

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL TRANSFORMING LIVES



APPLICANT PACK

Prison Officer - Operations

Thank you for your interest in the above role. Below, you will find the job description and person specification, outlining how the different criteria will be assessed throughout the recruitment process. You will also find information on the recruitment and selection process and key dates.

Job Description

Job Purpose	
<p>As an Operations Officer, you will be in an almost unique position of being able to make a real difference to the community that you live in and be at the very heart of delivering the SPS' vision of 'Helping to build a safer Scotland by Unlocking Potential and Transforming Lives'. Your role will be challenging and immensely rewarding with responsibility for maintaining custody and order whilst facilitating opportunities for those in our care. You will influence and encourage offenders to maintain contact with their families, access education and training and ultimately assist them on their journey to be contributory citizens within our communities.</p> <p>Contributing towards the prevention and management of challenging behaviour; you will provide safe and secure custodial services that empower offenders to take responsibility and transform their lives.</p> <p>In this role you will be responsible for the overall functioning and security of the establishment, working as part of a team and carrying out roles in Front of House, Visits, Electronic Control Room, Patrol and Prisoner Reception.</p>	
Key Responsibilities	
1	<p>You will be the first point of contact for meeting and greeting visitors to the establishment and will interact with people from a wide range of backgrounds, including offenders' family and friends, lawyers, solicitors, pastors, ministers and SPS staff. You will follow procedures and demonstrate effective communication and interpersonal skills; showing compassion, empathy, building rapport and offering advice where necessary. You will have responsibility for maintaining security, by screening, searching and facilitating entry and exit of individuals from the establishment. In doing so you will confidently and constructively challenge individuals appropriately when required.</p>

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2	Family contact is important for offenders to maintain relationships with their family and friends. The SPS encourages visits to maintain family contact and support the development of these important relationships. You will be responsible for observing and supervising visits as well as being a key point of contact for family support. You
	will be responsible for safety and security within the visit room and demonstrate effective problem solving skills when addressing emerging situations. In doing so you will demonstrate respect for individuals' needs and human rights.
3	The Electronic Control Room (ECR) manages the movement and security of staff and prisoners throughout the prison establishment. You will be responsible for monitoring security systems, including closed circuit television, alarm and communication systems to maintain the safety and security of everyone within the establishment; demonstrating strong team working and effective communication skills.
4	You will be responsible for ensuring the safety of staff, offenders and the public by checking physical barriers in and around the establishment. You will be required to apply your effective problem solving skills to identify and respond to any potential breaches of security and order. You will demonstrate good housekeeping and adhere to procedural requirements applying high ethical, moral and professional standards.
5	Within the Reception area you will be responsible for managing the entry and release of offenders from prison, assessing the needs of individual offenders and ensuring the correct procedures are followed. You will be faced with a diverse range of situations and you will be required to demonstrate care, compassion, dignity and respect in determining the most appropriate course of action.
6	You will be responsible for the safe and secure escorting of offenders throughout the establishment and externally as directed by management i.e. hospital, interprison transfer, court procedures as required. Managing the movement of offenders between residential accommodation and other areas of the establishment, such as education, health centre, visit room and offender work areas. You will also be responsible for escorting external contractors and visitors, ensuring the safety and security of individuals, buildings and equipment. You will remain vigilant and confidently deal with emerging issues, in line with SPS policies and procedures.

Person Specification & Assessment Information

Our selection approach is based upon the principle of merit which means that we will look to appointment the person who best meets the requirements of the role as outlined in the person specification. In determining the most meritorious candidate, applicants will be assessed against the published criteria during the selection process, as detailed below. The most meritorious candidate will be the one who best meets the essential criteria for the role. Performance against any published desirable criteria will only be considered where two or more candidates have performed equally against the essential criteria and there is a need to use the desirable criteria to identify the preferred candidate.

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Criteria	Essential/Desirable?	When assessed?
Qualifications		
Professional Development Commitment to undertake formal training and qualifications to support your learning and development.	Essential	Interview
Experience		
Working with others Work experience which demonstrates your ability to work effectively within teams, interact with people and build successful working relationships.	Essential	Interview
Influencing the behaviour of others Evidence of your ability to confidently and positively influence or challenge the behaviour of others.	Essential	Interview
Problem solving Experience of solving problems, demonstrating your ability to proactively identify the issue, explore options and take the necessary action to resolve the issue.	Essential	Interview
Knowledge & Skills		
Numeracy & literacy skills	Essential	Cognitive Ability Test

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Basic level of numeracy and literacy skills in order to comprehend and clearly articulate information.		
Following Processes & Procedures Evidence of an ability to follow processes, procedures and instructions to ensure accuracy and standards are met	Essential	Interview
Commitment to SPS Vision & Values Personal values which are aligned to and consistent with SPS values. Belief - believe that people can change Respect - have proper regard for individuals, their needs and human rights Integrity - apply high ethical, moral and professional standards Openness - work with others to achieve the best outcomes Courage - have the courage to care regardless of circumstances Humility - recognise that we can learn from others	Essential	Situational Judgement Test

Application Submission

You can apply by creating an online account. The application form will ask you to provide information including:

- Personal details
- Employment History
- Education and Qualifications
- Motivation for Applying
- Equal opportunities monitoring questions
- Socio-Economic background monitoring questions

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You do not need to complete the application at once. You can save what you have completed and return at a later date to complete it. It may take around 30-40 minutes to fully complete.

On submission of your application, we will review the content to ensure you meet the SPS minimum eligibility criteria.

Situational Judgement Test

If you meet the minimum eligibility criteria, you will be invited to sit an online situational judgement test (SJT). The test is designed to measure your values and behaviours against those identified as important within the role. The test will give you an insight into different situations you may be faced with as a Prison Officer.

You will be presented with 17 situations or scenarios, and you are required to choose from a list of options, which response you believe would be most effective and least effective in the given situation.

Some things to note about this stage:

- There is no time limit within the test, however you should allow around 30 minutes to complete this.
- Once you click 'Save your answer' you won't be able to go back and change it
- You will have to complete the test in one sitting.
- Once invited to undertake the test, you will have five days to complete the assessment.
- Following completion of the test you will receive the outcome within around two hours.

Cognitive Ability Test

If successful at the SJT stage you will be invited to take an online cognitive ability test. The test will be made up of three sub tests and will last 12 minutes in total. The test will assess your general cognitive ability across three areas:

- Verbal
- numerical; and
- abstract reasoning

You will have four minutes to complete each test.

The tests are designed to assess your ability to understand written and numerical information and to draw logical conclusions.

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As the cognitive ability test is completed in unsupervised conditions (i.e. in your own time), you should be aware that if invited to the interview stage of the process, you may be invited to complete a second online assessment under supervised conditions (i.e. onsite at SPS).

We use a company called Cubiks for our assessment. You can access some practice questions on their website

[Ability Tests \(Intermediate\) | Talogy \(cubiks.com\)](#)

Interview

If successful at the Cognitive Ability Test, you will be invited to attend an interview. You'll receive an invitation via your online recruitment account asking you to book a suitable slot. Don't worry if there isn't a suitable one available initially, we regularly release more slots. The interview will take place on Microsoft Teams, and there will be up to three assessors present. The interview will last for approximately one hour.

Each panel member will take a turn to ask questions. They will work through questions covering five competencies:

- Professional Development
- Working with Others
- Following Processes and Procedures
- Influencing the Behaviour of Others
- Problem Solving

At the beginning of the interview, the panel will also ask some questions to find out a bit more about your interest and understanding of the role. This isn't an assessed area, but it will be helpful to come prepared to talk about what interests you about the role.

The panel will provide you with some context about why the competency is relevant to the role. You'll be asked a lead question first, followed by prompting questions. Don't be put off if you are asked a few prompting questions. This is to ensure the panel gains full insight into the example provided.

We will be looking for specific examples, so you should avoid using generic examples. We want to know what you did, how you did it, and what the outcome was.

We are happy for you to use some prompting notes on the day. However, please try to refrain from over reliance on notes.

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After the interview, the panel will carry out an evaluation and will provide a score against the evidence provided for each competency. This score will be based on the evidence provided by you during the interview.

You'll receive the outcome via your online recruitment account, usually within two working days.

Reasonable Adjustments

We know some people have conditions which require additional support for them to perform at their best. We call this support “making reasonable adjustments”. If you have a disability (visible or non-visible) and require reasonable adjustments to be made to support your participation in the selection process, please contact the recruitment team at vacancies@prisons.gov.scot in the first instance to discuss.

Some examples of reasonable adjustments we have made in the past are:

- Allocating additional time for the interview
- Assessors asking interview questions in a different way
- Scheduling the interview at a suitable time
- Asking multi-stage questions in steps
- Providing additional time to complete cognitive ability testing
- Providing written documents in different font, colour or text size
- Providing some extra information about what to expect through the selection process
- Printing resources on a different colour of paper

This isn't an exhaustive list, and we are willing to consider and discuss other requests to support you.

Pre-employment Checks

The final stage before appointment is the pre-employment checks. Due to the nature of our organisation, the standards we set are at times considerably higher than those that might be expected in other organisations. On average, pre-employment checks will usually take 6-8 weeks to fully complete.

The checks required are:

- **Baseline Personnel Security Standards**

As a Civil Service employer, all candidates appointed to the SPS must satisfy Baseline Personnel Security Standards. These checks include:

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- **Verification of Identity**

You'll be asked to provide official documentation to verify your identity

- **Right to Work**

You'll be asked to provide evidence of your right to work in the UK

As a Civil Service organisation, successful applicants also need to have the right to work in the Civil Service. Further information can be found on the [Civil Service Nationality Rules Guidance](#)

- **Employment History**

We'll verify your employment history. We'll do so by verifying your past employment through references and HMRC checks. If you have any gaps in your employment history, we will look for you to provide an explanation of the gap. If you have been self-employed, we will seek verification from HMRC, accountants or client references.

- **Criminal Record Check**

All new entrants to the SPS are subject to an Enhanced Disclosure Scotland check. Any convictions noted will be considered in conjunction with our [Criminal Convictions Guidance](#), to confirm suitability for employment.

- **Overseas Residency Checks**

If you have resided overseas for six months or more within the last three years, the following checks will be carried out:

- Proof of overseas residence
- Overseas employer references
- Official and verifiable overseas police certificates

• **Fitness Test**

You will be required to successfully pass a Fitness Test. The test is made up of four parts:

- Aerobic Run
- Grip Strength Test
- Dyno Seated Bench Press and Bench Pull
- Shield Hold

Further information on the Fitness Test Standards can be found [here](#).

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- **Health Declaration & Medical Examination**

You will take part in a medical with our Occupational Health provider. The first appointment will be a Telephone Consultation. If passed fit at this stage, you will be scheduled a face-to-face medical appointment. At your face-to-face appointment you may be subject to a substance misuse test.

- **Internal Vetting Checks**

We'll work with our Public Protection Unit to carry out internal vetting to confirm your suitability for employment.

Assignment

Following successful pre-employment checks you will be allocated a place on one of our Officer Foundation Training courses.

The training will take place at our training facility in Falkirk. The training will last for six weeks.

You will be assigned to a specific establishment which will be your primary place of work following the training. We will collect preferences of where you may like to be assigned, however we cannot make any guarantees, as offers of employment are subject to business need. We will, however, try to assign you to a prison within 30 miles of your home address.



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