

UNOFFICIAL GUIDES

LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD

apolitical

How to write behaviours that highlight your USPs

The 9 Behaviours

Introduction to Civil Service Behaviours

What are behaviours and how are they used?

- 9 core behaviours in the Success-Profile framework (e.g. *Delivering at Pace, Communicating & Influencing*)
- Each advert lists 3-5; one is often a **lead behaviour** that's double-weighted at sift
- Assessors score how your *evidence* maps to behaviour wording & grade scope—not your job title
- Grade lens: EO-HEO = follow process & meet deadlines; SEO = set priorities & mitigate risk; G7 = shape strategy & influence ministers

What does each behaviour mean in practice? (1/2)

Behaviour	Real-World Signals
Seeing the Big Picture	Links local work to strategic goals, scans political/econ context
Changing & Improving	Challenges status quo, pilots innovation, learns from failure
Making Effective Decisions	Gathers evidence, weighs risk, explains rationale
Leadership	Sets vision, inspires, respects D&I
Communicating & Influencing	Tailors message, persuades varied audiences

What does each behaviour mean in practice? (2/2)

Working Together	Builds trust, shares resources, resolves conflict
Developing Self & Others	Creates learning culture, mentors, seeks feedback
Managing a Quality Service	Plans, monitors, improves customer outcomes
Delivering at Pace	Prioritises, meets tight deadlines, owns results

Self-reflection

- Which behaviour are you most or least concerned about?

Writing Behaviours

How to turn your example into a strong behaviour statement

What structure to use?

Element	Target % of 250 w cap	What assessors want to hear
S – Situation	≈ 5 % (10–15 w)	1-line context + obstacle (“floods cut road”)
T – Task	≈ 10 % (25 w)	Clear goal + KPI + constraint (“clear 500-case backlog in 7 days”)
A – Action	≈ 60 % (150 w)	**I-verbs only** + 3 “depth prompts” (Why? Risk? Stakeholder? Trade-off?)
R – Result	≈ 15 % (40 w)	Metric / proxy (% / £ / time) and stakeholder impact
R+ – Reflection	≈ 10 % (25 w)	What you learned & how you’d apply it to the advertised role

What content to focus on/include?

- Grade-fit scope: verbs that match band (assist ▸ lead ▸ strategise)
- Genuine challenge: obstacle, risk, tight deadline—shows complexity
- Tangible metrics: % saved, £ gained, time cut, complaints to zero
- Stakeholder influence: who you persuaded or collaborated with
- Decision logic: brief “why” behind your chosen action
- Reflection: what you’d improve & why it matters for this vacancy

How to align to each specific behaviour?

- Mirror the exact behaviour title from the advert in your headline
- Lift key verbs from the CS framework (prioritised, mitigated, influenced)
- Hit behaviour's success cues:
- Delivering at Pace → time pressure, prioritisation, energy
- Communicating & Influencing → message tailoring, persuasion, outcome shift
- Managing a Quality Service → standards, monitoring, customer impact
- Grade lens: EO–HEO = meet deadlines; SEO = set priorities; G7 = shape strategy
- One behaviour per story — avoid dilution; reuse same project in a separate STAR if it fits another behaviour

Step 1: Find Your Example

- Scan last-3-years wins (work, study, volunteering)
- Confirm: clear challenge · your personal role · measurable outcome
- Pick one story you feel energized to tell

Step 2: Pick the Behaviour

- Read advert’s behaviour list; pick closest fit
- If advert flags a lead behaviour, tackle that first
- Check grade scope—people, £, risk must match band you’re applying for

Step 3: Situation

- Where & when: org / team / project
- Obstacle: deadline, budget, risk, politics
- Strip jargon; define one acronym max

Step 4: Task

- Personal KPI or objective (“clear 500-case backlog in 7 days”)
- Verb signals grade: assist · lead · strategise
- Set out the challenge - why was this hard

Step 5: Action

- What you did
- How you did it
- Why you did it that way

Hit ≥ 3 depth prompts (Why • Risk • Stakeholder • Trade-off • Decision)

Step 6: Result

- Metric: % / £ / time / proxy (“0 complaints”)
- Who benefited—team, region, department
- Optional quote: audit praise or stakeholder feedback

Step 7: Reflection

- Lesson learned: “Next time I’d…”
- Transfer: how lesson applies to advertised role