

COPFS Application Pack

Band B Fiscal Officer Edinburgh and Livingston

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# Introduction

This pack is to guide you through the COPFS recruitment process. It is vital that you read this carefully as hints and tips are contained.

If you have any further questions or require the application pack in an alternative format, you can contact:

Email - Recruitment@copfs.gov.uk

Telephone – 07733741065

# About COPFS

This is an exciting opportunity to join the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), Scotland’s only prosecution service. We receive reports about crimes from the police and other reporting agencies and then decide what action to take, including whether to prosecute someone. We also look into deaths that need further explanation and investigate allegations of criminal conduct against police officers.

COPFS plays a pivotal part in the justice system, working with others to make Scotland safe from crime, disorder and danger. The public interest is at the heart of all we do as independent prosecutors. We take into account the diverse needs of victims, witnesses, communities and the rights of those accused of crime. We support the Strategy for Justice in Scotland and, in particular, its priorities of:

* Reducing crime, particularly violent and serious organised crime
* Tackling hate crime and sectarianism
* Supporting victims and witnesses
* Increasing public confidence and reducing fear of crime

For further information about COPFS please visit our website - <https://www.copfs.gov.uk/about-copfs/>

[Click here for information regarding COPFS Recruitment Privacy Notice](https://www.copfs.gov.uk/privacy-notice/)

# Vacancy Information

**Fiscal Officer Edinburgh and Livingston
Closing Date – 26th March 2023 at 11.55pm
Sift Date – w/c 27th March 2023
Interviews – w/c 10th April 2023**
**Whilst we will endeavour to meet the dates as specified there may be occasions when these dates will change.**

**Please note that a reserve list may be created for similar vacancies arising in the future.**

**Salary**

Starting salary would be **£22,182** with the maximum salary on this scale being **£24,488** subject to future COPFS pay awards. All salaries are pro rata for part-time staff.

**Location**

Edinburgh and Livingston

Office attendance will be required 5 days a week. There may be occasional opportunities to work from home, depending on business needs and on agreement with Line Manager.

**Contract terms**

Vacancies are expected to be available on both Permanent and 2-year Fixed Term appointments (with possibility of permanency)

Full Time and Part time posts may be available.

**Job Description**

**About COPFS**

The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service is responsible for the investigation and prosecution of all crime in Scotland; the investigation of deaths which require further explanation; and the investigation of complaints against the police.

**About the Role**

This is an exciting entry level opportunity for someone looking to be in an interesting and fast paced role.

You may be starting out in your career or already have an administrative background and looking for a change, but you should have an interest in the Criminal Justice Sector.

You will be expected to work as part of a team to provide a first-class service to your colleagues and service users such as, victims & witnesses and defence agents.

The main duties of this role will cover a range of administrative support and will generally include the administration of cases including:

* Dealing with general enquiries relating to cases
* Uploading and maintaining case information on internal IT systems
* Assisting Legal staff in the administration and preparation of cases for court
* Ensuring all witnesses are notified of their requirement to attend court
* Ensuring the courts and defence agents have all relevant material prior to court hearings

**Please note this is not an exhaustive list and other duties may be required as appropriate to the role**

**Essential Criteria**

* The minimum entry qualifications are 5 National 5s at grades A-C (including English) or equivalent; or demonstrable experience of general office work
* Literacy and fluency in English
* Strong word processing skills
* Strong organisational skills
* The competencies noted also form part of the essential criteria for this post.

**Desirable Criteria**

* An understanding of the work of COPFS

# Application and Selection

**Stage 1 - Application**

**Part B, section 4** of the application should be in the form of a personal statement and should be no more than 500 words. This should outline your suitability for the role, providing evidence against the essential criterial, desirable criteria where possible and the job duties as outlined in the job advert/application pack. You should provide details of your skills and experience and demonstrate how you have acquired these skills and what experience you have which can be transferred to this role. The statement should include examples of ‘how’ and ‘what’ you have done and does **not** need to be written in a standard competency answer format such as STAR.

To assess the evidence relating to the duties specific to the roles within COPFS we will be looking for you to demonstrate a broad range of relevant administrative tasks. When considering your experience you should tailor your Personal Statement to provide evidence of when you have:

* Planned and organised your own workload
* Stayed focused in a busy environment
* Displayed good communication skills, both written and oral
* Used time management skills and ability to meet deadlines

## Stage 2 - Sift

Where there are specific essential criteria or a post attracts more applicants than can reasonably be handled at interview, applications may be “sifted” and a shortlist produced. This formal action will be conducted by a Sift Panel who will usually (but not always) be the same as the Selection Panel. The information you provide in part B of the application will form the basis for the sift.

**Stage 3 - Interview**

If invited to interview, this may consist of a range of question types. This is normally referred to as a Blended Interview. See our hints and tips for further information. These could include questions about your strengths and how you would respond in a particular situation as well as examples of things you have done. You will be assessed on the competencies that are detailed on page 10-13.

Strength Questions: These questions focus on motivation and passion. They do not require a structured detailed response and are more focused on a natural and honest discussion around areas of enjoyment and effectiveness.

Examples: “Would you say you are…?

 “How do you feel about…?

 “How comfortable are you…?

All strength based questions can be followed up by a probing question where required: “Why do you say that?” or “Why do you feel that way?”

**Situational Questions:** These questions are structured around reacting to a certain situation and seek to provide an insight into your natural instinct and thought process as well as give an indication on how realistic scenarios within the role would be handled.

Example: “You’re working on xx but xx happens … what would you do?”

Any situation will be made as realistic and as relevant as possible in order to provide true insight into the duties and challenges of the role

Comprehensive examples using a structured format such as STAR are not required for strength or situational questions.

**Competency Questions:**

The [COPFS Competency Framework](https://www.copfs.gov.uk/about-copfs/careers/how-your-application-is-assessed/a-candidate-s-guide-to-competency-based-selection/) details the level of competence required for each Grade, a description for each competency and what behaviours are expected at each level. You should refer to the Framework to gain an understanding of the role; however for the purposes of this exercise we have detailed the key competencies within this pack.

The examples you provide will ideally be from a recent work-related context but might equally well be derived from other activities away from the workplace (e.g. voluntary work, outside interests) provided they are relevant to the job role. The Selection Panel will consider the suitability of the example used (i.e. relevance and complexity) in assessing your application and/or performance at interview.

You must remember that the Competency Framework is not exhaustive and provides an indication of the general level of working. Your evidence should also take account of your skills, the job role and its accountabilities.

In order to do this, we recommend you adhere to the ‘STAR’ (Situation, Task, Action, Result) method to present your answers:

**S – Situation**

This part of your answer is to describe the scenario you are going to use. A brief overview is all that is necessary.

**T – Task**

Again, a brief sentence or two is all that is needed. The task will be your objective or goal; it may also be relevant to note any consequences to you not achieving it.

**A – Actions.**

This is the most important part of your example in terms of assessment. You should explain what you did within your described situation and task.

It is important to note what YOU did, so actions should start with **“I”** and contain a specific action word (e.g. organised, presented, researched, etc.). You should also note how you carried out actions (e.g. face to face, over the phone, etc.).

When preparing your answers at home, actions should read like bullet points.

**R – Result**

Like the situation and task, this should be kept brief and describe the outcome of your situation. You may also consider some reflection points (e.g. would you do anything differently, has there been an evaluation).

Following the STAR method helps present your example in a chronological order which focuses on what you have done.

The perfect competency answer may be one element of a bigger picture - if you use too big an example you will just skim over the surface of the actions rather than providing the detailed answers they need to hear. It may be helpful to have an example of the following sorts of situations to hand:

* A situation where you resolved conflict with a colleague
* A time you worked to a pressured deadline
* The performance or project you are most proud of
* A time when something went wrong and what you did to resolve it
* An example of working as a team to achieve a common goal
* An example of motivating others, if relevant

Examples of showing specific skills relevant for the job you're going for.

You should be prepared to talk about your example in a lot of detail. The Selection Panel will ask you probing questions to ensure they fully understand the situation you are describing. The Panel will also be interested in the outcome of the situation and whether there was anything you learned from the experience

Rehearse your answers in front of a friend or family member. We would advise that you don’t use jargon unless you are absolutely sure all the members of the selection panel will understand.

**Selection Panel**

When at interview, the Selection Panel will try to put you at ease. The Chairperson will explain what is going to happen and who will ask the questions. You can also ask questions, seek clarification or add extra information at any time and will be given a specific opportunity to do so at the end.

The selection panel will comprise at least two members. If you find that your line manager (or someone with whom you are familiar) is interviewing you do not be surprised if they treat you formally, they must treat all candidates equitably and must not give you an unfair advantage through over-familiarity.

For any particular post, everyone’s interview will be similar in that all candidates will be asked the same core questions. Any follow-up questions will depend on the answers you give and won’t necessarily be the same as those for other candidates.

Prepare examples for each of the competencies. By preparing in this way you will feel more comfortable with being able to perform at your best at interview. Focus on your own contribution and ensure that you show yourself in a good light, whilst of course being honest.

Candidate Notes
Candidates are advised that they may bring personal notes to their interview; however these should be used as reference material only.

Scoring

You can expect to receive **one overall score** reflecting your overall evidence against the full list of criteria using the following ratings:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | **Not demonstrated** – No positive evidence of the competence |
| 2 | **Minimal Demonstration** – Limited positive evidence of the competency |
| 3 | **Moderate Demonstration** **–** Moderate positive evidence of the competency |
| 4 | **Acceptable Demonstration** – Adequate positive evidence of the competency |
| 5 | **Good Demonstration** – Substantial positive evidence of the competency |
| 6 | **Strong Demonstration** – Substantial, positive evidence of the competency and includes some evidence of exceeding expectations |
| 7 | **Outstanding Demonstration** ­– Evidence provided wholly exceeds expectations at this level |

**Guaranteed Interview Scheme**

COPFS is committed to valuing diversity and equality of opportunity and participates in the Disability Confident scheme as awarded by Job Centre Plus.

Under this scheme, all candidates who consider themselves to be disabled in terms of the Equality Act 2010, and who meet the essential minimum criteria for the post, will be guaranteed an interview.

For the purposes of the scheme, the minimum criterion to quality for interview requires adequate demonstration of the essential criteria.

This will be applicable at all stages of recruitment, i.e. if you do not pass the standard required at sift or technical assessment (if applicable), you will not proceed to interview.

**Selection Information**

The selection panel will recommend the candidate(s) for appointment in order of merit.

You may ask for feedback on your performance however this may not be available. Candidate rating forms will be available for candidates who reach the interview stage.

Please note that we will not meet any expenses you may incur in association with this recruitment exercise (tests or interview), nor if you have to relocate to take up appointment (this is also applicable to any current COPFS staff who may make an application for an externally advertised post).

**Appeal**

All candidates are entitled to the right of appeal against any selection decision (i.e. at sift or interview).

Appeals against selection decisions can be made on the following grounds:

* + There has been a procedural irregularity that can be seen to have materially disadvantaged the individual candidate; and/or
	+ There has been an infringement of COPFS’ equal opportunities policy causing actual disadvantage

Appeals out with these grounds will not be considered. The appeal must be submitted in writing, justifying the grounds, to the HR Resource Team within five working days of receiving the results or feedback (if available). Where an appeal is upheld, COPFS will take steps to remove disadvantage or compensate for actual loss.

**Equality & Diversity**

COPFS is proud to maintain an inclusive workplace and we encourage applicants from all backgrounds.

COPFS have set out a strategy to ensure we continue to promote equality of opportunity and treatment and to eliminate unfair discrimination in its employment practises.

Our policy is to provide equal opportunities for employment, career development and promotion to all where eligible, based on ability, qualifications and suitability for the work.

No job applicant or employee will receive less favourable treatment than others because of their gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital or family status, part-time status (unless such treatment is objectively justified), socioeconomic background (or is perceived as belonging to), racial group (includes colour, race, nationality, national or ethnic origin), religion, disability (unless such treatment is objectively justified), age (subject to the operation of a retirement age policy) or trade union membership/non-membership/activities.

COPFS has several staff network groups which include:

### **Equality Ambassadors**

As part of our commitment to equality for all staff we have a number of Equality Ambassadors who are responsible for promoting their characteristic across the service and beyond.

### **Sheriffdom Equality Networks (ShEN)**

Each Sheriffdom has their own equality network, which supports internal and external engagement and awareness of equality issues. The groups advise on policy issues and some run events, like autism awareness sessions, Pride attendance and the Schools’ Public Speaking Competition. Each ShEN has a leader, responsible for the work of the network, and an administrative contact.

#### **Proud in COPFS**

The Proud in COPFS network supports lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) staff. They also provide support and guidance for parents and carers of LGBTI children.

#### **Staff Disability Advisory Group**

The Staff Disability Advisory[Group](https://glwweb02/my-workplace/equalities-inclusion?title=Staff_Disability_Advisory_Group&layout=article&id=9518)comprises of disabled staff, carers and staff with a special interest in disability equality. It was established to meet the specific requirement in disability equality legislation that disabled people be directly involved in improving policy and practice. The Group acts as a forum for the exchange of information and ideas on disability equality, and to advise and influence the development, assessment and implementation of policies relating to disabled staff.

#### **Believe...in COPFS**

The Believe…in COPFS group is for everyone, all staff are welcome to join the network to discuss and consider faith and belief issues. The only requirement is respect for the religion or belief of all members. You can be an active contributor or just sit quietly and reflect.

#### **Carers Network**

The Carers Network group supports colleagues across the organisation who have caring responsibilities.

#### **Mental Health Network**

The Mental Health Network group supports staff with mental health conditions by raising awareness of and signposting appropriate support mechanisms.

#### **Inclusion in COPFS**

Inclusion in COPFS is a BAME staff network which aims to provide support and information to colleagues across the service on equalities issues related to race and ethnicity.

Gender Equality Network (GEN)

The Gender Equality Network (GEN) is your employee network for support on gender-based issues.

The Neurodiversity Support Network (NSN)

The NSN is a resource for all staff to access advice and guidance on all aspects of neurodiversity including autism, ADHD, epilepsy, migraines, and dyslexia and other learning difficulties.

We have created information pages for Autism and Epilepsy that can be found under guidance above. We are working on pages for other areas too.

If you are interested in joining the NSN, contact Sarah McCall, SPFD at SOCU West and Equality Ambassador for Autism and Epilepsy.

# Competencies

**COPFS Competency Framework**

The COPFS Competency Framework applies to all staff. The Competency Framework has been developed to recognise the general range of skills and behaviours expected across all job roles within COPFS. It is based on the same competency framework used by nearly all other Civil Service organisations. The COPFS Competency Framework is central in understanding how best to use the considerable resources available in Civil Service Learning. This includes access to National Occupational Standards (NOS), recognised nationally in industry and Government as indicators of how professionals should be performing. COPFS Learning & Development can provide advice about management development in particular to a level 7 of the Chartered Management Institute standard.

The Competency Framework enables COPFS to recruit and select staff by considering evidence on how an individual achieved an objective or completed a task. It further allows selection based on specific past occurrences which can be indicators of future behaviours or performance.

The Competency Framework should give all candidates an equal opportunity to describe their behaviours when working towards an objective or performing a task.

**Competency Levels**

Competency levels determine the level that someone would be expected to demonstrate indicative behaviours in their day to day work and interaction with others, these differ by grade. The levels go from level one up to level six. It would be assumed that someone performing at level six would be aware of and routinely performing at levels one to five.

For the purposes of this exercise, you are asked to provide examples and evidence against the following key competencies.

**Collaborating & Partnering**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Description | People skilled in this area create and maintain positive, professional and trusting working relationships with a wide range of people within and outside the Civil Service to help get business done. At all levels, it requires working collaboratively, sharing information and building supportive, responsive relationships with colleagues and stakeholders, whilst having the confidence to challenge assumptions. At senior levels, it’s about delivering business objectives through creating an inclusive environment, encouraging collaboration and building effective partnerships including relationships with Ministers.  |
|  | ***Effective Behaviour People who are effective are likely to…*** | ***Ineffective Behaviour People who are less effective are likely to…*** |
| Level 1 | * Proactively contribute to the work of the whole team
* Get to know fellow team members/colleagues and understand their viewpoints and preferences
* Seek help when needed in order to complete own work effectively
* Be open to taking on different roles
* Try to see issues from others’ perspectives and check understanding
* Listen to the views of others and show sensitivity towards others
 | * Focus on own objectives at the expense of supporting colleagues
* Is overly critical and blaming of people who have different working styles or development needs
* Miss opportunities to generate better outcomes for the customer through collaboration with others
* Assume specific, unvarying role responsibilities
* Look at issues from own viewpoint only
* Not treat all colleagues fairly, equitably or with respect
 |

**Leading and Communicating**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Description | At all levels, effectiveness in this area is about leading from the front and communicating with clarity, conviction and enthusiasm. It’s about supporting principles of fairness of opportunity for all and a dedication to a diverse range of citizens. At senior levels, it is about establishing a strong direction and a persuasive future vision; managing and engaging with people with honesty and integrity, and upholding the reputation of the Department and the Civil Service. |
|  | ***Effective Behaviour People who are effective are likely to…*** | ***Ineffective Behaviour People who are less effective are likely to…*** |
| Level 1 | * Put forward their own views in a clear and constructive manner, choosing an appropriate communication method, e.g. email/telephone/face to face
* Act in a fair and respectful way in dealing with others
* Write clearly in plain simple language and check work for spelling and grammar, learning from previous inaccuracies
* Ask open questions to appreciate others’ points of view
 | * Miss opportunities to contribute positively to discussions about the organisation or team
* Show bias or a lack of respect and treat some groups more favourably than others
* Make little effort to ensure they express themselves in an effective manner that others can easily understand
* Withhold work information and refuse to share knowledge that would help others to do a better job
 |

**Managing a Quality Service**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Description | Effectiveness in this area is about being organised to deliver service objectives and striving to improve the quality of service, 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 and efficient service, applying programme and project management approaches to support service delivery. At senior levels, it is about creating an environment to deliver operational excellence and creating the most appropriate and cost effective delivery models for public services |
|  | ***Effective Behaviour People who are effective are likely to…*** | ***Ineffective Behaviour People who are less effective are likely to…*** |
| Level 1 | * Communicate in a way that meets and anticipates the customer’s requirements and gives a favourable impression of the Civil Service
* Actively seek information from customers to understand their needs and expectations
* Act to prevent problems, reporting issues where necessary
* Gain the knowledge needed to follow the relevant legislation, policies, procedures and rules that apply to the job
* Encourage customers to access relevant information or support that will help them understand and use services more effectively
* Take ownership of issues, focus on providing the right solution and keep customers and delivery partners up to date with progress
 | * Communicate with customers in an unprepared way
* Act without thinking through the necessary steps and disregard the customer’s circumstances
* Allow service levels to drop or problems to occur before reporting
* Miss opportunities to learn or find out about relevant guidance and rules
* Keep customers in the dark about relevant and useful information or partners
* Treat people unfairly or make unrealistic commitments
 |

# Additional Information

**General Pre-Employment Requirements**

Should you be successful in your application you will be recommended for appointment subject to our standard pre recruitment checks. These include:

* **Identity** – you will be asked to provide evidence of your identity if invited to interview and potentially at another time during the recruitment process.
* **Nationality and Immigration Status** – you will be asked to provide proof of your eligibility to work and remain in the UK. Successful candidates will also be required to satisfy the Civil Service Nationality requirements. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nationality-rules>
* **Employment/ Academic History Verification** – if you are successful, we will conduct a verification of your 3 year history
* **Criminal History** – COPFS has exemptions from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974). This check will be undertaken through an Enhanced Disclosure check (of which, COPFS will meet the expense)
* **Health** – prior to appointment, candidates will also undergo a pre-employment health assessment through our Occupational Health provider.

When full checks are satisfactorily completed, a formal offer of employment will be made.

**Terms of Appointment**

Salary is paid monthly by credit transfer to your nominated bank account.

Successful candidates will be expected to complete a 9 month probation period.

Successful applicants will be expected to work a five day week of 37 hours excluding lunch breaks. You will have an annual leave allowance of 25 days per year (rising to 30 days after 4 years’ service) and will also benefit from an additional 11.5 public and privilege holidays per year.

Part time allowances will be calculated as a pro rata amount and confirmed within the contract of employment.

On joining COPFS, employees will be automatically enrolled in the Civil Service pension arrangements. You can find further information on Civil Service Pensions via the [Cabinet Office](http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/pensions/) ([www.civilservice.gov.uk/pensions](http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/pensions)).

# Civil Service Code

As a Civil Servant, you will be expected to carry out your role with dedication and a commitment to the Civil Service and its core values. The Civil Service Code defines the core values that you, as a Civil Servant, are expected to work within and uphold. These core values are:

* Honesty
* Impartiality
* Integrity
* Objectivity

The Code forms part of the terms and conditions of every Civil Servant. Further information can be obtained from <http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/values>

# Civil Service Commission

The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service’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 Recruitment Principles which can be found at <http://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk/>

If you feel your application has not been treated in accordance with the Principles and you wish to make a complaint, you should contact the HR Resource Team by e-mailing Recruitment@copfs.gov.uk in the first instance.  If you are not satisfied with the response you receive from the Service you can contact the Office of the [Civil Service Commission](http://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk/contact-us/) directly.

The Code forms part of the terms and conditions of every Civil Servant. Further information can be obtained from <http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/values>

# Hints and tips

How to I prepare for a Blended Interview?

**Read**

* Read the duties of the job, the Civil Service Competency Framework

**Consider**

* Think about the role and what the competencies/indicators mean for that role. Would you enjoy this kind of role? What can you bring to the role?
* Consider your previous experience and current skills and think about whether these are transferrable
* Think about your strengths and what motivates you, both at work and in your personal life.

**Listen**

* Make sure you listen to the question, the panel may not be expecting a STAR model answer for every question, a STAR model answer is only required for a competency question which will being with the phrase “Tell me about a time when…” or “Please give me an example of when you have ….”

Strength – how you feel about or how effective you are at something

Situational – what you would do in a certain situation

Competency – what you have done in the past

**Relax**

* The Blended Interview is aimed to get the best out of you in a more flexible and natural way so try to be as relaxed as you can and speak honestly and freely.