

## A guide to completing a competency based 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 Hertfordshire 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. Please try and keep to one example for each competency and make sure you provide lots of in-depth detail.

We will check your application for spelling and grammatical errors, and if you have more than 10 may cause your application to 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.

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

What is good evidence?

- Give specific examples explaining 'how' not 'what'
- Do not use multiple examples – one 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.
- Although we want details, 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.

When writing about the results and outcomes remember to:

- Give clear examples
- Supply any facts or statistics that strengthen your answer
- Make sure you give a conclusion to your example, whether the outcome was good or bad.
- Consider what you may do different next time if the outcome was not positive.

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

- 'be aware of'
- 'have an awareness of'

Finally:

- Make sure that you check your spelling and grammar. If you have more than 10 spelling and/or grammatical errors your application will automatically fail.
- Provide the context for your example in a brief opening summary.
- Does your example flow? It is difficult for the assessor to mark your application if your example does not follow a logical format.
- Does your example make sense? Remember that the assessor does not know you or the background to your examples, so you need to ensure that you provide context and that your example is well structured.

