

Tips for getting through the Fast Stream application and assessment Centre

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1. Strength-based video interview

Overview:

20 minutes interview where your responses are recorded on a video platform looking at your experience and also what you enjoy and find motivating.

Can use PC, laptop, tablet or mobile phone. You'll have the opportunity to do a practice question before starting.

Once you start the questions you will have 1 attempt at each question. There are 8 questions in total. For the first 7 questions you will have 2 minutes to record your answer and for the last question you will have 1 minute.

The competences tested in the interview are:

- Collaborating and Partnering
- Developing Capability for All
- Managing a Quality Service
- Delivering at Pace

The assessors will also be looking for openness to ideas as well your motivation for applying to the FastStream.

Interview tips:

- Make sure you are somewhere quiet where you won't be disturbed.
- Practice with a friend and/or by recording yourself and then watching back.
- Use the competency framework to prepare and think about some specific examples that you could talk about to demonstrate your effectiveness in each of the competency areas.

- Try to give specific examples and as well as describing what you did in the situation, state what the outcome of your actions was.
- Use 'I' not 'we'
- Show that you are thinking about how you can keep developing your skills by reflecting on what you might do differently next time.
- Showed a strong commitment to a career in the public sector and be enthusiastic.
- Be yourself.

Some example questions that you might find useful to think through ahead of the interview:

- What is your motivation for applying to the FastStream?
- What do you think you could bring to the Civil Service?
- What do you think you would find most challenging about the FastStream? What could you do to prepare for/address this challenge?
- Why do you think diversity is important in the civil service?
- Can you tell us about a time when you have:
 - o Overcome a challenge?
 - o Worked in a particularly diverse team / worked with people who are very different to you?
 - o Motivated a team or group of people
 - o Supported someone else's development
- How do you go about developing information to make a decision? Give an example.
- Describe a situation when you have had to complete a number of pieces of work/ tasks at the same time. How did you handle it? What was the result?
- Can you tell us about a time when you have introduced an improvement to a service or way of working?
- Describe a time in which you were faced with problems or stresses, which tested your coping skills. What did you do?
- Give us an example of a development goal and a number of different ways you went about achieving it

2. E-Tray exercise

Overview:

80 minutes to review a number of information documents that provide the exercise background and then respond to a series of e-mails relating to that information.

Competencies assessed:

- Making Effective Decisions
- Collaborating and Partnering
- Managing a Quality Service
- Delivering at pace

Tips:

- Review all background information/folders. You won't have time to take detailed notes, but it is useful to write yourself a quick index/reference sheet reminding you where to find key information.
- Time management is key. Keep an eye on the time throughout, try to work at an even pace and aim to complete all of the questions.
- Carefully select the responses – there is a right answer to each question.
- Do lots of practice e-tray tests, including for other graduate schemes (even if the content is very different they will help you get used to completing this sort of task under time pressure).
- When you do the test make sure that you do it somewhere quite where you won't be interrupted.

3. Assessment Centre

General tips

Be yourself, try to relax and be authentic.

If you think you haven't performed as well in one exercise try not to dwell on it, keep your head up and go into the next task positive. You pass on an average score so it doesn't mean you won't get through. It is also sometimes hard to judge your own performance, I thought I had performed much better in written exercises when in fact my performance in the oral exercises was much stronger despite them being the exercises where I felt much less comfortable, so it is worth persevering.

When you arrive at the assessment centre you will be given your own agenda for the day to confirm in which order you will be completing exercises.

In between each exercises you will have a short break. You are not being assessed during this time so you can use it to do whatever helps you relax (read through your notes, chat to the other candidates, listen to music).

There will be tea and coffee provided but you might want to bring your own snacks.

There is a kindle book (may also be available as a pdf via a google search) called "*Getting Into The Civil Service Fast Stream: An Unofficial Guide By Existing Fast Streamers*". It will be talking about the previous FSAC format but the general advice will remain the same and is really helpful.

a. Group Exercise

Overview:

Asks you, in a group, in 35-40 minutes, to make effective decisions, to work collaboratively with others, to show leadership and communicate effectively.

The key to this exercise, is to strike a balance between pushing for your own agenda and building consensus to reach a decision in the group. The main competencies you are being assessed on are:

- Making effective decisions
- Collaborating and partnering
- Leading and communicating
- Delivering value for money

In the preparation time:

- Read your brief carefully. Try and identify the government's key objective.
- Consider the risks associated with your recommendation. How will you mitigate against these risks.
- Consider who the other stakeholders are likely to be and who your natural allies will be.
- Think about the weak points in your recommendation. How will you counter argue?
- Consider whether your recommendation represents value for money for government.
- Think about not just what you will say but how you will say it.

During the exercise:

- Agree a timetable and stick to it – don't be afraid to keep reminding the group of this.
- You are not allowed to appoint one person to chair the meeting, so you need to agree a format that makes sure everyone to argue their recommendation.
- Agree the criteria that you are going to measure recommendations against (e.g. effectiveness, value for money, deliverability, risks).

- Consider your body language, make eye contact, show enthusiasm for other people's ideas, use people's names.
- Bring other people into the discussion, ask open questions to encourage others. It's about trying to show the best of yourself but also help other people to show the best of themselves.
- Respond positively to challenge but don't agree too readily with everyone's arguments.
- Built rapport and alliances with other people in the group.
- Be prepared to make decisions that are wider than the brief you have been given.
- Encourage the group to step back and look at the bigger picture – what is government trying to achieve?
- Defend your position well but focus on leading group to secure an agreed outcome.
- Recognise where its necessary to concede to get consensus
- Cooperative rather than domineering behavior is rewarded
- It's more important to reach a consensus decision as a group than it is to get your own way. They are looking for candidates who can compromise in order to achieve results.
- Use the numbers – having specific figures and facts to back up your points goes a long way.

b. Analysis Exercise

Overview:

Written task (completed on PC) that asks you, in 100 minutes, to analyse a range of information and prepare a recommendation, which builds a balanced and convincing case for one of two projects.

The main competencies you are being assessed on are:

- Seeing the Bigger Picture
- Making Effective Decisions
- Leading and Communicating (especially written communication)
- Value for Money

Tips:

- Balance cost, quality and turnaround times.
- Draw on a range of quantitative and qualitative data to evidence your recommendation.
- Think about what represents value for money in the short, medium and long-term
- Know who your stakeholders are. Who are the commercial experts you might want to consult with?
- Make sure that your answer is well structured and includes the following sections:
 - o Problem/Issue: Make sure this is set within the bigger picture. What is government trying to achieve?

- Recommendation. Which of the options do you recommend taking forward? It is a good idea to have the recommendation at the beginning.
- Options: This is where you set out the arguments for and against each argument. Set out the criteria that you are judging the options on clearly. Make sure you use these criteria consistently throughout.
- Implementation and risks:
 - Stakeholders to engage.
 - Media handling
 - Parliamentary handling
 - Resourcing and timescales (who will deliver this and by when?)
 - Evaluation (when will you review the effectiveness of the policy?)
 - Risks and mitigation strategies

Possible stakeholders

- Other government departments
- Politicians and parliamentarians
- Media (media handling plan and 'lines to take')
- Industry
- EU and international governments
- Trade unions
- Think tanks
- British Embassies overseas
- Academics and experts
- Local authorities
- Charities
- Other campaigning groups
- Wider public sector agencies
- Communities
- General public

c. Leadership Exercises

Overview:

This exercise lasts 1 hr (30 minutes preparation and 30 minutes with an assessor). It is designed to test your ability to take a leadership role, dealing with team members and key stakeholders and the various issues they present. Your assessor will play the part of a senior manager, who you are reporting to.

The premise of this exercise is likely to be that you are taking on a new role as the lead on a project. There will probably be some issues both with the delivery of the project (e.g. milestones have been missed) and within the team (e.g. overstretched and/or under-performing staff). You will need to demonstrate

that you have a plan of action to get the project on track, to improve the capability of your team and to work effectively with key stakeholders.

You will be given a brief containing information about the project and your team and will be given 30 minutes to prepare for a meeting with your manager (the assessor). In the meeting you will have 10 minutes to brief your manager and then a further 20 minutes discussion time.

The main competencies you are being assessed on are:

- Leading and Communicating
- Building Capability for All
- Collaborating and Partnering

Tips:

- Focus on achieving the best possible outcome for Government. What is the project trying to achieve? Show a good understanding of the bigger picture e.g. draw out what the benefits are to the civil service
- What are the problems/issues and how will you tackle them? Provide a range of solutions to get around them
- What are the timescales? Do these need revising? When will you evaluate?
- Look after the welfare and development of your team:
 - o Look for opportunities to develop them (taking on new responsibilities, mentoring, etc).
 - o Tackle overstretch.
 - o Don't make assumptions about why a team/individual is underperforming.
 - o Zero tolerance of bullying.
- Identify your key stakeholders. How will you engage them?
- Consider risks and mitigation strategies.
- Consider who will do what within your team, but also what will you do.
- Don't be put off if the assessor asks quite critical questions. They are playing a part, but are not trying to catch you out and the questions they ask will give you an opportunity to further develop the competencies you need to demonstrate in this exercises.
- Try to express yourself concisely. Consider your body language (open, relaxed).
- Have a structure and keep discussion focused on the objective of the initiative

4. Assessment Centre Feedback

Following your attendance at the Assessment Centre you will be given detailed feedback on how you performed. This is given to you regardless of whether you are offered a place on the FastStream. The feedback is grouped under each competency area and then by exercises.

Examples of feedback given:

Seeing the Bigger Picture/Changing and Improving

In the Policy Recommendation Exercise she:

- Sought to set the discussion in terms of the broader aims of the initiative, and also to consider some of the wider implications of the options.
- Considered a range of stakeholder views and weighed them up against each other, but missed some key professional ones.
- Suggested a large number and good range of new areas to extend the initiative, but at the expense of fully exploring their implications.
- Made clear links with the broader Government objectives and discussed in detail how the two options would meet these goals.

In the Leadership Exercise she:

- Brought out the benefits of the initiative for the Civil Service and, with prompting, the longer term value.
- Identified some of the potential barriers and uncertainties about the project and suggested some valid solutions in her initial briefing.

Making Effective Decisions

In the Group Exercises she:

- Contributed effectively in the discussion to agree decision-making criteria, but could have applied the promoting her own preferred project and in discussing the other projects, especially towards the end of the meeting.
- Suggested sensible criteria at the outset and applied these appropriately throughout the discussion
- Showed a reasonable understanding of the issues relating to the projects in her own brief, but could have shown a greater awareness of the issues associated with the other projects under consideration.
- Let others push for making a decision and was somewhat reluctant at one point to use the data to help the group come to a consensus, stating 'we have to look beyond the numbers' when the group were trying to make a decision. She was prepared to compromise on her second choice project after a last minute attempt to influence the group.

In the Policy Recommendation Exercise she:

- Explained a fairly good number of the issues and key areas, but did tend to emphasize the strengths of the option she recommended and the weaker area of the other.
- Provided a fairly thorough comparative analysis of the options against the criteria, although it would have been helpful if she had said explicitly what these criteria were.
- Produced a recommendation, which flowed logically from the evidence s/he had provided and which to the material, in particular bringing out the fundamental aims of the project she chose.

Leading & Communicating

In the Group Exercise she:

- Communicated clearly and succinctly throughout the meeting.
- Was stronger in advocating the projects she was briefed to support (although she could have been more defending of her own views) but was less effective in challenging or questioning those s/he was briefed to oppose.
- Suggested the group set a schedule for the meeting and showed an awareness of the time. She could, however, have done more to help the group focus on the tasks and manage their progress to ensure they made decisions in time.

In the Policy Recommendation Exercise she:

- Wrote in a very clear and flowing style, and at sufficient length to do justice to the complexity of the material.
- Built arguments, which flowed logically and had some structure to her script, although this could have been a little more explicit in places.
- Used an appropriate tone, style and content for the needs of the line manager; it fully fit for purpose. relative ly little rev

In the Leadership Exercise she:

- Could have improved her briefing by setting it within a clearer structure, but it was quite easy to follow and relevant ground. Her answers to ques a little long-winded.
- She provided a reasonably effective defence of the initiative and policy and of her own proposals, and was able to offer some counter arguments when challenged.
- Suggested actions that would be likely to engage Departments and address their concerns. Her proposed messages to her team conveyed a clear sense of the initiative's purpos in its implementation.

Collaborating and Partnering / Building Capability for All

In the Group Exercise she:

- Built some rapport with others in the group, maintaining eye contact and listening whilst others contribute. She established alliances and build consensus within the group.
- Built on others' points occasionally, but could have done more of this. She could have more fully led the discussion and encouraged others to do so.
- Showed some willingness to reach a consensus, but did stop the group moving forward by defending her second choice when the person promoting this project suggested it did not meet the criteria.

In the Group Exercise Self Review she:

- Correctly identified communicating clearly and helping set the agenda as strengths.
- Correctly saw building alliances and helping the group to reach decisions as areas she needed to develop.
- Suggested few actions to help her develop in future, focusing on what she had not done in this area to improve.

In the Leadership Exercise she:

- Identified the development needs of individuals in the team and offered generally focused suggestions for addressing them, although she needed also to consider how she met the needs of the situation.
- Showed a good understanding of the need to improve overall team capability and identified a wide range of suggestions for addressing this.
- Had some sensible ideas for getting better engagement with Departments and other stakeholders.

In the Leadership Exercise Self Review she:

- Identified as strengths in her performance her well-developed proposals for her team, and her response to questions raising new ideas. The Assessor had seen the first of these as her real strength. However, her responses to new ideas were rather mixed and in some cases her focus was fairly narrow.
- Identified, as aspects of her performance on which she could improve, the need to give a more clearly structured briefing, and a clearer sense of her own role in implementing the policy. This assessment was broadly in line with that of the Assessor. However, Phoebe did not have specific proposals for improving in these areas.

In the interview she:

- Spoke with enthusiasm and understanding about the Fast Stream scheme, how it could meet her expectations for learning, interests and aspirations, and the kind of contribution she could make to its success.
- Gave a useful example of addressing her lack of confidence when communicating to large groups and senior people, describing how she had sought out situations to practice and had attended a training course which had helped her to understand a little more why she feels unsure and how to work on this.

Managing a Quality Service/Delivering at Pace

In the Leadership Exercise she:

- Identified some of the risks for the team and the project and had sensible proposals for addressing them.
- Was alert to the different needs and concerns of the various interests, and saw the need to accommodate them.
- Made some sensible suggestions in response to new ideas, but needed some prompting to consider them.

Delivering Value for Money/Achieving Commercial Outcomes

In the Group Exercise she:

- Made few comparisons between the different projects using the data from the response, but again could help projects compare brief in the meeting comprehensively.
- Occasionally referred to data in the meeting to support her views, but could have used more financial brief to make her points. In the written response she made some good use of the data to support her advice, but there were occasional inaccuracies in the figures she quoted.
- Identified some of the risks associated with her chosen project, but missed other important ones. She did, however, suggest well thought-out and sound actions to mitigate the risks she had identified.

Strengths

- Able to work effectively with a wide range of different people.
- A clear and succinct oral communicator.
- Able to write clear, concise prose.

Areas for Development

- When presenting ideas verbally or in writing, use a clear structure that helps guide the reader and supports the flow of the argument.
- Develop further her ability to establish rapport in discussions to form

- alliances and build consensus.
- Give more thought to costs and benefits and make better use of numerical and financial data to determine the best value for money, compare projects, and support arguments.

6. Civil Service Competency Framework

Throughout the application and assessment process you are being assessed against the civil service competency framework.

For the full framework, see here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/436073/cscf_fulla4potrait_2013-2017_v2d.pdf.

See below for examples of effective/ineffective behaviour at HEO/SEO (the equivalent of the FastStream grades) level:

Seeing the Bigger Picture

Seeing the big picture is about having an in-depth understanding and knowledge of how your role fits with and supports organisational objectives and the wider public needs and the national interest. For all staff, it is about focusing your contribution on the activities, which will meet Civil Service goals and deliver the greatest value. For leaders, it is about scanning the political context and taking account of wider impacts to develop long term implementation strategies that maximise opportunities to add value to the citizen and support economic, sustainable growth.

| Examples of effective behaviour | Examples of less effective behaviour |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be alert to emerging issues and trends which might impact or benefit own and team's work - Develop an understanding of own area's strategy and how this contributes to Departmental priorities - Ensure own area/team activities are aligned to Departmental priorities - Actively seek out and share experience to develop understanding and knowledge of own work and of team's business area - Seek to understand how the services, activities and strategies in the area work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ignore changes in the external environment that have implications for Departmental policy and considerations - Shows limited interest in or understanding of Departmental priorities and what they mean for activities in their area - Be overly focused on team and individual activities without due regard for how they meet the demands of the Department as a whole - Take actions which conflict with or mis-align to other activities |

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| together to create value for the customer/end user. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commit to actions without consideration of the impact on the diverse needs of customers/end users – apply a “one size fits all” approach |
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Changing and Improving

People who are effective in this area take initiative, are innovative and seek out opportunities to create effective change. For all staff, it's about learning from what has worked as well as what has not, being open to change and improvement, and working in 'smarter', more focused ways. For leaders, this is about creating and encouraging a culture of innovation and allowing people to consider and take informed decisions. Doing this well means continuously seeking out ways to improve policy implementation and build a leaner, more flexible and responsive Civil Service. It also means making use of alternative delivery models including digital and shared service approaches wherever possible.

| Examples of effective behaviour | Examples of less effective behaviour |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Find ways to improve systems and structures to deliver with more streamlined resources - Regularly review procedures or systems with teams to identify improvements and simplify processes and decision making - Be prepared to take managed risks, ensuring these are planned and their impact assessed - Actively encourage ideas from a wide range of sources and stakeholders and use these to inform own thinking - Be willing to meet the challenges of difficult or complex changes, encouraging and supporting others to do the same - Prepare for and respond appropriately to the range of possible effects that change may have on own role/team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retain resource intensive systems and structures that are considered too difficult to change - Repeat mistakes and overlook lessons learned from what has not worked and what has worked in the past - Have ideas that are unfocused and have little connection to the realities of the business or customer needs - Not listen to suggested changes and not give reasons as to why the suggestion is not feasible - Resist changing own approach in response to the new demands - adopting a position of “always done things like this” - Take little responsibility for suggesting or progressing changes due to perceived lack of control of processes |

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Making Effective Decisions

Effectiveness in this area is about using sound judgement, evidence and knowledge to arrive at accurate, expert and professional decisions and advice. For all staff it's being careful and thoughtful about the use and protection of government and public information to ensure it is handled securely and with care. For leaders it's about reaching evidence based strategies, evaluating options, impacts, risks and solutions and creating a security culture around the handling information. They will aim to maximise return while minimising risk and balancing a range of considerations to provide sustainable outcomes.

| Examples of effective behaviour | Examples of less effective behaviour |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make decisions when they are needed, even if they prove difficult or unpopular - Identify a broad range of relevant and credible information sources and recognise the need to collect new data when necessary from internal and external sources - Recognise patterns and trends in a wide range of evidence/data and draw key conclusions, outlining costs, benefits, risks and potential responses - Ensure all government and public data and information is treated with care in accordance with security procedures and protocols - Recognise scope of own authority for decision making and empower team members to make decisions - Invite challenge and where appropriate involve others in decision making to help build engagement and present robust recommendations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Miss opportunities or deadlines by delaying decisions - Only use evidence sources that support arguments or are easily accessible ignoring wider concerns such as security, legal or technical advice - Come to conclusions that are not supported by evidence - Give little consideration to the people and resources impacted by decisions - Create confusion by omitting to inform relevant people of amendments or decisions causing delays in implementation - Consistently make decisions in isolation or with a select group |

Leading and Communicating

At all levels, effectiveness in this area is about showing our pride and passion for public service, communicating purpose and direction with clarity, integrity, and enthusiasm. It's about championing difference and external experience, and supporting principles of fairness of opportunity for all. For leaders, it is about being visible, establishing a strong direction and persuasive future vision; managing and engaging with people in a straightforward, truthful, and candid way.

| Examples of effective behaviour | Examples of less effective behaviour |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continually communicate with staff, helping to clarify goals and activities and the links between these and Departmental strategy - Recognise, respect and reward the contribution and achievements of others, valuing difference - Communicate in a straightforward, honest and engaging manner with all stakeholders and stand ground when needed - Communicate using appropriate styles, methods and timing, including digital channels, to maximise understanding and impact - Promote the work of the Department and play an active part in supporting the Civil Service values and culture - Role model enthusiasm and energy about their work and encourage others to do the same | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be rarely available to staff and others, communicate infrequently - Take the credit for others' achievements - Give in readily when challenged - Communicate in a set way with little variation, without tailoring messages, style and timing to the needs of the target audience - Be ignorant of and/or dismissive of broader organisational values and goals, such as equality and diversity - Communicate information without consideration for the audience or with limited/low levels of enthusiasm and effort |

Collaborating and Partnering

People skilled in this area are team players. At all levels, it requires working collaboratively, sharing information appropriately and building supportive, trusting and professional relationships with colleagues and a wide range of people within and outside the Civil Service, whilst having the confidence to challenge assumptions. For senior leaders, it's about being approachable, delivering business objectives through creating an inclusive environment, welcoming challenge however uncomfortable.

| Examples of effective behaviour | Examples of less effective behaviour |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish relationships with a range of stakeholders to support delivery of business outcomes - Act as a team player, investing time to generate a common focus and genuine team spirit - Actively seek input from a diverse range of people - Readily share resources to support higher priority work, showing pragmatism and support for the shared goals of the organisation - Deal with conflict in a prompt, calm and constructive manner - Encourage collaborative team working within own team and across the Department | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Devote little or no time to networking or engaging with immediate stakeholders, preferring to work in isolation - Demonstrate limited capability to get the best from people and create barriers or negative feelings between and within teams - Display little appreciation of the value of different contributions and perspectives - Create reasons why resources and support cannot be shared - Show a lack of concern for others' perspectives - Support individual or silo ways of working |

Building Capability for All

Effectiveness in this area is having a strong focus on continuous learning for oneself, others and the organisation. For all staff, it's being open to learning, about keeping one's own knowledge and skill set current and evolving. For leaders, it's about investing in the capabilities of our people, to be effective now and in the future as well as giving clear, honest feedback and supporting teams to succeed. It's also about creating a learning and knowledge culture across the organisation to inform future plans and transformational change.

| Examples of effective behaviour | Examples of less effective behaviour |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify and address team or individual capability requirements and gaps to deliver current and future work - Identify and develop all talented team members to support succession planning, devoting time to coach, mentor and develop others | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manage others in a weak or ineffective manner, allowing capability gaps to persist - Choose to only develop team members who reflect own capabilities, styles and strengths - Be insensitive to and unaware of the diverse aspirations and capability of all members of the team |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Value and respond to different personal needs in the team using these to develop others and promote inclusiveness - Proactively manage own career and identify own learning needs with line manager, plan and carry out work-place learning opportunities - Continually seek and act on feedback to evaluate and improve their own and team's performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Passively expect others to identify and manage their learning needs - Make no attempt to learn from or apply lessons of feedback |
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Achieving Commercial Outcomes

Being effective in this area is about maintaining an economic, long-term focus in all activities. For all, it's about having a commercial, financial and sustainable mindset to ensure all activities and services are delivering added value and working to stimulate economic growth. For leaders, it's about identifying economic, market and customer issues and using these to promote innovative business models, commercial partnerships and agreements to deliver greatest value; and ensuring tight commercial controls of finances, resources and contracts to meet strategic priorities

| Examples of effective behaviour | Examples of less effective behaviour |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider, in consultation with commercial experts, alternative ways of working with partners and contractors to identify more efficient outcomes, balancing cost, quality and turn around times - Work with commercial experts in engaging effectively and intelligently with delivery partners in order to define and/or improve service delivery - Gather and use evidence to assess the costs, benefits and risks of a wide range of delivery options when making commercial decisions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overlook opportunities for continuous improvement in service delivery - Lack impact when engaging with commercial experts and delivery partners through misunderstanding commercial issues - Take a narrow view of options and focus only on cost, rather than long term value and impact - Show a lack of understanding about relevant commercial concepts processes and systems |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify and understand relevant legal and commercial terms, concepts, policies and processes (including project approvals and assurance procedures) to deliver agreed outcomes | |
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Delivering Value for Money

Delivering value for money involves the efficient, effective and economic use of taxpayers' money in the delivery of public services. For all staff, it means seeking out and implementing solutions which achieve the best mix of quality, and effectiveness for the least outlay. People who do this well base their decisions on evidenced information and follow agreed processes and policies, challenging these appropriately where they appear to prevent good value for money. For leaders it's about embedding a culture of value for money within their area/function. They work collaboratively across boundaries to ensure that the Civil Service maximises its strategic outcomes within the resources available.

| Examples of effective behaviour | Examples of less effective behaviour |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommend actions to achieve value for money and efficiency - Cultivate and encourage an awareness of cost, using clear simple examples of benefits and how to measure outcomes - Work confidently with performance management and financial data to prepare forecasts and manage and monitor budget against agreed plans - Follow appropriate financial procedures to monitor contracts to ensure deliverables are achieved - Monitor the use of resources in line with organisational procedures and plans and hold team to account | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ignore financial experts – not ask for advice or seek advice at the right time - Reserve resources for own team without considering wider business priorities or the organisation's financial environment - Misinterpret or over-estimate performance and financial data used to forecast and monitor budgets and plans - Ignore the organisation's financial procedures or break rules for the sake of expediency - Be unable to justify own and their teams' use of resources |

Managing a Quality Service

Effectiveness in this area is about valuing and modelling professional excellence and expertise to deliver service objectives, taking account of diverse customer needs and requirements. People who are effective plan, organise and manage their time and activities to deliver a high quality, secure, reliable and efficient service, applying programme, project and risk management approaches to support service delivery. For leaders, it is about creating an environment to deliver operational excellence and creating the most appropriate and cost effective delivery models for public services.

| Examples of effective behaviour | Examples of less effective behaviour |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make effective use of project management skills and techniques to deliver outcomes, including identifying risks and mitigating actions - Develop, implement, maintain and review systems and service standards to ensure professional excellence and expertise and value for money - Work with team to set priorities, goals, objectives and timescales - Establish mechanisms to seek out and respond to feedback from customers about service provided - Promote a culture that tackles fraud and deception and ensures security of information - Develop proposals to improve the quality of service with involvement from a diverse range of staff, stakeholders or delivery partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has minimal understanding of what could go wrong or needs to be resolved as a priority - Focus on delivering the task to the exclusion of meeting customer/end user requirements and needs - Allocate or delegate work without clarifying deadlines or priorities - Be unable to explain common customer problems or needs and how these are evolving - Not give sufficient priority and attention to ensuring that fraud and deception is being tackled. - Generate limited proposals to create service improvements and do so with little involvement of staff - |

Delivering at Pace

Effectiveness in this area means focusing on delivering timely performance with energy and taking responsibility and accountability for quality outcomes. For all staff, it's about working to agreed goals and activities and dealing with challenges in a responsive and constructive way.

For leaders, it is about building a performance culture where staff are given space, authority and support to deliver outcomes. It's also about keeping a firm focus on priorities and addressing performance issues resolutely, fairly and promptly.

| Examples of effective behaviour | Examples of less effective behaviour |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Successfully manage, support and stretch self and team to deliver agreed goals and objectives - Show a positive approach in keeping their own and the team's efforts focused on the goals that really matter - Take responsibility for delivering expected outcomes on time and to standard, yet allowing the teams space and authority to deliver objectives - Plan ahead but reassess workloads and priorities if situations change or people are facing conflicting demands - Regularly monitor own and team's work against milestones or targets and act promptly to keep work on track and maintain performance - Coach and support others to set and achieve challenging goals for themselves | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give people work to do without supporting them to develop the skills and knowledge they need for the job - Allow work flow to lose momentum or drift away from priorities - Give little or no support to others in managing poor performance, allow others' problems and obstacles to hamper progress - Show no consideration for diversity-related needs of the team when organising the workload - Allow poor performance to go unchallenged, causing workload issues for other team members - Allow organisational and other obstacles, including a lack of support, to stand in the way of own and others' aspirations |