

Candidate Information Booklet

[Ref: HoCS/06/24]

HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES

Middletown Centre for Autism

(Permanent Full Time)



Extended Closing Date:

Completed Application Forms must be received by

12.00 noon on Monday 22nd July 2024

Contents of the Pack

Prior to completing the application form applicants should familiarise themselves with the contents of the information pack. The pack includes:

- [Section 1 – Important Information](#)
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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES

Thank you for your interest in this important executive post of Head of Corporate Services at Middletown Centre for Autism.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS TIMETABLE

Following eligibility sift, the selection process will be based on a competency-based interview.

Key timetable

The indicative timeline is as follows:

Advert close date	Monday 22nd July 2024 at 12:00noon
Panel Shortlisting	Tuesday 30th July 2024
Interviews	Tuesday 13th August 2024
Location	Middletown Centre for Autism

We reserve the right to add additional stages to the process.

Applicants are advised that they must be available to attend on the above dates for interview if successfully shortlisted. No other dates are planned to be scheduled. However, please note that the panel reserve the right to alter or amend the timetable due to applicant numbers or unforeseen circumstances.

Please note applications received after the stipulated close date and time will not be considered.

Communication with Applicants

All communications, so far as possible, will be issued electronically. You should therefore check your email account to make sure that you do not miss any important communications in relation to this competition. There may, however, still be a necessity to issue some correspondence by hard copy mail.

Please note all communication in respect of this position will come from and should be directed to our third-party consultancy, Allen People Solutions, who have been appointed to manage this vacancy on our behalf - applications@allenpeoplesolutions.co.uk. Please contact them directly if you have any queries.

Reasonable Adjustments

Any candidates who require reasonable adjustments to any aspect of the selection procedure, including assistance completing their application form because of a disability, or who require the Candidate Information Pack and Application form in an alternate format, should contact Allen People Solutions via email on applications@allenpeoplesolutions.co.uk.

Candidates who wish to receive an Application Forms and information pack in accessible formats are requested to advise the appointed Consultancy of their requirements as promptly as possible allowing for the fact that the closing date for receipt remains the same for all applicants.

About Middletown Centre for Autism

Middletown Centre for Autism, located in County Armagh, is a cross border organisation jointly funded by the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) and the Department of Education (Ireland).

The purpose of the Centre is to support the promotion of excellence in the development and coordination of education services to autistic children and young people across the island of Ireland. Although it is not a statutory North/ South implementation body, the Middletown Centre is under the purview of The North South Ministerial Council.

The Centre was established in March 2007 under the Companies (NI) Orders 1986 to 1990 as a Company limited by guarantee. In 2012 it was classified by the then Department of Finance and Personnel as a non-departmental public body (NDPD) analogous to a non-commercial semi-state body in Ireland.

The Centre develops innovative evidence-based approaches to the provision of services for autistic children and young people and provides expert, research-based guidance and advice to policymakers and education providers in both jurisdictions.

The Centre is recognised as a leading source of advice to policy makers in both Departments of Education on the island of Ireland. It has acquired an international reputation as a respected innovator with a unique depth and breadth of expertise in the field of autism.

CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION

The Corporate Services (CS) Division supports the Chief Executive and Senior Management team (SMT) in securing and deploying the financial, people and infrastructure resources of Middletown Centre for Autism (MCA). It ensures that MCA is an efficient, effective, sustainable and accountable organisation with high standards of governance.

The CS Division has seven functions; Finance, Administration, Information Technology, Human Resources, Digital Resources, Estates, and Governance. It is based at Middletown Centre for Autism Headquarters, and currently employs 12 personnel.

(1) Finance

The Finance function manages MCA annual budget of approximately £3m. It provides support to the SMT and wider organisation on financial management and financial governance. This includes financial planning, budgeting and accounting, strategic and business planning, financial systems, procurement and services.

In addition to Grant-in-Aid (GIA) received from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland and Ireland which supports core work programmes, MCA wishes to progress success in securing non-GIA income from a range of public sector and other funders. In an era of constrained public sector finances, Finance Function play a critical role in supporting Middletown Centre for Autism's delivery of both GIA and non-GIA work programmes and ensuring effective financial management of both funding streams.

In conjunction with both Sponsor Departments, the Finance Function has a leading role in supporting several projects to enhance and sustain Middletown's Centre for Autism work across the Island of Ireland. Senior finance staff are members on Project Boards as well as providing financial support and guidance to colleagues who are leading and delivering on key projects.

(2) Administration

The Administration function primarily supports the Training and Advisory Team as well as the Learning Support and Assessment functions, ensuring robust data management processes that align with organisational goals and support team members.

Members of the Administration team serve as the first point of contact for professionals, autistic children and young people, and parents who utilize MCA services, whether through our switchboard telephone service or online.

(3) Information Technology

Information Technology (IT) function provides comprehensive IT infrastructure and application support to ensure that IT continues to work as a strategic enabler for the Centre. This service is offered in conjunction with our Third Party IT Support Service.

IT develops bespoke digital solutions for internal and external use to fulfil the objectives of the Partnership Agreement and Business Plans. It supports the requirements of agreed partnerships and collaborative working arrangements.

(4) Human Resources

The Human Resources (HR) function delivers a range of services to support the Centre in Workforce Planning, Equality, Performance Management, Employee Relations, Employee Engagement, and Employee Well-being. This is provided within the context

of dual jurisdiction employment legislation, and strict compliance with Child Protection legislation.

HR is focused on providing support to staff and line managers in ensuring they have what they need to meet wider business plan objectives.

(5) Digital Resources

The Digital Resources (DR) Function includes print, digital publishing, and communications packages (including social media) supporting the Business Plan objectives and other funded projects.

DR is responsible for communicating the work, values, and mission of the Centre internally to employees, externally to stakeholders, and to the public locally, nationally, and internationally. Event Management responsibilities are included.

(6) Estates

The Estates function is responsible for Estate and Emergency Planning, delivering estate and property management services for the Centre including business continuity management/incident management.

Included within this remit are the delivery and management of estate maintenance and development, site security, estate-related contracts, fire safety, estate-related overhead budget, incident management & business continuity planning, and MCA input into sustainability and environmental best practices.

(7) Governance

The Governance function provided by the Head of Corporate Services gives support and advice on a range of corporate and information governance matters. This includes organisational performance, risk management, business planning, audit and assurance, insurance & indemnities, data protection, freedom of information, environmental information regulations and records management.

The Head of Corporate Services supports the Chief Executive, who serves as the Accounting Officer, in ensuring robust governance arrangements. This role involves coordinating the Centre's interactions with the Board, its sub-committees, and both internal and external auditors. Additionally, the Head of Corporate Services oversees the MCA Secretariat and Auditing Partners, which provide administrative and secretarial support to the MCA Board, its sub-committees, the Executive Management Team, and various ad-hoc groups.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Head of Corporate Services

Reporting to: Chief Executive

Location: Middletown Centre for Autism, Co. Armagh

Job Purpose: The post holder will be responsible for the effective leadership and development of a professional Corporate Services team to ensure that the finance and corporate functions operate effectively and economically in a way which is responsive to the changing needs of the organisation.

Under the leadership of the Chief Executive, the Head of Corporate Services will develop strategic support systems and ensure that they are embedded and fully operational in the Centre to deliver efficient, effective and accountable high standards of corporate governance.

This includes supporting the Chief Executive (as the Accounting Officer), members of the Senior Management Team, and Board of Directors in providing clear and effective Governance and Financial Management and contribute to the attainment of the Business Objectives during a program of organisational change, particularly in relation to a) Administration and b) Secretariat Services.

The appointee will act as the key adviser to the Chief Executive in the deployment of all resources, financial, human and physical, and is accountable for the management of Middletown Centre for Autism's budget, after deployment of resources (on which they will advise) has been agreed by the Senior Management Team and the Board.

A key requirement of the role is also to provide management and financial information to the Chief Executive and the Board of Directors.

The post holder may be required to Deputise for the Chief Executive if required.

Key Areas of Responsibility:

1. Strategic Thinking and Planning

- To work as an integral part of the Senior Management Team to create a corporate plan, vision and values for the Centre and to implement and report on the Centre's strategic plan, aims and objectives.
- To work alongside the Chief Executive to ensure that policies, strategies and procedures are in line with the Centre's overall objectives.
- In collaboration with the Head of Care Services, ensure the development of protocols practices and procedures that provide a safe environment for the children and young people whilst visiting the centre and to monitor, review and to report on the provision of care services.
- To develop strategies and plans which will provide information to allow for effective decision making by the Senior Management Team.
- To establish and implement a robust challenge function at all levels within the organisation.

2. Managing the Business

- To develop and evaluate corporate and business planning systems to include annual targets consistent with the overall strategic plan.
- To develop and manage a robust corporate and business planning system to provide effective planning and objective setting for the centre.
- To develop and maintain a risk register.
- To develop and maintain an accountability and corporate governance framework.
- To ensure that the Government Sponsoring Departments, currently the Department of Education (NI) and the Department of Education and Science (Ireland), are fully updated and appraised on key issues of the Centre's business and operations, on an agreed frequency basis
- Ensure that the Centre's HR and administrative processes and procedures meet the relevant legislative requirements including:
 - Policies and procedures are in place and regularly reviewed to ensure compliance and promote good practice when possible
 - Appropriate people and business metrics are in place and regularly monitored.
 - Systems and processes are in place to enable strict compliance to Health and Safety obligations and Child Protection /Safeguarding .
- Ensure the provision of comprehensive IT infrastructure and application support to fulfil the objectives of the Partnership Agreement and Business Plans.
- Ensuring the provision of Digital Resources (DR) and events management.
- To manage the needs and administrative requirements of the Board of Directors and its committee members through effective management of Secretariat services.

3. Managing People

- To lead, motivate manage and develop the staff to achieve the Centre's aims and objectives across the seven functions of the Corporate Services (CS) Division; Finance, Administration, Information Technology, Human Resources, Digital Resources, Estates, and Governance.

- To set and monitor individual standards, targets and activities.
- To design, develop and evaluate Human Resource strategies and processes to reflect evolving business strategy including Workforce Planning, Employee Engagement, and Employee Well-being.
- To assist the Chief Executive in establishing and monitoring performance management processes that encompass a range of disciplines and practice.
- To implement effective procedures for managing and assessing employee relations matters.
- To promote an open, honest and inclusive environment in which employees can contribute to their full potential in line with Equal Opportunities.
- Provide expert advice to managers that contributes to organisational effectiveness by influencing management development and importing skills and knowledge within the context of dual jurisdiction employment legislation.
- Ensure that the business is supported by a well-trained and flexible workforce and ensure effective staffing structures are in place with the appropriate levels of skills and expertise.
- Maintain good employee relations including participation in the consulting/negotiation process with trade(s) union and colleague representatives as required.

4. Managing Resources

- To ensure proper resource accounting records in accordance with government accounting regulations and procedures.
- To support the Chief Executive in fulfilling his responsibilities as accounting officer for the financial management of the centre and the annual budget (approximately £3m per annum).
- To ensure Middletown Centre for Autism's business targets are underpinned by sound financial planning and monitoring, effective management systems and by the highest standards of corporate excellence.
- To ensure that the Centre secures value for money from the resources available to it and in relation to procurement to ensure compliance with public sector purchasing standards and protocols.
- To implement a quality management framework by establishing best practice finance systems and processes.
- To ensure that effective business continuity and contingency plans are in place and reviewed according to agreed schedules.
- To identify and implement appropriate financial IT systems and a management reporting system to facilitate decision making.
- To manage and oversee the provision of buildings maintenance and associated services within the Facility Services Function.
- Acquire and maintain an IT network which is flexible and robust and meets the business needs of the employees, the Centre, and their customers.
- Management of maintenance and future expansion of the network including upgrading of hardware and software.

5. Managing Information

- To evaluate, interpret and present complex information.
- To provide management and financial information in response to requests from the Centre's Chief Executive and Board of Directors.
- To ensure timely and accurate preparation and presentation of annual

statement of accounts, monthly management accounts and other financial information as required.

- To proactively monitor and analyse the service delivery of the Centre against business objectives and performance measures and identify opportunities for improvement.
- To give objective advice based on sound information and evidence, and a thorough understanding of statutory requirements.
- To ensure robust data management, strict record keeping and data collection associated with the role and in compliance with GDPR.

6. Communication

- To demonstrate strong interpersonal skills, with proven ability to develop effective internal and external relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders.
- Develop external relationships with various stakeholders to identify sources of funding, undertake relevant projects, or build relationships for future activities.
- To represent the Centre at external meetings as appropriate.
- To act as an ambassador for the Centre and promote the organisation in a way that is consistent with its ethos and strategy.
- To provide advice and guidance to the Senior Management Team.
- To present management and financial information to the Chief Executive and Board of Directors.
- Provide opportunities for customer feedback.

7. Professional and Specialist Skills

- To work with the CEO to promote the standing of the Centre within the Autistic community and professionals, at a local and wider level.
- To contribute to developing the Centre to be recognised as a centre of excellence nationally and internationally.
- To ensure that the services delivered to all internal and external customers meet the highest standards.
- To develop and maintain a close working relationship and liaise on a regularly basis with both the Head of Research and Development and the Head of Learning Support and Assessment.

NB The above is given as a broad range of duties and responsibilities and is not intended as a complete description of all tasks. The post holder may be required to undertake various other duties as deemed necessary and commensurate with the level of responsibility of the post. This Job Description may be subject to change in line with organisational needs.

General Principals

- The post holder shall, at all times, uphold and comply with the Centre's policy on the Protection of Children and Young People in an Educational Setting.
- The post holder shall, at all times, uphold and comply with the Centre's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Maintain knowledge, skills and expertise through engagement in a range of continuous professional development activities.

PERSON SPECIFICATION:

Essential Eligibility Criteria: Head of Corporate Services

Applicants **must** be able to demonstrate the following, by the closing date:

1. Have a relevant degree in Finance, Accounting or Business or equivalent third level qualification.
2. Have a minimum of 3 years relevant post qualification experience and evidence of successful financial management gained at senior management* level in one or more of the following areas:
 - a. Management accounting and cost analysis
 - b. Planning and budgeting
 - c. Financial Accounting
3. Proven experience of successfully managing an organisation/department with financial and HR responsibility.
4. Proven experience of strategy development and delivering aims and objectives of an organisation at senior management level*
5. At least 3 years senior management experience of successfully leading, managing and delivering complex programmes of work or projects against demanding deadlines in a large and complex**.
6. Knowledge of the role and responsibilities of company secretariate duties in a registered company.
7. Access to a form of transport that will permit them to meet the requirements of the post.

The following additional clarification is provided:

- * Senior management is defined as a manager who reports to the Chief Executive, Board or a Director.
- ** Large and complex is defined as an organisation with professional and technical disciplines, having a customer base with diverse requirements and a budget of at least £2m within the public, private or voluntary sector organisation.

Applications will also be considered from applicants with relevant formal qualifications considered by the selection panel to be of an equivalent or higher standard to those stated.

Desirable Criteria:

- A relevant postgraduate qualification or equivalent OR
- Experience in the area of corporate management and strategic planning OR
- Experience in the management of procurement and contracting for the provision of goods and services OR
- Knowledge of special educational needs including autism and the issues associated with the health, safety, welfare and protection of children and young people.

Essential Competencies:

Applicants **must** be able to demonstrate that they meet the following competencies which will be explored at interview:

1. Strategic Thinking and Planning

- A strong capacity for strategic thinking and an ability to plan and organise work to achieve results within tight deadlines, focusing on priorities and objectives with a clear sense of direction
- Fostering an environment and culture that delivers excellence in all activities and that is inspiring, creative and rewarding for staff drive

2. Managing the Business

- Demonstrate strong financial acumen with the ability to make effective business and financial decisions
- Proven experience of operating within a corporate governance framework and maintaining an up-to-date risk register

3. Managing People

- Demonstrate effective leadership, change management and team-working skills and the ability to proactively manage the performance and development of others to achieve the objectives of the organisation
- Demonstrated experience of influencing and working with others both internally and externally to achieve corporate management objectives
- Proven ability to formulate and implement HR processes and procedures

4. Managing Resources

- Demonstrated ability to effectively plan, prioritise and manage a range of resources and work priorities to deliver objectives, meet stakeholder requirements and manage risk
- Experience of implementing financial and management reporting systems and operating efficiencies
- Experience of budget management and the maintenance of resource accounting records

5. Managing Information and Problem Solving

- Demonstrated ability to evaluate, interpret and present complex management and financial information, and make critical decisions
- Ability to negotiate and influence key contacts internally and externally to gain the commitment of others

6. Communication

- Demonstrated experience of establishing and developing effective relationships with a diverse range of internal and external key stakeholders and third parties
- Demonstrated ability to communicate confidently, clearly and persuasively, both orally and in writing, to a wide audience, with experience of making presentations at Board level displaying sensitivity, tact and diplomacy.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT

Salary: £66,767 - £69,914, Scale SCP points 58-61 of the NJC Salary Scale.
(Equivalent to approximately €76,118 - €79,816 per annum)

Consideration may be given to starting at a higher point on the salary scale for applicants with additional relevant experience and/or qualifications. The relevance and extent of the additional experience will be determined by MCA at the time of offer of appointment.

Location: Middletown Centre for Autism Headquarters, 35 Church St, Middletown, Armagh BT60 4HZ.

The post holder will mainly be required to travel throughout Northern Ireland and Ireland with the possibility of travelling to GB and Internationally.

Hybrid Working: MCA is currently finalising its hybrid working policy which will provide staff with the opportunity to work on a hybrid basis for those posts where it is appropriate to do so and as agreed.

Working Hours: The successful candidate will normally be required to work 5 days each week, totalling 37 hours.

However, the post holder may be required to work additional hours (outside normal office hours) from time to time and remain flexible and mobile as is reasonably necessary for the efficient performance of the duties.

Annual Leave: 30 days per annum (pro-rata), rising to 33 days after 5 years continuous service, plus public and privilege holidays

Pension: MCA offers all employees an attractive pension package. Further details of this can be found at the following link: <https://nilgosc.org.uk>

Post Status: Permanent

Probation Confirmation of appointment will be dependent upon the satisfactory completion of a probationary period of 6 months. If performance, conduct or attendance is not satisfactory the probationary period may be extended or the appointment may be terminated at any time during this period. An appointee will be expected to demonstrate a track record of effective service within this period.

Reserve List: There is currently one full-time permanent position to be filled. A reserve list will exist and will be held for a period of 12 months from the date of interview, to cover any further vacancies which may arise.

Pre-employment checks

Any offer of appointment will be subject to a number of satisfactory pre-employment checks including satisfactory references, provision of documentary evidence of qualifications as listed in the essential and/or desirable criteria.

The successful applicant will also be required to be cleared to Standard level.

Referees

Applicants are required to identify two referees, one of which should be your current employer (if applicable). Referees will be approached after an offer of employment has been made. You should not seek as a referee anyone who is related to you or for internal candidates, is a member of the recruitment and selection panel.

The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003 (POCVA)

The post for which you are applying is governed by The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. Before appointing anyone to such a post, it is imperative for the relevant check to be carried out by Access NI or the Garda Vetting Office, as appropriate. This check is to make sure those individuals who might be a risk to children and/or vulnerable adults are not appointed.

The check will indicate if you have a criminal record or if your name is included on the DHSSPS Disqualification from Working with Children List or included on the DE List and/or the DHSSPS Disqualified from Working with Vulnerable Adults List. Any information received will be treated confidentially and will be discussed with candidates before a final decision is reached. After the decision is made the information will be destroyed.

Secondment

This post may be filled by secondment of the successful candidate from his/her current employer. "Secondment" means a voluntary transfer from a permanent employer for a fixed period which does not sever the employment relationship of the person seconded with the permanent employer.

The duration will be agreed by all parties prior to the start of any secondment. A secondment would be on a candidate's current terms and conditions of service.

It is advisable that candidates interested in a secondment option make their employers aware that, under NICS secondment arrangements, the successful candidate will remain an employee of their current employer. The necessary administration arrangements will be agreed with the Department and the employer before a secondment arrangement commences.

Public Service

All public officeholders have a duty in relation to conduct, propriety and confidentiality. The Nolan Principles apply to anyone who works as a public officeholder: **Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership.**

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

Privacy Statement

Middletown Centre for Autism is committed to protecting the privacy of all our applicants and upholding high standards in terms of information security and transparency. Your information is held securely by us and we have taken all reasonable steps, and have in place appropriate security measures, to protect your information. Your information is not transferred outside the European Economic Area.

When you apply for a job with us (whether you are an internal candidate or not), you will be asked to provide personal information to support your application and to enable us to determine your eligibility and suitability to work with Middletown Centre for Autism. This will include the personal information we need to enable us to select the right candidate for the role, and may include things such as past employment details, educational qualifications and skills. If you are successful in the employment process, any personal information provided to us may then form part of your HR record which we would hold.

Equality of Opportunity

Middletown Centre for Autism is committed to equality of opportunity and all applications for employment will be considered on the basis of merit. Middletown Centre for Autism welcomes applications from all suitably qualified candidates irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

In accordance with Fair Employment regulations, you are required to complete a monitoring form. This information is used to assist us in completing annual FEC returns and access to this information is strictly limited.

Equality monitoring is the process of collecting, storing and analysing information that is relevant to and necessary for the purpose of promoting equality of opportunity between different categories of persons. This section sets out what information is collected, the reasons for doing so and what it is used for.

You should note that the Monitoring Form is regarded as part of your application and failure to fully complete and return it will result in disqualification. The Monitoring Form will be processed separately and neither the form nor the details contained in it will be available to those considering your application.

Submission of Completed Application Forms

Completed application forms must be submitted by the date and time advised at the front of this pack and to the email address as advised or otherwise submitted by post or hand delivered to Allen People Solutions, 1b Ladas Drive, Belfast BT6 9FQ.

Applicants are encouraged to submit their applications by email wherever possible. However, all requests for hard copy application packs are welcomed and all applications will be treated equally regardless of whether they are hard copy or received via email. Applications must bear the correct amount of postage as any shortfall may lead to a delay in delivery and the closing date may be missed.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the completed form is received by the closing date. Late applications will not be accepted.

Supplementary material such as CVs will not be considered by the Selection Panel.

CVs, letters or any other supplementary material will not be accepted in place of, or in addition to, completed application forms.

Application Form Guidance

Applicants are reminded that the Application Form must be fully completed. Incomplete application forms will not be considered. Additional information received after the closing date will not be considered. Faxed applications will not be accepted.

Applicants should take care to indicate on their application form how and to what extent their qualifications, skills and experience met the selection criteria outlined.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

- The space available on the application form is the same for all applicants and must not be altered.
- Applicants must complete the application form in either typescript font size 12, or if handwritten in legible block capitals using black ink.
- Write down clearly your personal involvement in any experience you quote. Write "I" statements e.g. I planned meetings, I managed a budget etc
- The examples you provide should be concise and relevant to the criteria.
- Do not use acronyms or complex technical detail. Write for the reader who may not know your job or organisation.

The Selection Process

1. Initial Screening: All applications received by the closing date will initially be screened by our appointed external consultancy, Allen People Solutions to check they have been completed properly. Any applications which have not been completed properly will be deemed invalid.

2. Shortlisting: The selection panel will meet to review the completed application forms in relation to the essential criteria. Only those applicants who fully and clearly demonstrate on their application form how they meet each of the essential criteria will be shortlisted. The selection panel reserves the right to apply the desirable criteria in the order specified to reduce the pool of candidates to a manageable number for interview stage and interview only those candidates that it believes best meet the selection criteria.

4. Interview: Shortlisted candidates will be invited to a panel interview to explore the competencies as set out. Please note that it is our policy that all candidates invited to attend for interview bring photographic identification – passport or driving licence to confirm identity.

An Introduction to a Competency Based Selection Process

The Competency Based Interview process is designed to help you to present relevant evidence to enable the decision makers to evaluate 'fit' against the requirements of a particular role. Relevant evidence is usually, but not exclusively, drawn from your work experience and the way in which you have accomplished a range of activities or projects.

The information you provide will be evaluated against the specific skills and competencies required for effective performance in the role. Make sure you give enough detail so that panel members understand what you actually did not make assumptions that they may understand you demonstrate a skill at the right level just because of your current role, length of experience or educational qualifications.

Some guidelines include:-

- **Give specific examples** - most questions will ask you to describe an example of when you have demonstrated a skill. Try to do this concisely but with enough detail so that the panel will be clear about what you actually did and how you did it. This detail might include information about timescales, the number of people involved, budgets etc.
- For example, if a question is about your approach to decision making, you need to do more than describe your current role and list important decisions you have made. You will need to describe how you reached that relevant decision.
- **Give a range of examples** – if possible, base your answers on different situations or challenges you faced rather than rely on just one experience. This helps the panel to evaluate how you tackle different challenges and not just your behaviour in a 'one off' situation. However, one example can be used to demonstrate competence in a number of areas.
- **Be concrete rather than theoretical** – a clear description of how you actually behaved in a particular situation (and why) can be more useful to the panel than a vague or general description of what you consider to be desirable attributes.