Government Social Researcher Annual Recruitment Campaign:

Senior Social Researcher and Research Officer (SRO/RO)

March 2026

Contents

Welcome 3
1. Overview of guidance..... 4
2. Government Social Research Profession (GSR) 5
3. Working for the Welsh Government 8
4. How to apply 11
ANNEX – helping you prepare 23

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in research roles in the Welsh Government

I am delighted that you are interested in finding out more about our Social Research roles at in the Welsh Government.

The Welsh Government is the devolved Government for Wales. It is responsible for developing and implementing national policies for Wales and works across devolved areas that include key areas of public life such as health, education and the environment.

Most social researchers in the Welsh Government are in a central department called **Knowledge and Analytical Services (KAS)** which also includes statisticians. Just over a quarter of the social research profession are working in out bedded posts within policy departments.

The wide variety of the devolved powers of the Welsh Government allows Social Researchers to work across a range of policy areas. The work is fast-paced and will allow you to develop your analytical skills by engaging in research to support policy teams and ministers. This includes:

- Evaluating policies which are being implemented
- Conducting impact analysis or feasibility analyses on a policy which may be implemented in future
- Providing evidence for a policy team
- Research to scope public attitudes towards key issues
- Disseminating research findings
- Working with stakeholders to create new monitoring and evaluation systems to monitor Welsh Government funded programmes.

This might be done through both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Many research projects at Welsh Government are contracted out to research companies, so there is some contract management involved in the role. Depending on the research team, there is often interaction with third sector organisations, academics and other Government departments. As Welsh Government covers many policy areas, there are opportunities to move around to work within different policy areas.

You can find out more about careers in Social Research in the Welsh Government on our Careers webpage.

If you believe that you have the right skills to help us, then we would like to hear from you.

Catrin Awoyemi and Rebecca Sarasin

Chief Social Research Officer, Welsh Government

1. Overview of guidance

We are looking for passionate and capable people from all walks of life. Previous experience as a civil servant is not a requirement. We want people who can bring different lived experiences to our decision making and thrive in collaborative teams that will help change the way we think.

This guidance includes an overview of the organisation and the Government Social Research Profession within Welsh Government. This guidance has been designed to provide helpful hints and tips to assist you in applying for Social Research vacancies at the Welsh Government, including;

- completing an application, including producing Success Profile Behaviours and experience examples;
- the assessment process, including interview, an oral briefing exercise and GSR Knowledge Test.

If you have any questions relating to the information contained in this guidance or the application process, please contact the Shared Service Centre on 0300 025 5454 or via email (SharedServiceHelpdesk@gov.wales).

Principles for Recruitment into the Civil Service

The Welsh Government is bound by the principles for recruitment as set out in the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Principles.

The main Principles are:

- Individuals will be selected on merit on the basis of fair and open competition: Prospective applicants will be given equal and reasonable access to adequate information about the job and its requirements, and about the selection process; and applicants will be considered equally on merit at each stage of the selection process.
- The process will be based on consistent criteria relevant to the job being applied consistently to all candidates; selection methods will be reliable and guard against bias.
- All external recruitment to permanent posts will be underpinned by these principles, including the requirement that permanent appointments must be made on merit via fair and open competition as set out in the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010.

2. Government Social Research Profession (GSR)

Government Social Research (GSR) is the social research profession for the Civil Service. There are GSR members in all government departments, and in Welsh Government most social researchers are based in a central department, Knowledge and Analytical Services (KAS), which also includes statisticians. There are also a number of social researchers working in out-bedded posts within policy teams.

The wide variety of the devolved powers of the Welsh Government allows social researchers to work across a range of policy areas. The work is fast-paced and will allow you to develop your analytical skills by engaging in research to support policy teams and ministers. To do this, your role may include some of the following:

- In-house or contract management of evaluations for policies which are being implemented;
- Conducting impact analysis or feasibility analyses on a policy which may be implemented in future;
- Providing in-house evidence (e.g. literature reviews or small-scale research projects) for a policy team;
- Providing in-house statistical analysis on omnibus survey data;
- Contract management of external organisations to undertake surveys;
- Providing in-house or contract management of research to scope public attitudes toward key issues;
- Disseminating research findings to policy colleagues and other customers;
- Liaising closely with other staff across Welsh Government to share knowledge and develop expertise; working with stakeholders to create new monitoring and evaluation systems to monitor Welsh Government funded programmes.

This might be done through both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Our researchers draw on both quantitative and qualitative knowledge in their roles.

Many research projects at Welsh Government are contracted out to research companies, so there is some contract management involved in the role. Depending on the research team, there is often interaction with third sector organisations, academics and other Government departments. As Welsh Government covers many policy areas, there are opportunities to move around to work within different policy areas.

Candidates for GSR roles are assessed using the Civil Service Success Profile approach to recruitment. The Government Social Research Technical Framework has been produced to align with success profiles and provides more information on the technical and communication skills required for Research Officer (HEO) and Senior Research Officer (SEO) grades.

We are looking for applications from diverse candidates who can bring fresh skills, lived experiences and perspectives to our work.

See what our researchers have to say about their work…

Research Officers

Childcare Offer Policy Analysis team - Childcare, Play and Early Years division

> "It is a research role embedded within a policy team, in the Childcare, Play and Early Years division. I am responsible for managing research contracts to evaluate the Welsh Government Childcare Offer policy using a range of methods, including surveys, in-depth interviews and focus groups."

> "I am able to ensure evaluation work was fit-for-purpose and manage the relationship between policy asks and what the research contractor are able to deliver. The role also allows me to work closely with local authorities delivering the programme and stakeholder groups. I have presented evaluation work on multiple occasions to a range of stakeholders. Working so closely with a policy team who have a real interest in evidence-based decisions is a great experience. I also enjoy being able to work closely on a specific policy as through my knowledge of both the policy area and the recent and current research on the policy I can work with my team to actively identify any areas that would benefit from further research."

Internal Research Programme – Knowledge and Analytical Services

> "Within this position, I am tasked with undertaking small-scale research projects on behalf of other departments within the Welsh Government, assuming a role similar to an internal research consultancy. This offers the exciting opportunity to conduct first-hand research and to experience research projects in a way that is unique amongst most Knowledge and Analytical Services positions, while providing an insight into the varied work taking place across the different areas of the Welsh Government."

Senior Research Officers

Sustainable Futures Research Team – Knowledge and Analytical Services

> "I work in the sustainable futures research team which serves the research needs of a wide range of policy areas including environment, marine, land, nature and food directorates. This means a wide range of research requirements, policy relationships to make and research contracts to manage. Already in the few months I've been in the role, I have been able to work with other UK government departments such as BEIS on joint research contracts and advise the Chief Scientific Officer for Wales on survey questions."

> "I am currently managing research contracts in various areas of Environment and Rural Affairs and I'm really enjoying the fast-paced nature of focusing my time between multiple pieces of research. This role gives me the chance to promote the value of research to policy customers and provide advice on the most appropriate methods to achieve policy's goals. What is really exciting about this post is the opportunity to work on research in high profile policy areas such as the National Forest for Wales."

Education, Skills and Welsh Language team – Knowledge and Analytical Services

"I work in the Education, Skills and Welsh Language team, and alongside my colleagues, I manage the development and delivery of a number of research and evaluation projects that are related to schools. I enjoy managing such a wide variety of research projects, as well as working with different policy leads to understand their evidence needs and plan the most appropriate research projects. What I find particularly rewarding in my role is that I am able to manage the development of a research project from the early scoping meetings with policy colleagues, right through to the publication of a research report that directly supports policy decisions. At the moment, I am working on high profile research projects, which include supporting the Renew and Reform programme, as well the Additional Learning Needs transformation programme."

3. Working for the Welsh Government

The Welsh Government has an annual budget of around £27.5 billion and is responsible for a range of areas including health, education and skills, the economy and transport, and agriculture and the environment. The First Minister of Wales and her Cabinet form the Welsh Government and make decisions in devolved areas of responsibility. Welsh Ministers are accountable to the Senedd Cymru/Welsh Parliament, Wales' legislative body comprising 60 elected Members. This will increase to 96 members following the 2026 Senedd elections.

Welsh Ministers are supported by around 5,500 civil servants, approximately half of whom are located in Cardiff, with the remainder based in Welsh Government offices across Wales. The Welsh Government also has small offices in London, Brussels and an overseas network for trade and investment work. The Permanent Secretary leads the Welsh Government Civil Service and is accountable to the First Minister and Welsh Ministers.

Our aim is to help the First Minister and Welsh Ministers to build a fairer, greener and more equal Wales.

The Organisation's structure

Corporate Services and Inspectorates Group (CSI) - CSI focuses on developing a confident, capable and resilient organisation as well as providing professional advice to Ministers and the rest of the organisation.

Local Govt, Housing, Climate Change and Rural Affairs Group (LGH&CCRA)– LGH&CCRA supports a broad range of policy areas, including climate change, infrastructure, rural affairs and housing and regeneration.

Economy, Energy and Transport Group (EET) – EET has responsibility for advising on policy issues in economy, arts and sport and finance. It is also responsible for Welsh Treasury, business and regions and science and innovation.

Education, Culture and Welsh Language Group (ECWL) – ECWL is responsible for helping to create efficient education, Welsh language and public services.

Health, Social Care and Early Years Group (HSCEY)- HSCEY advises the Welsh Government on policies and strategies for health and social care in Wales including Cafcass Cymru

First Minister's Group (FMG)- FMG leads on the provision of services to the First Minister, Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers.

Diversity and Equality

The Welsh Government is committed to providing services which embrace diversity and promote equality of opportunity. These principles are underpinned by the Equality Act 2010 and are upheld throughout every stage of the recruitment process. Our goal is to ensure that these values are embedded not only in recruitment, but also in our everyday working practices with customers, colleagues, and partners. We

are committed to increasing diversity across the organisation, removing barriers and supporting all staff to reach their full potential.

We welcome applications from everyone regardless of age, marriage (including equal and same sex marriage) and civil partnership, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, impairment or health condition, race, religion or belief or pregnancy and maternity.

We are a Stonewall Diversity Champion and in their top 100 list of employers with a Gold award in 2023. We are a Disability Confident (Leader) organisation. We have signed Victim Support's Hate Crime Charter, Business in the Community's Race at Work Charter and Changing Faces' Pledge to be Seen which supports people with visible difference. Key to supporting this work and providing peer support are 5 Board sponsored Staff Networks (Disability Awareness and Support (DAAS); Mind Matters; Minority Ethic Staff Network (MESN); PRISM (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex +) and Women Together).

Name-free recruitment

The Welsh Government operates name-free recruitment. The recruiting panel will not see personal information such as a candidate's name and address during the sifting process. This policy is in line with our commitment to end bias and promote equality and diversity.

Disability Confident

Welsh Government accepts the social definition of disability, in which it is recognised that barriers in society act to disable people who have impairments or health conditions or who use British Sign Language. We are committed to removing barriers so that all (or potential new staff) can perform at their best. The Equality Act 2010 uses the medical definition of disability ("a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term impact on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities").

The Welsh Government is a Disability Confident Leader. As part of our commitment to this scheme we interview any candidate with an impairment, health condition, who is neurodivergent or who uses British Sign Language if they meet the minimum criteria for the post (usually defined as a minimum score of 4 per criteria). Eligible candidates should tick the relevant box on the application form if they wish to be considered as part of this scheme. After the assessment stage prior to interview, the Recruitment Team will inform the panel of any eligible candidates who meet the minimum criteria but were not initially selected for interview.

We are committed to the employment and career development of disabled people. If you have an impairment or health condition, or use British Sign Language and would like to discuss adjustments to support you during any part of the recruitment process - or explore how we can support you if you're successful - please email SharedServiceHelpdesk@gov.wales as soon as possible. A member of the team will contact you to discuss your needs and answer any questions you may have. You can also contact the Diversity in Recruitment Team directly for confidential advice.

A Great Place to work for Veterans

If you have completed at least one year in his Majesty's Armed Forces – either as a regular or reserve - and are in transition from the Armed Forces, or no longer a member, you can apply for roles in the Civil Service under the Great Place to Work Veterans initiative. As part of our commitment to this scheme we interview any eligible candidates who meet the minimum criteria for the post (usually defined as a minimum score of 4 per criteria). If you wish to be considered under this initiative, please tick the relevant box on the application form.

Redeployment interview scheme

Civil Service employers can offer an interview to a fair and proportionate number of civil servants who are at risk of redundancy and who meet the minimum criteria for the post (usually defined as a minimum score of 4 per criteria). For example, you may be at risk if your work area has launched a voluntary or compulsory redundancy scheme that you're eligible for, or you are aware that your employer has begun consultation on how to reduce staff in your immediate team or work area. If you wish to be considered under this scheme, please tick the relevant box on the application form.

Welsh Language

Wales is a bilingual country, with both Welsh and English used routinely in our daily lives and workplaces. The Welsh language has official status in Wales. There are measures in place to ensure it is not treated less favourably than English. The First Minister has set out his vision for the future of the language in our Welsh language strategy Cymraeg 2050: a million Welsh speakers. This government's vision is to see the number of people able to enjoy speaking and using Welsh reach one million by 2050. It also wants to double the percentage of people using the language daily.

As an organisation we have a legal obligation to provide services and information to the public in Welsh, for example providing bilingual correspondence and newsletters and answering the phone bilingually. The details of this are set out in the Welsh Language Standards.

The standards also ensure that Welsh speaking employees have access to internal services in Welsh such as: a bilingual Intranet, Human Resources (HR) documents, IT tools to help us work bilingually.

We want to support our employees to improve their language skills at all levels. We have many opportunities for our staff to start learning or brush up on skills they already have. Our bilingual working strategy Cymraeg. It belongs to us all sets out our ambition to become a truly bilingual organisation by 2050. Our initial goal is to become exemplar in our use of the language over the next 5 years.

The Welsh Government therefore acknowledges the importance of developing and growing its bilingual workforce. Applications for any post can be submitted in either Welsh or English. Applications submitted in Welsh will not be treated less favourably than applications submitted in English. You can also request an interview through the medium of Welsh and deal with us through the medium of Welsh throughout the recruitment process.

4. How to apply

Stage 1: The Application Process

The majority of vacancies with the Welsh Government are advertised on the Recruitment pages of our website. Select ‘Vacancies’ to view the different types of opportunities available with the Welsh Government. Vacancy adverts will include a description of the vacancy and will identify the behaviours (core skills and behaviours) and essential experience criteria required for the post, together with any other requirements such as particular qualifications. The advert will also provide details of any other assessment method that may be undertaken during the course of the recruitment activity in addition to the interview. It will also set out the general terms and conditions of the vacancy, including the starting salary at which the appointment will be made.

Planning your Application

Before you make your application you should carefully read the job advert and job description and assure yourself that you can provide sufficient evidence of the core skills and behaviours and experience criteria for the post. You must also ensure you meet the eligibility criteria for Government Social Research. It is worth noting that anyone who is deemed unable to provide sufficient evidence by the panel will not progress to interview and will be sifted out. Only candidates deemed competent against each of the areas being tested (which for the purposes of the Guaranteed Interview Scheme is the minimum criteria for the post) may progress beyond the sift (short listing) and/or assessment stage. You should plan the completion of your application being mindful of the closing date for the vacancy and any potential technical difficulties in using the online system, as this is a fixed date that will not be negotiated (except where a reasonable adjustment is appropriate and has been agreed beforehand).

Assistance in completing the Application Form

It is your responsibility to provide examples that best demonstrate the relevant competency behaviours and job specific criteria required and it is important to bear in mind it is your application and should therefore be all your own work. If you get an interview or progress to another form of assessment, you will be tested in depth on what you have written. You must not seek advice from anyone who will be involved in the recruitment process, particularly members of the recruitment panel. Assistance may however be provided for a disability-related reason, including the help of an advocate to complete the form in appropriate circumstances.

You are welcome to complete the application form in English or Welsh. For posts where Welsh language skills are required, please check the job description and advert carefully for any instructions about the need to answer certain questions in Welsh in order to test those skills.

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence can be a useful tool to support your application, however, all examples and statements provided must be truthful, factually accurate and taken

directly from your own experience. Where plagiarism has been identified (presenting the ideas and experiences of others, or generated by artificial intelligence, as your own) applications may be withdrawn and internal candidates may be subject to disciplinary action. Please see the Civil Service AI candidate guidance for more information on appropriate and inappropriate use.

E-Recruitment System

The majority of Welsh Government vacancies are advertised via our e-recruitment system, which can be accessed via the Recruitment page on the internet.

To view all the types of opportunities the Welsh Government has to offer, visit the Recruitment page on the internet, and then select the type of vacancy you are looking for.

You are able to track the process of any applications you make via the online recruitment system, in the Candidate Application Centre section of your account.

Recruitment Adjustments

If you have an impairment or health condition, if you are neurodivergent or use British Sign Language and need to discuss reasonable adjustments for any part of this recruitment process, or wish to discuss how we will support you if you were to be successful, please email socialresearch.recruitment@gov.wales as soon as possible and a member of the team will contact you to discuss your requirements and any questions you may have.

Guaranteed Interview Scheme

The Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) provides individuals with impairments or health conditions the right to proceed to the next stage of the selection process if they meet the minimum criteria at the sift stage. To apply under the GIS, simply confirm this under the ‘Positive about Disability’ section in the application form. We guarantee to interview anyone who is disabled whose application meets the minimum criteria for the post. By ‘minimum criteria’ we mean that you must pass the online tests and provide us with evidence in your application which demonstrates that you generally meet the level of competence for the role and any qualifications, skills or experience defined as essential. We are committed to the employment and career development of disabled people.

To apply in Welsh

To access the Welsh version of a vacancy, simply click on the ‘Change Language / Newid Iaith’ toggle button at the top right hand of the page. If you would like to apply in Welsh, simply click on the ‘Gwneud cais’ button at the bottom of this page. Please note, once you start an application in Welsh, you aren’t then able to switch to an English application for that post, using the same user account. If you experience any difficulties, or have any questions regarding the process, please contact the Shared Service Centre on 029 20 82 5454 or via email sharedservicehelpdesk@gov.wales.

Creating a new user account

Once you have selected ‘Apply’ you will be taken to the candidate log in screen. If you do not have an existing candidate account, you will need to select ‘Create New Account’ which can be found underneath the log in details. Once you have done this, enter your details and read the terms and conditions.

Did you know?

You can register for Job Alerts via the Candidate Application Centre in your account, so that you are sent the details of any vacancies that meet your search criteria to you via your registered e-mail address. Just select ‘Create Job Alert’ at the bottom of the vacancies board.

Application Updates

Once you have applied for a vacancy, you will be kept updated on the progress of your application via your registered e-mail address. You can also check on the progress of your application by logging in to your account and viewing the ’My Applications’ section of your account which is at the top of the page when you are logged in.

Navigating the Application form

The fields marked with an asterisk ‘*’ are mandatory, therefore you must provide a response or you will not be able to submit your application. Fields without a ‘*’ are not mandatory, as they may not be relevant to all candidates. If you do have information you could include in response to a question, providing as much information as possible against each field will help to ensure that the sifting panel have a complete picture of your skills, experience and knowledge.

Select ‘Continue’ once you have completed all the questions on a page to proceed (this will save what you have completed on that page). You can also select ‘back’ at any point to return to the previous page. Alternatively, you can select a specific page you want to return to by clicking on a link to the page in the Progress Tracker on the left hand side.

Progress Tracker

A green tick by a section shows that you have responded to all the questions in that section. An orange tick shows that you have completed all the mandatory questions in that section. A cross indicates that you have left some mandatory questions unanswered; therefore the application cannot be submitted.

You don’t have to complete the whole application form in one go. Once you have completed a section, ensure you click the ‘Continue’ button to save all you have done in that section. You can then log out of your account and return to your unfinished application at any point up to the closing date for the vacancy. To return to the application form, simply log in to your account, select ‘My applications’ and click on the relevant vacancy title, which should be in your applications history.

Completing the Application form

Completing the "Experience Criteria and Success Profile Behaviour Evidence" section

This is the most important part of your application. You will be asked to evidence how you meet the Success Profile behaviours and experience criteria identified as essential for the role. This is the new Government wide framework that uses a number of different "elements" (Experience, Strengths, Ability, Technical and Behaviours) to determine our recruitment selection methods. Further details can be found via this link: Success Profiles.

We strongly recommend that you read all information relating to the assessment process before starting your application. The panel will be looking for how well the evidence you have provided demonstrates that you meet the requirements for the role.

Experience Criteria

These are criteria identified by the Chief Social Research Officer as they are crucial to the Social Research Profession that these roles fall within. They will include particular skills, experience or knowledge relevant to the profession and roles. We also ask for a specific qualification relevant to the role. You will be required to provide evidence against three profession specific experience criteria (unless stated differently in the job advert). You should evidence how you meet the experience criteria listed in the advert by drawing on your past experience, knowledge and achievements to provide a summary which demonstrate that you meet the criteria. This is an equally important part of the application form, and if you do not sufficiently evidence the experience criteria, it is unlikely that your application will pass the sift stage. The experience criteria are outlined in the areas to evidence section (Experience 1-3) of the job advert.

Success Profile Behaviours

The Success Profile Framework aims to assess candidates flexibly against a range of elements and using a variety of selection methods. This provides the best possible chance of finding the right person for the job and improving diversity and inclusivity. The Framework outlines 9 behaviours which are deemed to be key for successful performance within the Civil Service. For each behaviour there is a description of what it means in practice and some examples of effective behaviours at all levels. In your application, you will be asked to provide evidence, in the form of real examples, of how you demonstrate the key behaviours identified as essential for the role for which you are applying. The required behaviours will be outlined in the vacancy advert.

For this exercise, there are 2 behaviours for which you will be asked to provide evidence (Behaviour 1-2). The evidence is used to benchmark how you have behaved in the past, as this is likely to be a good indication of how you will perform in the future. Your evidence should be written in a way that helps panel members assess your suitability for the role. Read on for advice on how to choose and write your evidence for your application.

How do I provide my behaviour and experience evidence?

You will be asked in the application form provide evidence against behaviours and experience criteria. We would expect up to 250 words per each individual behaviour and experience that needs to be evidenced. You should aim to provide as much evidence as you can for each individual area, so make best use of the word allowance. You should ensure that you clearly evidence all the necessary behaviours and experience. Use the STAR approach to provide your evidence (see Annex A for more information on how to draft your response using the STAR approach).

Failure to provide good evidence will result in you not getting through the sift process to interview.

For further advice on evidencing your behaviours and experience, see Annex A: Providing your evidence.

Completing the "Role Specific Questions" section

Answer either 'yes' or 'no' to these questions if shown. These questions will only appear if the role for which you are applying requires specific qualifications, skills or experience, without which you will not be able to fulfil the requirements of the role. If you aren't able to confirm you meet the requirement(s) your application will not be progressed.

Completing the "Personal Details" section

Complete the fields regarding your personal details such as your name, address etc. It is essential that you provide correct and up to date information, as the information is needed in order to progress your application.

Completing the "Minimum Criteria" section

The purpose of these questions is to determine if you are eligible to apply for the vacancy, in accordance with Civil Service nationality requirements. The application form will require you to provide some personal details to enable us to process your application effectively. You will be asked as part of your eligibility, to confirm your nationality details and that you are legally allowed to work in the United Kingdom. This is a requirement for working within the Civil Service. If you do not meet the eligibility criteria as set out in the application form, your application will not be taken further. If it becomes apparent at a later stage in the process that you aren't eligible to apply, you application may be withdrawn, or offer retracted.

Answer the questions via the drop-down boxes with regards to the minimum eligibility criteria.

Completing the "Attach your CV" section

Complete this section by uploading your CV as an attachment. A CV allows you to demonstrate to the recruiting panel the required skills, experience and personal attributes you possess to do the job effectively. Whilst there is no set CV template that you must adhere to, you may wish to provide further information on your personal attributes and key achievements throughout your career history, together

with any further information you may wish to provide on your education, training and professional memberships.

Please note, the CV will support your evidence provided on behaviours and experience criteria, but should not be provided instead of this evidence. The CV should be used to add any additional information which you feel is relevant to the role.

If this has been requested in the vacancy advert, you can attach your additional document in this section in .doc, .docx, .pdf, .xls or .xlsx formats.

Completing the "Education" section

Please provide us with details of your education history. The institution refers to the school/college/university you have attended, and the subject will be what you studied there. It is essential that you provide correct and up to date information, as this may be taken into consideration at the sifting stage. If a particular qualification has been noted in the vacancy advert as essential or desirable for the post, you should ensure that you include the details of that qualification if you hold it.

You are able to add another instance of the boxes to input your information if there are too few to enter your qualifications.

Completing the "Learning and Development" section

Please provide us with the details of any wider learning and development you have undertaken that may be relevant to the application. This could include any personal development you have undertaken which hasn't led to a qualification, but is relevant to the post for which you are applying.

Completing the "Employment History" section

Complete the fields with regard to your current (or most recent) employment and then add any previous employment. To add the details of an additional employer or role, respond 'Yes' to the 'Do you have previous employment?' question. This will add another instance of the employer details section. It is essential that you provide correct and up to date information, as the information is needed in order to progress your application.

You will need to provide details of the name of your previous employers, position(s) held and reason(s) for leaving, for at least the last 3 years (unless you have not been in employment for this long – please provide as many details as you are able). If you have no employment experience, select 'No' to the 'Are you currently serving as a civil servant?' question, and then insert 'No employment history' in the 'Employer Name' box.

Completing the "Disability Confident Scheme" section

The **Disability Confident** scheme operated by the Welsh Government means that we welcome applications from people with disabilities. The scheme guarantees an interview to disabled people who meet the minimum criteria for the post applied for. Select your responses with regards to the guaranteed interview scheme and provide us with the details of any requirements for assistance at interview, or any information you would like to make us aware of with regard to your requirements.

Completing the “Welsh Language” section

Select your level of Welsh language ability for the various skills areas listed, as well as your preferred language for assessment. Your level of ability will normally only be assessed and scored formally if Welsh is identified in the vacancy advert as being essential or desirable for the role. However, we sometimes wish to take account of Welsh Language skills as part of matching successful candidates to appropriate roles where Welsh isn’t required but could be of benefit. Look out for any information regarding this in the vacancy advert, or future communication during the recruitment process.

Completing the “Any other information” section

Please confirm if you are in a close relationship with or are closely related to a current Welsh Government employee or a Welsh Senedd Member. Select “yes” or “no”. This will not prevent you from being considered for this post.

Completing the “References” section

You will need to provide the names of two referees (one must be your current or most recent employer) that cover at least the previous three years of employment. If you have just left school or college and have no previous work experience, please make sure that at least one of your referees is one of your teachers, lecturers or your head teacher or personal tutor.

Source of Application

Please provide information on how you found out about the vacancy – this is for Welsh Government monitoring purposes, to ensure we are using the most effective means of advertising our vacancies.

Completing the “Equal Opportunities Monitoring” section

Complete the sections with regards to the equality data, such as gender, as required. If you prefer not to answer one or more questions, select ‘Prefer not to say’. All monitoring information is strictly confidential, for statistical purposes to ensure that policies are being applied fairly. For example, data can help us improve our recruitment processes to identify where we may be able to better support people with specific Protected Characteristics to reduce barriers or any disadvantages procedures present.

The monitoring information will only be shared with a restricted number of authorised personnel who monitor this data. Please be reassured, the information will not be seen by the selection panel.

Completing the “Declaration” section

Please ensure you read the declaration statement. If you agree to the statements regarding Data Protection, Equal Opportunities and how your application will be processed, select the tick box to confirm your agreement.

Select ‘Submit’ ONLY if you are content that your application is complete and you do not wish to make any changes.

Stage 2. The Sift Process (short listing)

Once the closing date has passed, the appointment panel will consider all applications received, and sift out those who have not provided sufficient evidence against the identified behaviours and experience criteria. If you have applied under the Guaranteed Interview Scheme, you are guaranteed an interview if you meet the minimum criteria agreed by the panel prior to the sift. The sift panel will rank applications in merit order, using an agreed, standardised scoring system. If you are unsuccessful in meeting the minimum criteria required to be invited to the next stage of the process, you will be notified by e-mail to your registered e-mail address.

Notification of the outcomes of the sift will be issued to all candidates. If you are offered an interview or other assessment format, you will be given a minimum of 5 working days' notice of it taking place. You will receive confirmation of the arrangements for the interview, including the location, date and time. The normal 5 days' notice is considered a minimum period and will be extended where any disability related adjustments need a longer timescale to be put in place.

If you are unsuccessful in meeting the minimum criteria required to be invited to the next stage of the application, you will be notified by e-mail and given feedback to help you with future job applications.

Stage 3. The Interview Process

If you are successful in passing the sift stage you will be invited to attend an interview. This will involve questions based on the behaviours and experience criteria noted in the advert. You will also be asked to participate in an oral briefing exercise and take the GSR knowledge test (this will be made clear in the job advert and / or the invitation to interview e-mail).

The Panel

At interview, the recruitment panel will usually comprise of three people: the Chair, whose responsibilities include ensuring that the process complies with open and fair competition guidance; and two other panel members. Some panels may comprise only two people.

Assessment Language

We will endeavour to ensure that your interview is conducted in your preferred language, English or Welsh (you will be asked your preference in the application form). If you select to have an interview conducted in Welsh, we will also need to test your ability in English, so part of the assessment will be conducted in English. You will be informed of the arrangements beforehand. In some cases where a full Welsh-speaking panel cannot be convened, simultaneous translation from Welsh to English may need to be provided for the benefit of any panel members who don't speak Welsh. In such cases, you will be informed of the arrangements prior to the interview.

What will happen at the assessment?

At present all assessments will take place online (unless a reasonable adjustment is agreed with HR that may involve a different approach). Throughout the process, you

will be assessed against 2 experience criteria and 3 Behaviours from the Civil Service Success Profiles Framework;

- Research Knowledge
- Managing Research
- Communicating and Influencing
- Delivering at Pace
- Leadership

There are three components to the assessment.

The purpose of the assessment process is to:

- Test your suitability for the requirements of the role
- Give all candidates an opportunity to express their views and present their evidence
- Score candidates based on the requirements identified for the role
- Recommend which candidate should be offered the position and produce an order of merit based on scores achieved
- Help you to decide if the role is right for you.

1. GSR Knowledge Test – 45 minutes

If you are not already a member of the Government Social Research Profession you will be invited to take an online GSR Knowledge Test separately to the oral briefing and interview. The Knowledge Test assesses your competence and technical skills on key aspects of quantitative and qualitative methods, research design and data interpretation required to be a member of GSR. The test is comprised of multiple-choice questions.

You will receive a link to the test via email following confirmation of having passed the sift and will have a limited time in which to log-into the online platform and take the test.

If you have previously taken and passed a GSR Knowledge Test as part of a successful application for a GSR role in another government department, you will not need to take the test again. Please notify us as soon as possible if this is the case so that we can confirm your pass. You will also not be asked to do the test again if you passed as part of the Welsh Government Research Officer/ Senior Research Officer recruitment in 2025.

2. Oral Briefing and 3. Interview (combined) – 1 hr approx.

Oral Briefing

An oral briefing exercise will be used to test the behaviours and professional skills required to be a member of GSR. You will be given a fictional policy scenario and a set of relevant materials to review. You will also be given a set of three questions that you will need to address in a 10 minute presentation to the oral briefing panel. You will also be asked follow-up questions on your presentation and the evidence within the materials provided. You will be provided with further details on what the exercise entails after you have been invited to interview. The oral briefing will be

assessed using the same scoring matrix as the interview, and will form part of your overall score.

The oral briefing will assess you against the following criteria:

- Research Knowledge
- Managing Research
- Communicating and Influencing

Interview

At interview, the Panel will be trying to find out how you meet the following behaviours and experience criteria identified for the role:

- Delivering at Pace
- Leadership

You need to be prepared to give answers demonstrating how you meet them. The interview will be an opportunity for the recruitment panel to confirm, probe or further explore the evidence given in your application. The work that you have already done in completing your application will greatly assist you in preparing for the interview. You should ensure that you are familiar with the evidence provided in your application. Remember that the panel will be looking to see from the evidence in your application form and the interview, whether you are likely to be able to carry out the responsibilities of the specific post. The panel will not be allowed to ask you questions about your personal circumstances.

You may be asked about how you feel issues relating to equality can be incorporated into the design and management of research as part of the oral briefing or interview. You do not need direct experience of the Welsh Government context, but this further reading may help you:

- Anti-racist Wales Action Plan
- Let's Raise the Roof: A Social Model of Disability (YouTube)
- Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units strategy

Preparing for the interview

Here are some useful tips to help you in preparing for your interview:

- try to arrange a ‘mock interview’ with a friend, family member or colleague
- research the area of work that you are applying for – check the Welsh Government website for any relevant information
- you may want to speak to the recruiting line manager to better understand the role – the job advert will include a point of contact for the role
- prepare more examples than you provided on your application. The panel may ask you for more details and another example if it helps you to provide the evidence required.

Remember the “STAR” model may be helpful to you when preparing for the interview, as well as during the interview when responding to questions, by giving a clear structure to your responses. See Appendix A: Providing your evidence for more details on the STAR model.

Behaviours Based Interviewing

The aim of a behaviours-based interview is to find out how you have behaved and used certain skills to deal with challenges and problems in the past, on the premise that this is likely to be a predictor of how you will perform in the future. You are therefore asked to provide evidence in relation to specified behaviours and experience criteria which are defined beforehand in the job advert.

The questions at interview will be designed to allow you to provide evidence of the required behaviours and experience criteria, through the use of relevant examples. Please remember that though the panel will be looking for evidence of the behaviour/experience criteria, you will also need to ensure that you answer the question that they have asked you. It is important therefore to remember to listen to the question, and then select the most appropriate example that will enable you to both evidence the behaviour/experience criteria, and answer the question fully.

The panel will assess your evidence against the pre-defined Welsh Government scoring matrix, which can be found in Annex C. The panel will agree beforehand the minimum qualifying criteria for the role, and ensure that these criteria are applied consistently for all candidates.

The Interview

The panel will hope to see you at your best at the interview and will do all they can to give you the opportunity to show that you can meet the criteria. They will not be trying to trick you. When they see you they will already have seen the qualities you have from your application form. The panel will want to complete the picture of what you can do by learning more about you in a face-to-face situation. Interviews will generally follow the following structure:

- The Chair will introduce the other panel members and explain the format of the interview (including which panel member will ask questions on each area being assessed) and will outline the timing of the interview (which will be the same for all candidates). You will be given the opportunity to ask any questions about the format of the interview. You will also be asked if there may be any extenuating circumstances which may affect your performance at interview i.e. a recent bereavement, car accident etc. This is to ensure that there is nothing which may inhibit your performance. In the event that something has occurred, you will be provided with the opportunity to reschedule your interview. However, if you do choose to go ahead with the interview, you will not be able to reschedule for another time if afterwards you feel you did not perform at your best.
- The oral briefing exercise, including presentation and follow-up questions will form the first part of the interview, and will last no more than 30 minutes.
- The interview will follow the oral briefing after a short comfort break. You will be asked four questions in total; three behaviour questions and one job-specific question.
- Each member of the panel will then take it in turns to ask questions. It is the Chair's job to ensure these are focused on testing the behaviours and experience criteria for the post and the interview or assessment method runs to time

- The interviewing panel will ensure that recruitment adjustments are taken into account for any disabled candidate who has identified specific requirements on their application form, in relation to any aspect of the interview process. It is important therefore that any specific requirements you may have are identified as soon as possible – there is a section in the application form to note these.
- At the end of the interview, the Chair will give you the chance to ask any questions you may have about the post.

Stage 4: After the Interview

Issuing Outcomes

The panel Chair will give you an indication at the end of the interview of when the outcome of your interview will be issued. All outcomes will be notified by e-mail. Candidates will only receive brief written feedback regarding their interview but we do hope it will be helpful if considering future applications.

What you should do if your application is unsuccessful

Take time to reflect. Look at the feedback provided in your outcome e-mail and the points made. Remain positive and look at what you did achieve. You should be aware that, inevitably, you may receive different feedback from different panels for similar or even identical job applications. The overall agreed score rating will have been achieved by a consensus decision by all panel members.

Starting in your new post (for successful candidates)

Once you have been notified of your successful outcome, the Shared Service Centre will send you a new employee starter pack, which will include a conditional contract, security vetting documentation and any other documentation needed to start your employment. The starter pack will include instructions on how to ensure your employment can start as quickly as possible, including how to arrange to attend a Security Vetting Clinic, and what documentation needs to be returned to the Shared Service Centre before your starting date can be agreed. Your references will also be taken up at this point.

Grievance and Complaints

Anyone who believes they have been treated unfairly, or has a grievance or complaint, about how the process was conducted should either write to the Head of Resourcing, Welsh Government, Cathays Park 2, Cardiff CF10 3NQ or email sharedservicehelpdesk@gov.wales. If you are unhappy with the outcome of the complaint raised with the Welsh Government and feel that the principles of appointment on merit through fair and open competition have not been met you have the right to pursue your grievance with the Civil Service Commission at 3rd Floor, 35 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BQ.

ANNEX – helping you prepare

Annex A: Providing your evidence

You should always pick your strongest examples that allow you to evidence how you meet the behaviours and experience requirements in the context of the role.

When choosing your examples, consider the following advice:

- Base your examples on a previous experience.
- Use the 'STAR' Model to structure your evidence – the STAR approach may help you to present your evidence by providing structure and focus to your examples in both the application form and the interview.
- The STAR approach includes:
    1. **Situation** – briefly describe the context and your role;
    2. **Task** – the specific challenge, task or job that you faced;
    3. **Action** – what you did, how and why you did it;
    4. **Result** – the outcomes and what you achieved through your actions.
- Keep the situation and task parts brief (2-3 sentences in a written example).
- Concentrate on the action and the result. The action should take up the majority of your answer.
- If the result was not entirely successful describe what you learned from this and what you would do differently next time.
- STAR may help you to cover all the points you need to make. It may help you in drafting your application and ensure that you cover what you personally have done. Make sure you focus on your strengths. It may also help you at the interview stage, by giving you a structure to form your answers to questions asked at interview. There are however other frameworks available which could help you with structuring your evidence. Spending some time researching application and interview techniques prior to applying for a vacancy could help you to identify a framework that best suits you.
- Don't assume the sift panel has any knowledge of the situation. They cannot assume what is not included in the example and can only assess what you have actually written
- Make sure you include how you overcome problems/obstacles
- Describe your thoughts, actions and feelings rather than just describing what happened
- Don't get caught up telling a story in your example. Just give enough to show how you went about the task
    - Why you did it the way you did
    - Describe any obstacles you encountered

    - Don't forget to include results and show why your actions were effective and/or how you could have improved on what you did

- Ensure your examples are at the right level for the level of the roles. Refer to the HEO and SEO guidance (Level 3 in the Success Profiles document), to help you pitch your examples at the right level.
- Write down all the things that you have done well in your job over the past 2 years. Any performance reports you may have completed may help here. For each of these things note down how you achieved what you did, what skills and behaviours you used.
- For each example, note which Success Profiles behaviours or experience criteria it might cover.
- Gather your evidence together and analyse it before you start writing examples – you probably have more evidence than you think.
- Use evidence from work if possible, but if you have any roles of responsibility outside of work, these may provide you with equally appropriate evidence of the competency behaviours/job specific criteria.
- As we are recruiting for the Social Research profession, we recommend you use research in the majority of examples where possible.
- Talk through your evidence and examples with your line manager or a colleague – a second or third pair of eyes is always useful.
- Always tell the truth. You will be asked about your examples at the interview stage so you may not be able to provide sufficient evidence if you have written about something you are not familiar with.

Writing Your Evidence

Ensure your examples are presented as succinctly as possible. As there is a limit on the number of words it is essential that you use the space as effectively as possible by focusing on the actions you took as part of the example. When writing your examples, consider the following advice:

- Write a first draft, then allow yourself plenty of time to refine your examples
- Check everything is there that is needed
- Check your word count – you don't want to exceed the word count of 250 words per competency behaviour/experience criteria
- Think about presentation – would bullet points work as opposed to paragraphs of text?
- Draft in clear language that is grammatically correct, including the spelling
- Do not use jargon, abbreviations or specialist terms
- Make use of the past tense e.g. achieved, verified.
- Use active verbs (see Annex B)
- Use 'I' not 'we'. This is about your role in the task and how you affected the outcome
- Use short statements that show the value you added
- Use your own words. Consider using active verbs to create greater impact (see Annex B).

ANNEX B: The Use of Active Language

When completing your competency examples consider using active verbs which give your application greater impact and make a stronger impression. Using the past tense also gives the sense that you have completed or achieved your goals.

As an added bonus you will use fewer words.

Don’t use: I was responsible for organising a programme of speakers.

Do use: I organised a programme of speakers. Here is a list of active verbs that you can consider using:

A - accomplish, achieve, adapt, administer, advise, analyse, apply, appoint, appraise, approve, assess, attain, arrange, assist

B - broaden, budget, build

C - calculate, capture, centralise, check, coach

D - decrease, define, delegate, deliver, demonstrate, determine, develop, devise, diagnose, direct, distribute, document, drive

E - earn, edit, eliminate, encourage, engineer, ensure, establish

F - facilitate

G - generate, guide

H - help

I - identify, implement, improve, improvise, incorporate, increase, influence, initiate, innovate, inspire, instigate, instruct, interpret, interview, investigate, introduce

L - lead, liaise, launch

M - mentor, manage

N - negotiate, network

O - organise, operate, obtain

P - participate, persuade, plan, present, produce, prompt, propose

R - reinforce, research, revitalise

S - shape, sell, solve, specify, streamline, supply, support.

ANNEX C: Scoring Matrix

Behaviour and experience evidence at application stage is graded on a scale of 1-7 using the following scoring matrix.

Score	Explanation
7	Outstanding Demonstration The evidence provided wholly exceeds expectation at this level
6	Strong Demonstration Substantial positive evidence; includes some evidence of exceeding expectations at this level
5	Good Demonstration Substantial positive evidence of the competency or behaviour
4	Acceptable Demonstration Adequate positive evidence and any negative evidence would not cause concern
3	Moderate Demonstration Moderate positive evidence but some negative evidence demonstrated
2	Minimal Demonstration Limited positive evidence and / or mainly negative evidence demonstrated
1	Not Demonstrated No positive evidence and / or substantial negative evidence demonstrated