

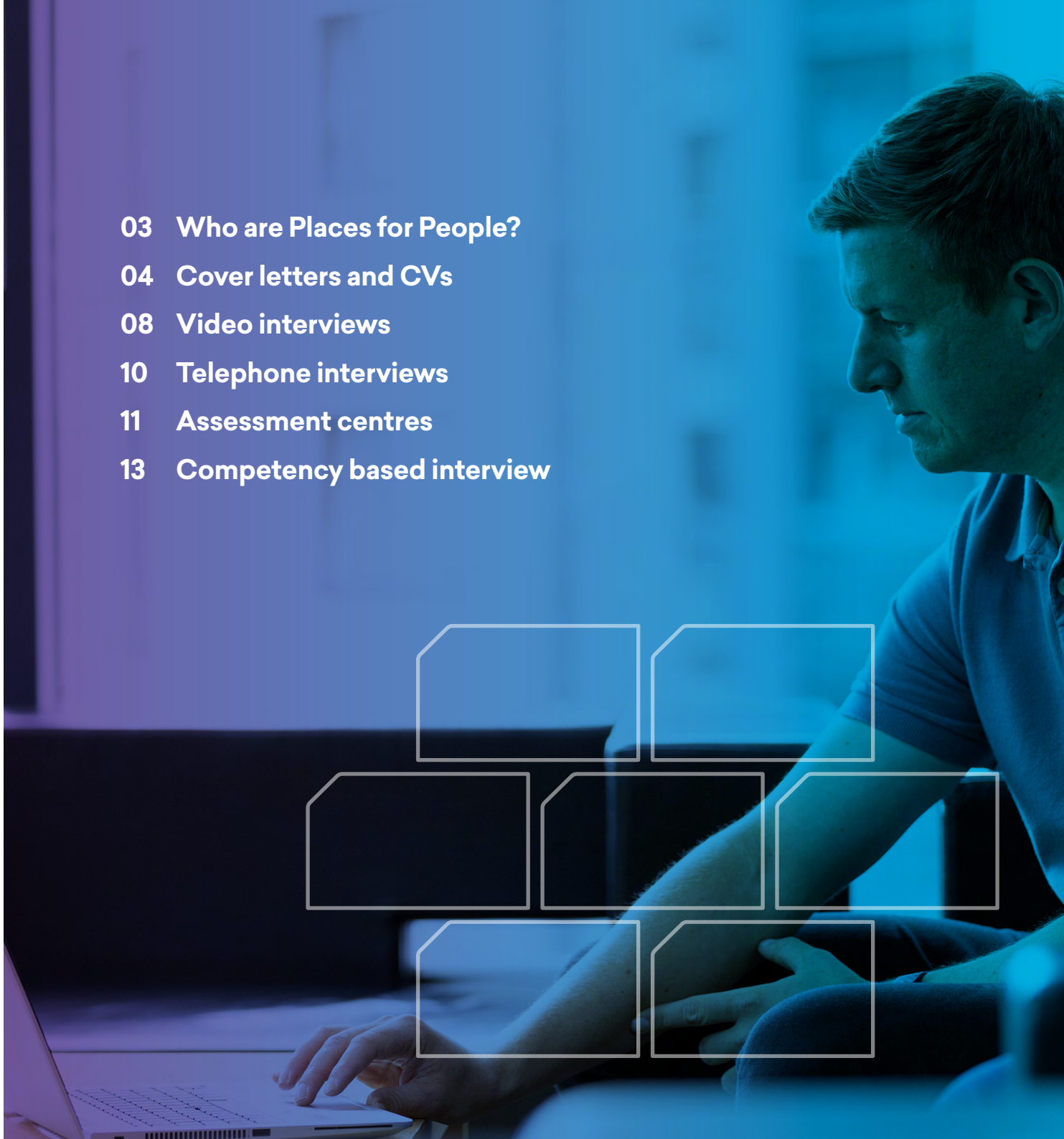
# Early careers: Employability guide





**The purpose of this guide is to support you through the application process of a new role at Places for People. This could be one of our apprenticeships, a traineeship, a graduate role or a new career. To navigate back to the contents page throughout, please click the arrow icon in the left panel.**

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## Who are Places for People?

**We understand that applying for a new role at the start of your career can be a daunting experience, this guide is designed to support you through the process providing opportunities to learn and test your interview skills from initial expression of interest through to assessment centre.**

From supported living and affordable housing to leisure centres, retirement homes and city apartments, we are leaders when it comes to creating places that benefit people and planet, at Places for People, everyone matters.

We're award-winning, too. Recently, Places for People was crowned Residential Company of the Decade and is a People First organisation underpinned by six SPIRIT values.

Our early careers options will give you plenty of exposure to different areas of the organisation, alongside opportunities to progress — in fact, we have a proven track record of developing our own talent and supporting people every step of the way.

You can find examples of our early careers roles by visiting [placesforpeople.co.uk/about-us/careers/our-roles/early-careers](https://placesforpeople.co.uk/about-us/careers/our-roles/early-careers)



## Cover letters and CVs

**They say ‘first impressions count’ for a reason. For most roles the first step in the recruitment process will be an application form, part of this will include an opportunity for you to submit a supporting statement, cover letter and CV.**

**Whilst this can be a time consuming process, its important that you dedicate time to each job application and cover letter. By tailoring your CV and application form to a specific type of role it can demonstrate your interest in Places for People and the role we are advertising.**

**This section will provide a detailed insight into each step considering how you can utilise your CV, Cover Letter and Application Form to demonstrate your employability and create a great first impression.**



## Cover letters and supporting statement

**At Places for People you have the opportunity to add a supporting statement and a cover letter to your application. There is no word limit you need to consider but should ensure that it is direct and holds relevant information.**



### Things to consider

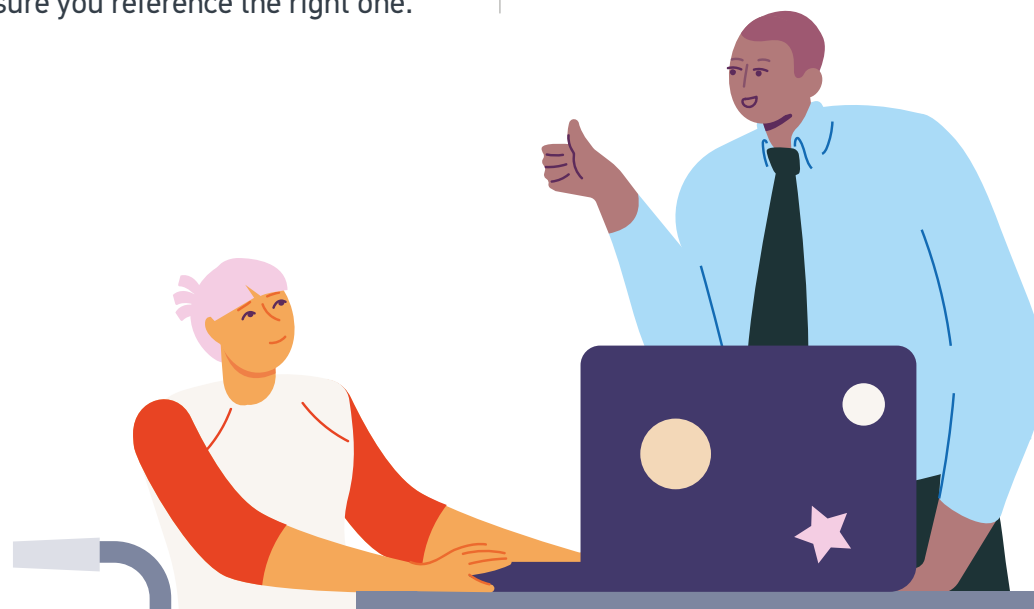
- Include why you are interested in the role, why you want to work at Places for People, why you are a suitable candidate and how it fits with your long term ambitions
- consider your spelling and grammar. Utilise programme like Grammarly
- avoid copying chunks of text from employer websites
- write in a professional style, short sentences, paragraphed
- if you are going to refer to the job title, make sure you reference the right one.

### What we look for

- Well researched and relevant to the role you've applied for
- personality and an opportunity to understand the person behind the CV.

### Why we use cover letters

- Understand interest
- supporting with CV sifting.





# Your CV

A CV is the best way to bring your experience, skills and knowledge to life. Whilst a CV should be tailored to the specific job requirements, there are also some things it should always contain which can be found below:

## Personal details

This sounds like a given, but it is essentially. To assist with layout and for ease of access include this at the top of your CV. Your name should be the title of the document:

- name
- contact information
- address.

## Personal statement

As it's the first thing that's shown on your CV, a personal statement is an essential part of standing out from the crowd. It explains who you are, what you're offering, and what you're looking for. Aim to prove why you're suitable in one short and succinct paragraph.

## Education

Please include your educational experience and achievements. Include dates, qualification type and attainment grade. If you are working towards a qualification that is related to the role then please include this.

## Work experience

This section should include all of your relevant work experience, listed with the most recent first. Include your job title, the name of the organisation, time in post, and your key responsibilities.

## Achievements

In addition to your work experience and education what else have you done? This could be awards, qualifications and projects you are proud of.



## Things to consider

- Make your CV easy to read with clear information — consider bullet points and making relevant information bold
- keep the information focused, clear and concise
- highlight responsibilities but emphasise achievements
- include interests and what makes you, you — this could be hobbies etc.
- check spelling, font and tenses.

## What we look for

- Clear, concise, relevant information
- easy to read format
- an understanding of your experiences and education.

## Why we use cover letters

- Easy format to access information
- clarification tool to compare to the job advert and description
- chance to get a good first impression.

# Exercise

Why are you interested in this role?

What would you consider being your biggest achievement?

## Video interviews

**At Places for People, we sometimes utilise a pre-recorded video interview to support our sifting. We appreciate that recording yourself answering pre-set questions may be a novel experience. We see this as a valuable part of our selection process as it will allow you to bring your CV to life and explain your experience in more detail than you can on a CV alone.**

**The interview is sent out via our recruitment system and will give you the chance to record answers to a limited number of simple questions. You will always receive the questions ahead of time and have the opportunity to re-record if you aren't happy with your answer.**





### Things to consider

- Show your personality — answering honestly and not what you think we want to hear
- avoid reading off a script, you can have notes in front of you but ideally you will know what you want to say. Don't be too reliant on cue cards
- your backdrop and what is visible behind you when you record your answers
- practice and review
- stick to the time limit
- gesticulate
- structure your presentation.

### What we look for

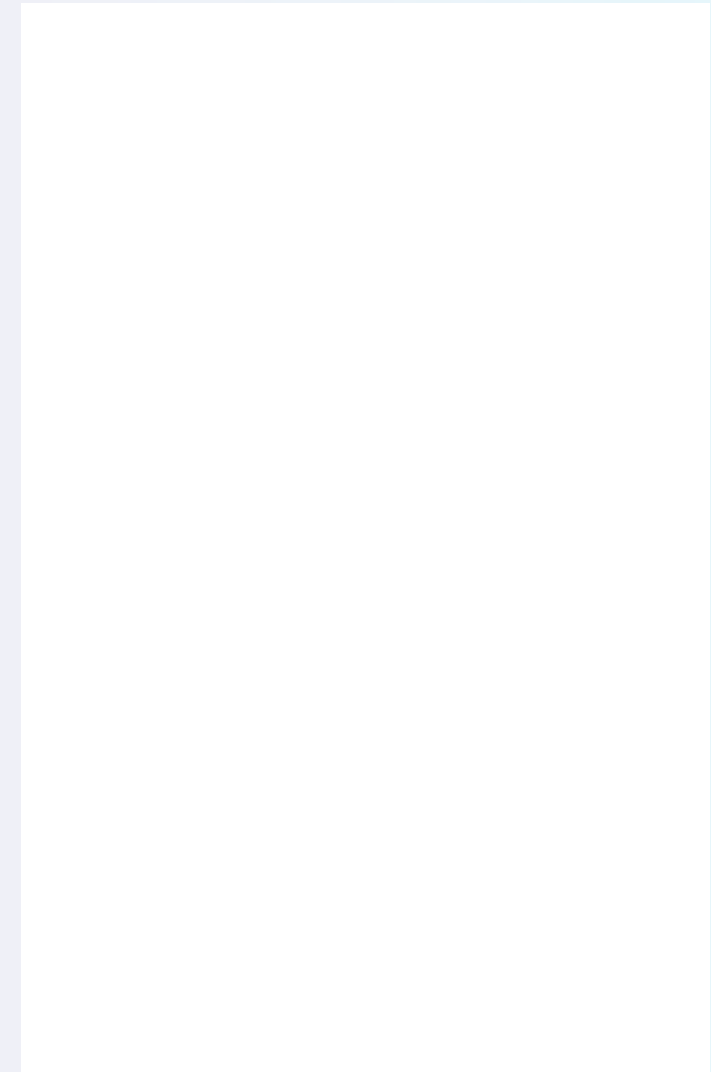
- Personality and enthusiasm
- confidence
- clear delivery
- interesting content and relaxed demeanour
- a natural flow to your answer.

### Why we use video interviews

- We want to get to know more about you including your interest and personality
- support with sifting
- to see how you cope with nerves and pressure.

# Exercise

Introduce yourself and tell us something you are passionate about?



## Telephone interviews

**At Places for People we utilise telephone interview as the final sifting stage before assessment centre and video interview. These are relaxed informal conversations with a member of the early careers team.**

**The call may range between 10-20 minutes and include questions relating to your cv and your motivations for applying. It also allows you to ask our team any questions you have relating to the process and Places for People.**

### What we look for

- Continued enthusiasm for the role
- a natural flow to your answer.

### Why we use telephone interviews

- To get to speak to you in person
- give you an opportunity to ask questions prior to the interviews.



## Assessment centres

**Assessment centres give you the opportunity to demonstrate a wide range of skills while completing a number of different activities. Each of our assessment centres are designed with a graduate and the role you want in mind.**

**At our assessment centres, you will be given the opportunity to meet your potential future line manager and the team you'll be a part of. Each assessment centre takes half a day and can be delivered in person or via Teams.**

**Assessment centres may seem daunting, but just remember to be yourself and relax. You won't only be assessed against the skills needed for the role: the team will be looking to see who a great fit for Places for People will be and who demonstrates our SPIRIT values.**



### Things to consider

- Wear business attire, we have a business casual dress code
- be sociable
- make the most of the networking opportunity
- prepare thoroughly / research company
- be punctual
- participate and contribute positively
- know your strengths.

### What we look for

- Personality
- preparation
- professionalism
- effective communication
- your skills
- your connection to our SPIRIT values
- your technical experience and knowledge
- how you interact with other candidates.

### Why we use assessment centres

- Ability to get candidates together
- ask candidates to complete a range of tasks to understand and assess a range of skills
- talent spotting
- judge ability to handle pressure within a range of tasks.



## Competency based interview

**The final part of the assessment centre will include a competency interview. We want each candidate to do well in this style of interview and recommend that everyone coming to meet us should use the STAR method to answer – that stands for: Situation; Task; Action; and Result.**

**In a successful interview you will develop professional rapport, highlight your commercial readiness and convince the interviewer that you are able to contribute to the long-term success of an organisation.**



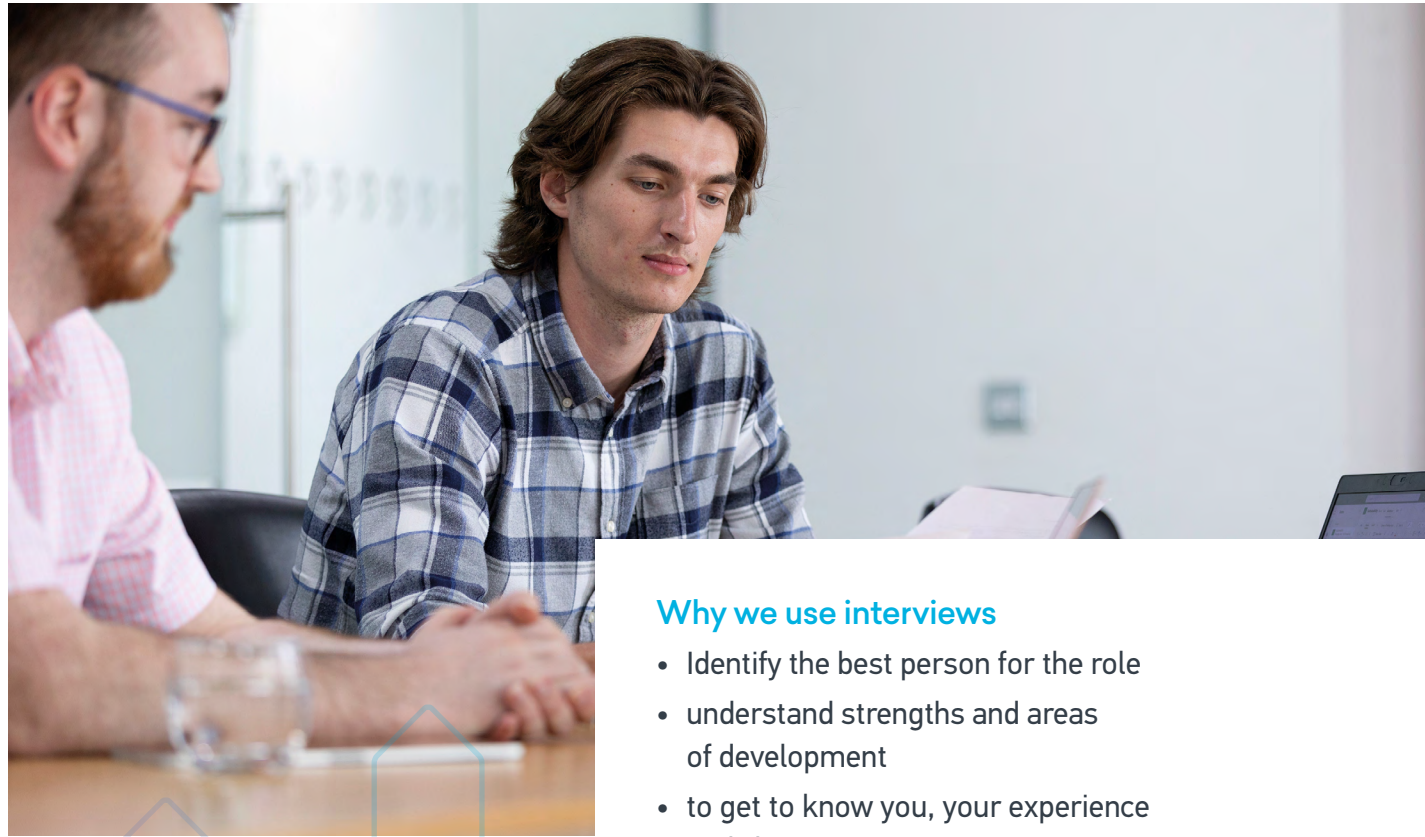


### Things to consider

- Research the company, role and interesting projects we are being part of
- answer the question asked. Take a breath and don't be afraid to ask for clarity
- use positive body language and eye contact
- adopt a friendly approach
- use examples — think outside of your working and educational environments
- justify opinions
- avoid long-winded explanations, be concise and clear
- highlight the role you played to deliver success, take ownership of your examples.

### What we look for

- Structure
- enthusiasm
- drive / ambitions
- motivations
- opinions
- knowledge both technical and research
- our SPIRIT values.



### Why we use interviews

- Identify the best person for the role
- understand strengths and areas of development
- to get to know you, your experience and character.

### Interview feedback

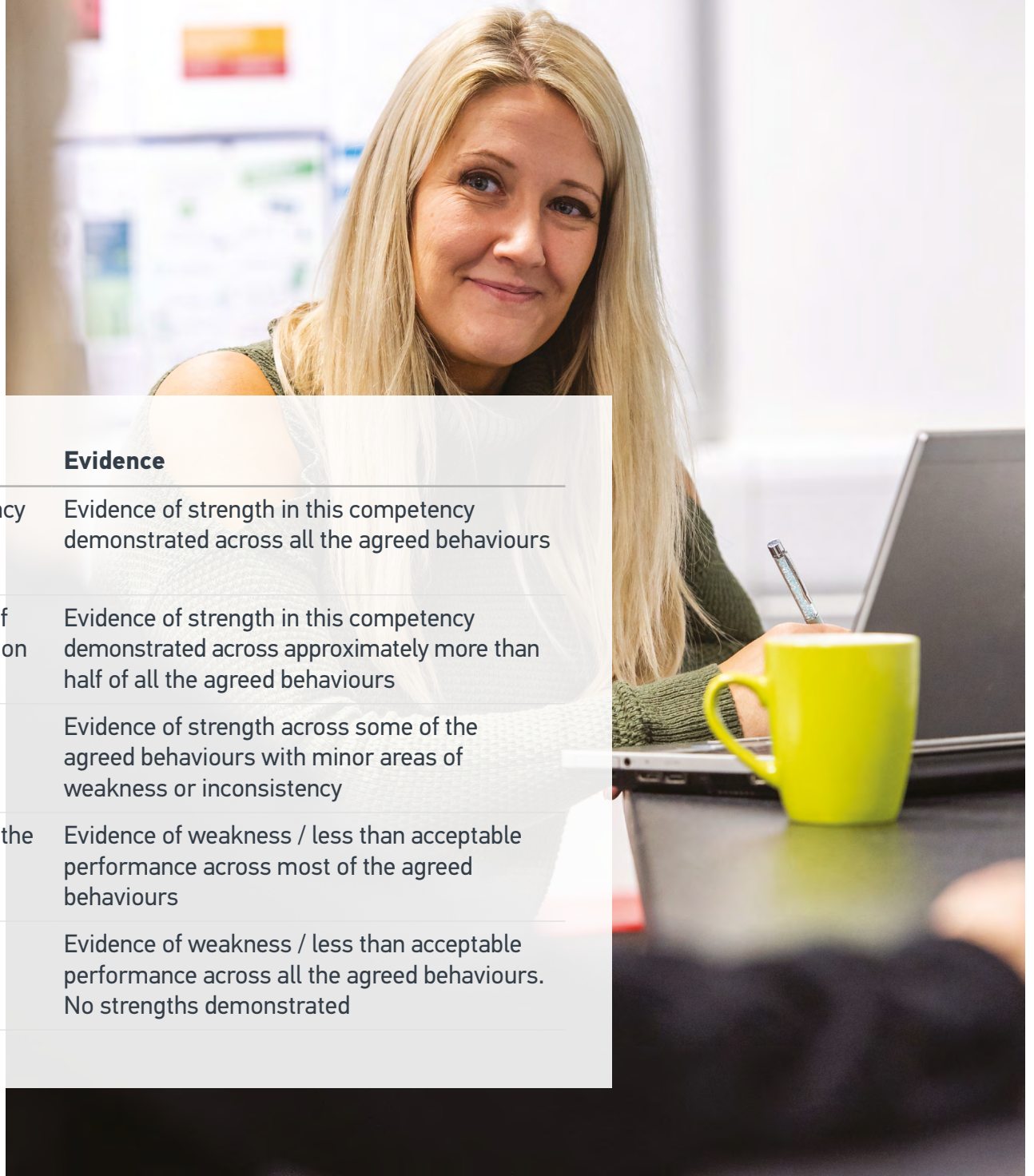
If you are unsuccessful at assessment centre we will guarantee interview feedback. This will come directly from the manager and provide guidance that you can put into practice at following interviews.



## How we score interviews

To ensure a constant approach across our interviews, all managers will be scoring candidates using the same method.

Rating	Level	Description	Evidence
5	<b>Outstanding</b>	Meets all the competency definition	Evidence of strength in this competency demonstrated across all the agreed behaviours
4	<b>Good</b>	Meets more than half of the competency definition	Evidence of strength in this competency demonstrated across approximately more than half of all the agreed behaviours
3	<b>Acceptable</b>	Meets half of the competency definition	Evidence of strength across some of the agreed behaviours with minor areas of weakness or inconsistency
2	<b>Marginal</b>	Meets less than half of the competency definition	Evidence of weakness / less than acceptable performance across most of the agreed behaviours
1	<b>Poor</b>	Meets none of the competency definition	Evidence of weakness / less than acceptable performance across all the agreed behaviours. No strengths demonstrated



# Exercise

## The STAR method

An easy way to ensure you are answering the question thoroughly is to use STAR which stands for: Situation; Task; Action; and Result.

Please create an answer to the following questions using the Star (+L) technique:

- Situation –
- Task –
- Action –
- Result –
- Learnings –



Describe a time when you have had to overcome a setback in order to be successful.

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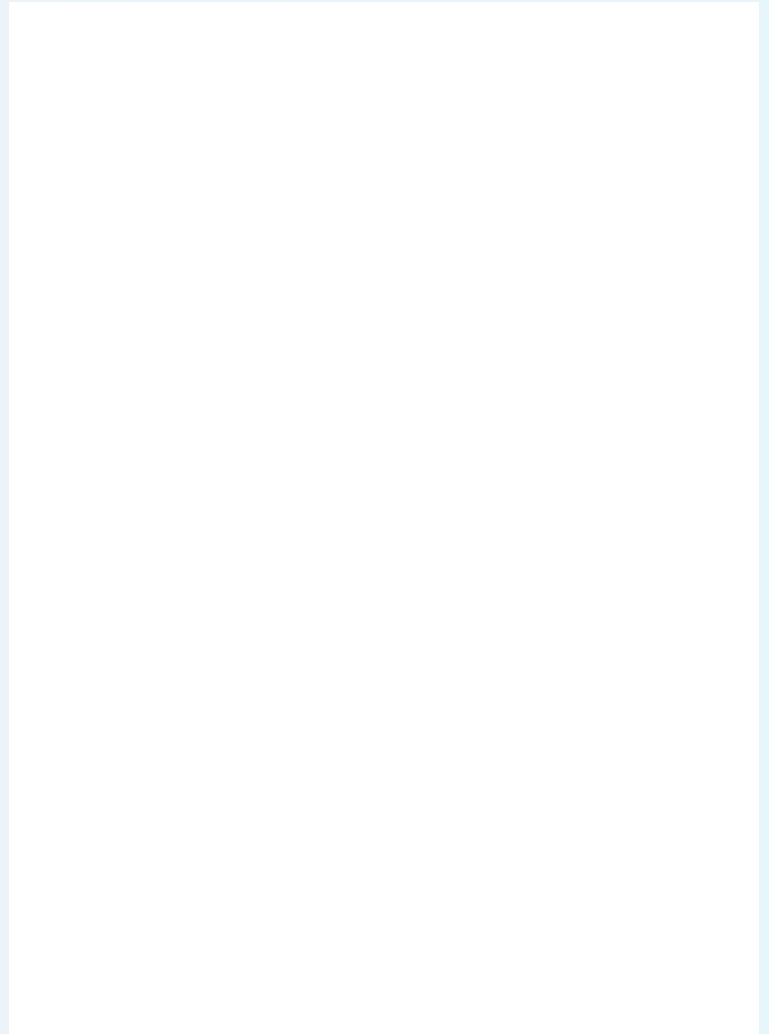


# Exercise

Give me a specific example of something you did which helped build confidence in others. What were some of the outcomes?



Give me an example of a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty in order to get the task done. Why did you feel it was necessary?





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