disability provided they meet the minimum criteria for the post

By 'minimum criteria' we mean that you must provide us with evidence in your application form which demonstrates that you meet the knowledge, skills and experience defined in the information pack. Disabled applicants should indicate in the Equal Opportunities Section (Three) if they wish their application to be given consideration under the Disability Confident Scheme.

We have a policy to endeavour to provide access, equipment or other practical support, where it is reasonable to do so, to ensure that disabled people compete on equal terms during the assessment and at interview. Examples include providing a sign language interpreter, additional time for written assessments, assistance in and out of your vehicle etc. Please advise us of any requirements that you may have so that we can ensure that our selection process is accessible.

Declaration: This section must be completed by all applicants. The declaration asks you to sign and date the form to confirm that the information you have given is true and complete. It is important that you read this section before signing. Providing misleading or false information, or a significant omission will normally result in the withdrawal of any offer of appointment made or participation in the recruitment process, or if appointed, may result in dismissal.

Please note that we are unable to consider application forms where this section is incomplete. If you are sending the form by email you must select the box next to signature and type your name to indicate that you have read and understood the declaration. You will be asked to sign the form if you are invited to assessment/interview. If you are sending the form by post, you should sign the form.

Data Protection: In accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act and the General Data Protection Regulation, we will use any information you give us only for the purposes of recruitment and selection. However if you become one of our employees the information will be used for the purpose of operational management and Human Resources administration. Further details can be found in the Privacy Notice found [here](#).

Flexible working

Applications for full-time, part-time/reduced hours, job share or on another flexible basis will be considered. If you wish to apply to work flexibly in a role, please include a statement in your application outlining the flexibility/preferred pattern you wish to be considered and the reasons for your request. Please note that we cannot guarantee we will be able to offer your exact requirements but your preferred pattern will be considered.

Correspondence and feedback

All applicants will receive an e-mail confirming the outcome of their application once each stage has been completed.

Verbal feedback will be provided to applicants on request, following assessment and interview once the recruitment exercise has been completed. We do not usually provide feedback following the initial sift stage due to the number of applications we receive.

Pre-employment Enquiries

If your application is successful, we will carry out pre-employment enquiries (to the [Baseline Personnel Security Standard](#)) to ensure that you are eligible and qualified for employment. These will include health, character, identity and nationality checks and the receipt of satisfactory references. The purpose of these checks is to determine an applicant's suitability to work for Estyn.

For some posts an Enhanced DBS disclosure or an Enhanced check for regulated activity is required. Where a disclosure or check is a requirement of the post, the details will be specified in the 'Information for Applicants'. Estyn's '*Policy on Disclosure and Barring Service checks for those who work for Estyn*' provides information on Estyn's system for checking criminal records via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and is available from www.estyn.gov.uk. We comply fully with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Code of Practice and undertake to treat all applicants for positions fairly. Where any offence is disclosed by the DBS, we will investigate this fully, having consideration to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and undertake not to discriminate unfairly on the basis of conviction or other information revealed. We may withdraw an offer of employment if, as a result of the pre-appointment checks, you do not meet the conditions of the offer. **Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us.** If a disclosure shows content, Estyn will follow its internal procedure for dealing with the issue(s) and consider the individual's eligibility to work on behalf of Estyn. This will be considered carefully by a panel of internal managers, taking into consideration previous deliberations and any additional information provided by the individual.

Other checks may be necessary and will be discussed with you once a conditional offer has been made. If all enquiries are successfully completed a formal offer of employment will be made. Estyn reserves the right to retract an offer of employment where it is considers either references or the results of other background checks to be unsatisfactory.

Complaints

Estyn's recruitment processes are underpinned by the principle of selection for appointment on merit on the basis of fair and open competition as outlined in the Civil Service Commission's Recruitment Principles which can be found at www.civilservicecommission.org. If you feel your application has not been treated in accordance with the Principles and you wish to make a complaint, you should contact Phil Sweeney, Director of Corporate Services, Estyn, Anchor Court, Keen Road, Cardiff, CF24 5JW. E-mail: Phil.Sweeney@estyn.gov.uk, in the first instance. If you are not satisfied with the response you receive from Estyn, you may be able to ask the Civil Service Commission to consider your complaint further.

Selection Process

The selection process will follow the steps detailed in the information for applicants.

Initial sift: The selection panel will consider all complete applications. The panel will consider the relevant knowledge, skills and experience demonstrated in the application form. The information you give us in your application is vital in deciding whether you will be invited to attend an assessment. We will be looking to see how well you match the role and person specification. We will inform you whether or not you were successful at the initial sift.

Assessment: A long list will be drawn up from the initial sift of applications and those on the long list will be invited to participate in an assessment in our Cardiff office, which involves a series of tasks as part of a work-based written exercise. For some vacancies assessments and interviews will take place on the same day – and will therefore begin at short-list stage.

If you have indicated that you can work effectively in both Welsh and English, and the post you have applied for states that the ability to use your communication skills effectively in both Welsh and English is essential, you will be assessed in both languages.

Short-list and Interview: Following the assessments, a short list will be drawn up and shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend a final, competency based panel interview in Estyn's Cardiff office. The panel interview may also include a short presentation.

All costs of attending the assessments and interviews will be at the applicant's expense. Estyn will not pay any transport, accommodation or subsistence costs associated with the recruitment. All applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application.

Future vacancies: If you successfully go through to the final stage and are appointable, but a suitable post is not immediately available, you may be retained on a reserve list for up to twelve months from the date of the letter confirming the outcome of your application. If a suitable vacancy should occur during that period, you may then be recommended for appointment.

Records Retention

All recruitment documentation will be retained in line with our Records Retention Policy and Schedule which can be found [here](#).