

A Guide to the 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 Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

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. Reading the question carefully should ensure that your answers are relevant and to the point.

Last but not least we'll check your application for (spelling and grammar) errors, and if you have more than 10 it will automatically 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.

You can use examples from your work or social life, or of situations you have come across, it does not have to be police orientated but does need to demonstrate the qualities we look for.

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

When writing about the results and outcomes remember to:

- Give clear examples.
- Supply any facts or statistics that strengthen your answer.

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

- 'be aware of'
- 'have an awareness of'
- 'be prepared for a variety of'

What is good evidence?

- Give specific examples explaining 'how' not 'what'.
- Do not use multiple examples – one or two good examples is better than several weak ones
- Avoid being vague or ambiguous.
- It is important to describe what part you played in the example provided – the how you did something not the what e.g. 'I broke down barriers of mistrust', is no good – explain - i.e. 'I broke down the barriers of mistrust between ***** by explaining the support offered and asking what else ***** needed.'
- Although we want detail, 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.

Actions verbs and their use – remember it's the 'what' plus 'how':

- I tasked to
- I organised to
- I kept informed which meant.....
- My work led to
- I decided / I made the decision
- I gained the support of by

- I considered which meant / led to
- I recognised so I negotiated
- I briefed
- My actions led to
- I took responsibility by
- I established by

Other action verbs:

- analyse
- apply
- change
- create
- determine
- differentiate
- identify
- perform