

Frequently Asked Questions: Senior Civil Service Recruitment Open Evening Event 19/08/2020

During the DfT Senior Civil Service Open Evening Event attendees had the opportunity to ask the speakers questions throughout the session. Below is a list of frequently asked questions from the event:

Question	I was wondering about references; do you have a recommendation of who they should be? Is it better to ask current / past SCS that have managed me? I was also thinking about asking industry contacts?
DfT Response	We would recommend two people who have had close experience of your work, that may be a recent senior manager or it might be a stakeholder with whom you have had to work closely with. They need to be able to comment insightfully on your skills and abilities.
Question	Will it be a blind sift?
DfT Response	No
Question	which provider do you use for the tests?
DfT Response	The assessments we use are from Saville consulting
Question	Are the psychometric tests "pass or fail" criteria i.e. if you don't do well in the test but you have the experience/skills etc will the application still be progressed?
DfT Response	While the Psychometric tests are not "pass or fail" as such, the output of the online assessments is an overall 'fit score' to the role(s). A benchmark will be set, ensuring there is no adverse impact, and therefore performance on the assessments will be used to determine which candidates progress to the next stage.
Question	Is the CV required to be 'name blind' i.e. anonymous?
DfT Response	SCS Applications do not have to be 'blind' so please don't anonymise your application
Question	Could you please email out the link for the dedicated website cited please?

DfT Response	https://dft.gatenbysanderson.com/
Question	CV is 2 sides only - how can we get across all experience/achievements in 2 sides?
DfT Response	We would suggest highlighting experiences and achievements that are relevant to the roles you are applying for
Question	How many of the positions will require higher security clearances?
DfT Response	This has not been confirmed at this moment in time
Question	Is the intent to have remote interview panel or face to face?
DfT Response	Interviews will be held remotely using Microsoft Teams
Question	Are staff who come in at this senior level viewed as outsiders if they have not risen through the civil servant ranks?
DfT Response	This is not the case. External candidates can offer a huge amount to the department and have found the DfT to be incredibly welcoming.
Question	Are certain roles based in each city (e.g. policy in London, delivery in Leeds)?
DfT Response	The successful candidates will have the opportunity to discuss working location at the 'offer stage' but we will expect individuals to be either based in London, Birmingham and Leeds as advertised
Question	are roles being advertised on your website?
DfT Response	You can find our roles advertised here: https://dft.gatenbysanderson.com/job/deputy-director-roles.11766
Question	is there any flexibility on the £71k
DfT Response	The department will discuss salaries with the successful candidates and this will be based on skills and experiences. Existing Civil Servants will be appointed in line with the normal Civil Service pay rules.
Question	Would be good to understand your job opportunities for senior digital leaders, please kindly advise...? Where would this kind of profession potentially sit...?

DfT Response	We would recommend you sign up to Civil Service Jobs in order to receive notifications as and when digital roles become available. These roles will normally sit in the digital profession
Question	I've predominantly worked in small and medium sized businesses and currently run my own business. Would my experience be of relevance/interest to the Department?
DfT Response	If candidates meet the person specification as specified on the microsite, we welcome applications from all backgrounds
Question	Hi, would you consider someone in a non-managerial role in civil services but had experience in previous roles. But is currently undertaking a management development program?
DfT Response	If candidates meet the person specification as specified on the microsite, we welcome applications from all backgrounds
Question	I'm disabled. Why do you run timed assessment tests? Cabinet Office recently ran un-timed tests which is easier to access without laborious adjustments. Would you consider taking the results of the Cabinet Office tests into account?
DfT Response	To discuss individual requirements, please contact dft@gatenbysanderson.com to discuss reasonable adjustments
Question	how many deputy directors are there for 1 director? how many directors are there? is there an overview of the organisation?
DfT Response	The number of deputy directors reporting to one director varies depending on the scope of the directorate. Please find the organisation chart here
Question	Will candidates be able to choose the area of work or will they be allocated by the Department?
DfT Response	Candidates will be matched to roles based on their skills and experiences and likewise the areas of work will be chosen to match department demand, candidate's skillsets and the candidate's interests.
Question	If you express a preference for one role over another (i.e. policy vs. project delivery) but the Dept. determines that you're better suited to the "opposite" role, what happens next?
DfT Response	At the offer stage the Department will have a conversation with the successful candidates on the rationale behind the matching.

Question	Given recent government policy development on local transport, particularly the Decarbonisation Plan and Gear Change, to what extent will the policy roles be looking at changes for walking, cycling and buses in particular?
DfT Response	Further information on roles will be provided later in the campaign
Question	I passed the bar in a recent x-Gov GRS campaign for SCS1s. I haven't been appointed yet, but I've been placed into a 'talent pool' for vacancies as they arrive. Would you "fish in this pool" for these vacancies?
DfT Response	This campaign is separate to the recent SCSPB1 cross government campaign; therefore, candidates will need to continue applying for this one
Question	Is there any point in applying if my project experience is on smaller budget projects (£4/5m?)
DfT Response	If candidates meet the person specification as specified on the microsite, we welcome applications from all backgrounds
Question	Can I ask why the interest in applications from BAME backgrounds and protected characteristics?
DfT Response	We recognise the challenges that people with (multiple) protected characteristics may experience in the job market and in their career progression. We are fully committed to being an inclusive employer and ensuring equal opportunities. We are keen to make our workforce as diverse as possible, and we hope to attract applications from underrepresented groups, including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people, people with a disability, and people with gender diverse identities.
Question	How open are you to candidates being based in the north west and from a more varied local public-sector background?
DfT Response	We aim to move 22,000 Civil Service Roles out of London and the South East by 2030. As part of DfT's commitment to delivering this wider Government agenda we have decided to actively build on our existing DfT family presence in Birmingham and Leeds as cities which the Cabinet Office's Places for Growth Programme have identified as key locations for building Government presence
Question	How does this job opportunity relate to a recent campaign Dep. Director / SCS Pay Band 1 which closed on 16 June?
DfT Response	This campaign is separate to the recent SCSPB1 cross government campaign; therefore candidates will need to continue applying for this one
Question	Will successful applicants have a choice of their "home base" or will that be determined by the Dept.? The GS advert states Birmingham, Leeds and London.

DfT Response	The successful candidates will have the opportunity to discuss working location at the 'offer stage' but we will expect individuals to be either based in London, Birmingham and Leeds as advertised
Question	BAME applicants at senior level are important to better represent our society and have more role-models across Government. My Question is if SCS near misses are asking to be given first refusal then would there even be any point anyone else putting the effort in to apply!
DfT Response	We strongly welcome applications from BAME colleagues and other underrepresented groups. All appointments made are based on merit following a fair and open competition so please do apply.
Question	The advert states there are 10 roles. Have these roles been defined or may the number/scope change during the recruitment timeline?
DfT Response	The Department has a minimum of 10 vacancies and this will continue to evolve as we respond to business demand.
Question	Are you interested in those with a background in portfolio management and business transformation or primarily construction?
DfT Response	If candidates meet the person specification as specified on the microsite, we welcome applications from all backgrounds
Question	What is the typical scale and lead time of a project allocated to you
DfT Response	There isn't a typical scale for DfT's projects as they range from a few million to several billion £s. The majority are infrastructure projects and as such tend to have long lifecycles with years spent in development and construction
Question	I have a question regarding sifting. In my experience, it is very subjective depending on the "sifter". I applied for a DfT role previously, and did not make first sift, yet virtually the same application made interview for a HO position which had the highest application rate recorded! Is there a drive to standardise the sifting process?
DfT Response	The sifting criteria will depend on the role you are applying for and this will differ across government. Please ensure you read and refer to the person specification on the microsite in order to tailor your application.
Question	How receptive are you to candidates from the private sector?
DfT Response	If candidates meet the person specification as specified on the microsite, we welcome applications from all backgrounds
Question	What level of seniority do you need to have in private sector for the policy roles? I am paid more in private sector and have a senior role but maybe not as many years' experience as others
DfT Response	If candidates meet the person specification as specified on the microsite, we welcome applications from all backgrounds

Question	How many roles are there to be filled?
DfT Response	We are currently advertising 10 Deputy Director (various project delivery and policy opportunities across DfT)
Question	How open are you to applicants from non-transport related backgrounds?
DfT Response	If candidates meet the person specification as specified on the microsite, we welcome applications from all backgrounds
Question	Is there a minimum management grade you're looking for in candidates? Or is it about their experiences and ability to demonstrate they possess the skill set required/potential?
DfT Response	If candidates meet the person specification as specified on the microsite, we welcome applications from all backgrounds