



Supporting Statement Guidance

What is a supporting statement?

A supporting statement is the evidence assessing managers use to make decisions about whether you are suitable for the job you're applying for and therefore whether you will be shortlisted to proceed to the full selection process.

It is a chance for you to write about your behaviours, skills, knowledge and experience and how these align to the behaviours expected within the Service and in the role (please see the Behavioural Competency Framework (BCF) for further information).

A supporting statement may be the first impression the assessing managers have of you, in considering you for a new role, so it's important to write clearly and concisely and to show how and why you meet the criteria.

The criteria can be found on the last pages of the job profile called 'Person Specification'.

Layout of a supporting statements

Supporting statements should be planned with a logical structure to make the best use of the word count. If the word count is very limited, try to pick some key examples that you can really expand on and cover multiple parts of the job criteria / person specification in order to get the most out of your supporting statement.

If possible, lay your supporting statement out in the same order as the job criteria / person specification, this will make it easier for assessing managers to find the examples you have given that line up to the criteria you are aiming to meet.

Structure your examples and ensure you are evidencing how you meet the criteria clearly; it can be valuable to use the CAR or STAR model.

The CAR model: Context, Actions, Result.

The STAR model: Situation, Task, Action, Result.

Key considerations when writing your supporting statement

You will be asked to either attach a document to your online application through the portal or type your statement into the portal directly.

Always remember to save your work as you go, an online application form can 'time out' after 30 minutes. We recommend writing your supporting statement on a word document before transferring it on to the application form. This also gives you the chance to read and review it for errors before submitting it on the online portal. You can then retain a copy for future reference; this will be useful in preparing for the later stages of the selection process if you are shortlisted.



You may be asked to expand on what was included in your supporting statement if invited to interview so it's important that all the examples you are using are factual, time relevant and based on your personal experiences and skills.

To be shortlisted you must evidence that you meet the essential criteria for the role as detailed in the person specification and aligned to the BCF. Assessing managers will only know what you decide to tell them; they will not make any assumptions or make inferences about what you might mean.

If the supporting statement has been given a word limit, make the most of the opportunity by using the full word count, if you don't you are missing an opportunity to provide assessing managers with examples of your suitability for the role. Don't go over the allowance given, anything over the word limit won't be considered. Once you have written your statement it is advisable to review it to see if you can edit out any unnecessary words which give you additional word count to provide further relevant detail.

What to avoid in a supporting statement

A supporting statement should highlight and evidence to the assessing manager what strengths you bring to the role. Try to avoid including the following within your supporting statement:

A quote – quotes often come across as a gimmick, so unless you're confident it perfectly fits the point you want to make don't include them.

Too much detail – assessing managers may find it hard to determine how you meet the criteria if you give a long narrative about your skills and experience rather than tailoring it to the specific criteria for the role. A narrative or story-telling approach is unlikely to address all of the criteria. Apply a proportionate amount of word count to each criterion.

Spelling or grammar mistakes – once complete, make sure you double check your supporting statement, you may also consider asking another person to proof read your supporting statement for any mistakes.

Exaggeration – ensure that you do not exaggerate examples, you will likely be asked for more detail about the content of your application and supporting statement if shortlisted, the examples of behaviours, skills, knowledge and experience must be your own.

Over-complicated language – you don't need to use unusual language to impress. Yes, you want to show the assessing manager you can write well but you can do this without forcing words into your statement that are unnecessary. Use your own work appropriate style and plain English.

Repetition – don't say the same thing twice, this is a waste of words, add another example or expand on a relevant point.

Statements not examples – a common error is to repeat the criteria stating that you meet it, without providing an example or saying how and why you meet the criteria.

What you don't have – never draw attention to the fact that you don't have what you think the employer is looking for. Instead highlight what you have experience in and how you are developing yourself including your strengths in line with the role.



Limited range – whilst you can use examples exclusively from your current role, if you can, also consider providing examples, drawing on all of your previous life experience and interests so long as they are current and relevant to the role and selection criteria.

Missing information – if you don't provide evidence about how you meet all of the criteria, you will not be shortlisted. Ensure you have provided evidence about how you meet every one. Check this before you submit.

Write in your own words - your supporting statement should genuinely reflect your own experiences, achievements, and reasons for applying. It is important that the content is your own work.

Be specific and reflective - we encourage you to provide specific examples against the WT Firefighter Job Profile (Person Specification).

Prepare to discuss your statement - if you progress in the recruitment process, you may be asked questions based on your supporting statement during interviews. Please be prepared to expand on your answers and discuss your experiences in detail.

On the use of AI and external help - It is acceptable to seek help with spelling, grammar, or formatting. However:

- The content must be your own work.
- Over-reliance on AI-generated text or third-party writing services is discouraged.
- Authenticity and honesty are highly valued.

Why This Matters

Your supporting statement helps us assess your suitability - genuine, detailed and reflective answers provide the best insight into your potential as a firefighter.

We look forward to learning more about you and your journey towards becoming a firefighter.



Worked Example:

Selection Criteria	Strong example	Weak example
Project Management qualification or suitable alternative training	I hold PRINCE2 foundation and Practitioner qualification (2020) undertaken with Knowledge Academy.	I have done some project management training provided by my current employer as part of their training and development offer. I volunteered for this it wasn't required for my role at the time.
	<p>This is a strong example because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is specific - It is timebound - The qualification and provider are recognised and credible - Only uses 12 words 	<p>This is a weak example because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It's not clear what the training involved, how long it lasted or what the training covered - It's not clear when the training was undertaken - It's not clear who delivered or what the quality of the provision was - Lots of additional words that don't add value but use word count (33 words)
Experience of leading or contributing to successful organisational projects	During the 2020 pandemic response I led a project work package to check the safety of 300 vulnerable residents. I created a project plan then identified, briefed and trained staff.	I have a great deal of experience working on projects I've been on a work package teams on an organisational project, I worked with others to get the job done.
	Stakeholders received progress updates throughout. I completed ahead of schedule. A report was provided to social care partners identifying required actions. This strengthened relationships with partner agencies and community members and assisted in the identification and mitigation of community risk. Following this success I was asked to manage the logistics workstream.	My work was praised and I received positive feedback from the Programme Manager. I worked on another project on another workstream. I enjoy working on projects and find it interesting.



	<p>This is a strong example because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- It is specific and timebound, showing recent activity and experience- It details the context, the actions the candidate was responsible for and the outcomes and benefits- It demonstrates learning and skills improvement and increased organisational trust in the individual.- It may satisfy multiple criteria e.g. planning, communication etc- Concise sentence structure, no wasted words- 81 words – proportionate to the criteria, particularly if it meets multiple criteria. This would need to be reviewed in the context of the overall word limit and number of criteria to be met.	<p>This is a weak example because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- It's formed of statements and does not give evidence-based examples- It is vague, it doesn't provide any detail about the context, situation, actions, results or benefits- It doesn't explain how or why the candidate has met the criteria- It doesn't explain when the work took place, it may not be recent- It's repetitive and uses unnecessary words that don't add value or address what is being asked- Unlikely to meet other criteria- 60 words
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