



Careers - Recruitment journey

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Our selection processes are designed to make sure we are as fair as possible and to give all applicants the opportunity to showcase their skills and abilities. This guide explains the different stages of your recruitment journey with us and offers some top tips to support you in your application. Use the links below to navigate through the guide and find out more.

Application

Found a job you'd like to apply for? The first stage is submitting an online application form. The different sections ask for key information about you, your previous experience and skills that are relevant to the person specification. Once the vacancy has closed, a shortlisting panel will mark all the applications against the criteria. We aim to do this within seven days of the vacancy closing and we'll always email you to let you know the outcome of your application.

If you want feedback on your application at this stage, you'll need to request this from the chair of the shortlisting panel.

All applications are completed and submitted through our e-recruitment system. For any help, advice or guidance please contact us at recruit@rcn.org.uk.

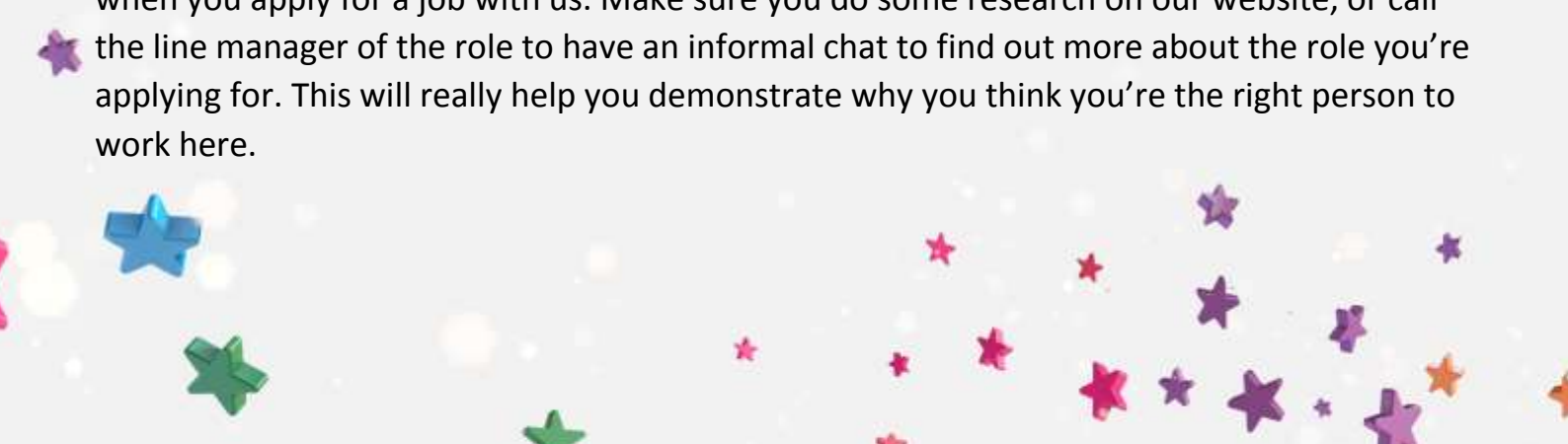
Here are some tips to help your application stand out from the crowd.

Take your time

It's worth taking time to put together a strong application. Make sure you read the person specification and job description thoroughly as you'll be marked against these when we shortlist. Always tailor your application to the job at hand; avoid submitting a generic statement. Don't forget you can save your application and return to it later; you don't need to do it all at once.

Do your research

We're proud to have strong values and it's important you understand what we're all about when you apply for a job with us. Make sure you do some research on our website, or call the line manager of the role to have an informal chat to find out more about the role you're applying for. This will really help you demonstrate why you think you're the right person to work here.



Use examples

The best applications use really clear, tangible examples of what you have done in previous roles and how this matches each of the criteria in the person specification. Examples can be a project you've worked on, a particular piece of work or tasks you were responsible for undertaking. Be specific, making it really clear what the outcomes were and what part you played in achieving them.

Be clear

Your application will be easier for us to understand if you present the information clearly and effectively.

- Use clear, plain English – avoid jargon, acronyms or overly academic language.
- Keep your sentences short – two shorter sentences are generally clearer than one very long one.
- Read our application before you submit it – does what you have written make sense? Are your points clear and easy to understand?

Check, check and check again

If you can, give your form the overnight test and go back to it the next day to read it with fresh eyes. It's often useful to get someone else to read it for you. Always run a spell check before submitting your form.

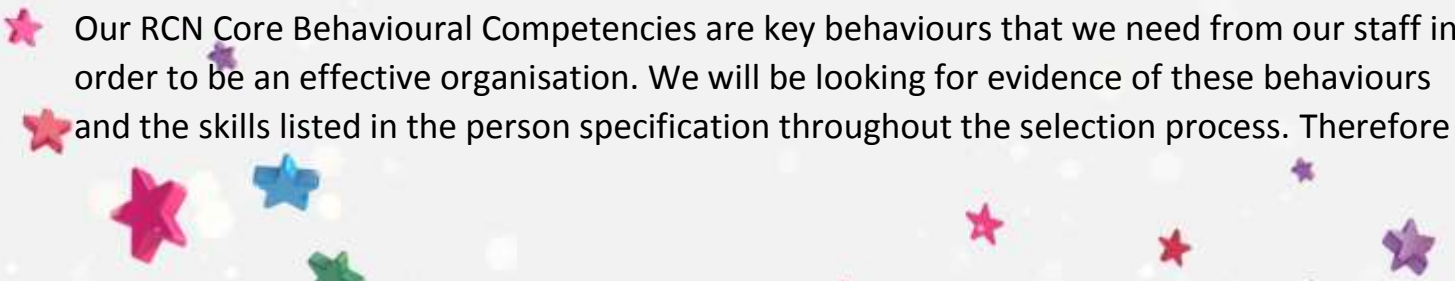
Assessment centre

If you are shortlisted, you will be invited to an assessment centre, where you'll be asked to complete some typical tasks that relate to the role you are applying for. Most of our selection processes involve this step, it's a great opportunity to demonstrate your skills in practice. It will also help you understand the typical tasks that will be expected of you in the role.

All of our assessment centres will include at least two assessments. These vary depending on the vacancy but their core purpose is to create an environment in which you, along with other candidates, have the opportunity to demonstrate key workplace skills. It is much easier for you to showcase a broader range of skills and competencies here than in an interview.

The assessments could be focussed around communication, teamwork, problem-solving, task management or leadership and will be assessed through activities such as role play, group discussion, seen and unseen presentations, psychometric assessments, work-sample tests and in-tray exercises.

Our RCN Core Behavioural Competencies are key behaviours that we need from our staff in order to be an effective organisation. We will be looking for evidence of these behaviours and the skills listed in the person specification throughout the selection process. Therefore



you may find it useful to familiarise yourself with our Core Behavioural Competencies before the assessment day.

These are some of the types of assessments you may be asked to take part in.

Group exercises

The group exercise is a key part of the assessment centre day and helps recruiters determine how you would perform in the job. It is usually used to see your communication and problem-solving skills, and to ensure that you can work effectively in a team. It also helps identify leadership skills. You need to support the group in completing the task that has been set, whether that involves discussing a particular issue or presenting your findings. The best way to proceed is to show yourself as a good team player: flexible, full of ideas but willing to listen to others and expand on their suggestions.

Role play

This type of exercise allows the assessors to observe how well you interact with others and how you respond when put on the spot or dealing with conflict. The key purpose of the exercise is to see what competencies you display and how your behaviour matches those of the required role. The scenarios will be based on the sort of situations that are very difficult to emulate in any other sort of test or an interview. They usually take a one-to-one format with an assessor observing the interactions.

In most instances the RCN will use a well-briefed actor. Try to keep in mind that a role play is about you exhibiting the required behaviours and not necessarily providing the best answer. On the day you will be provided with a brief and time to prepare. As part of your preparation, ensure you map out an introduction to the meeting, an actions list and a close to the meeting.

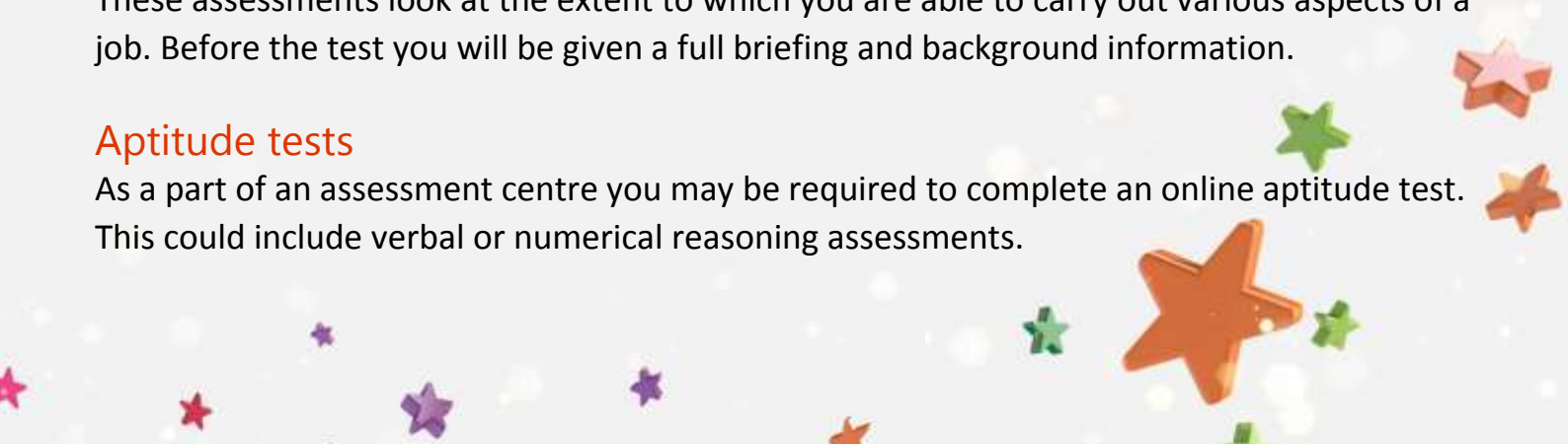
For most role plays you will have about 10 or 15 minutes in which to read the briefing information and then 20 to 30 minutes for the role play. This limited time doesn't usually offer you the opportunity to explore issues in depth so keeping control of the dialogue and reaching your required conclusion or outcome should focus your line of communication and questioning. The abilities you demonstrate and the time within which you come to the main issue will be a direct reflection of your planning and analytical abilities.

Written and work sample tests

These assessments look at the extent to which you are able to carry out various aspects of a job. Before the test you will be given a full briefing and background information.

Aptitude tests

As a part of an assessment centre you may be required to complete an online aptitude test. This could include verbal or numerical reasoning assessments.



Verbal tests are designed to measure your ability to understand written information and to evaluate arguments about this information. Numerical tests are designed to assess your understanding of tables of statistical data as well as your ability to make logical deductions.

It is advisable before taking these assessments that you attempt to practise the test online before you complete it. This will help to give you a good understanding of how the tests work.

Occupational personality questionnaire

As a part of the assessment centre you may be required to complete an online occupational personality questionnaire (OPQ). A company called SHL will email you a link to its website and provide you with a login and password so that you can complete the OPQ. Personality questionnaires assess personal behavioural preferences; that is, how you like to work. They are not concerned with your abilities, but how you see yourself and the way you relate to others, your approach to problems and how you deal with feelings and emotions. With this type of assessment there are no right or wrong answers.

Presentation

As a part of an assessment centre, unseen presentations are common. For an unseen presentation you will normally be given the full presentation title on arrival and 30 minutes to prepare. A presentation normally lasts 10 minutes. Different tools for presentations are available to you, such as PowerPoint, a projector, flipcharts and smart boards. Look out for specific instructions with the assessment centre invitation.

Tips to assist you at the assessment centre

Turn up with an open mind and be ready to get involved, but remember that some standard, practical preparation before the day will be your biggest help and confidence booster.

- You need to contribute, but not to dominate. Be assertive, but not aggressive. If you are aware that you are usually a shy person who sometimes finds it challenging to speak up, do your best to participate. If you know that you can sometimes be overbearing in groups, hold that tendency in check.
- Speak clearly and confidently. Listen and don't interrupt. During a group discussion or role play be aware of what others are contributing. You could try to draw out quieter members and seek their views.
- Be diplomatic. If one person is behaving in a dominant way, don't shout them down, but try to make sure that everybody gets a chance to share their thoughts. Be prepared to compromise.
- Keep an eye on the time and stay focused on the overall objective. From time to time, try to summarise progress.
- Use your local careers service. Most careers services run practice sessions for assessment centres. At the very least you may be able to practise psychometric tests



or book sessions to prepare for the individual assessment centre activities, such as group exercises.

- Read all the information we send you carefully. As well as practical information about the date, location and start time, it should also tell you how the day will be structured.
- Ensure you are familiar with the job description and person specification.
- Check whether or not you will have to complete any tasks before the day. You may need to work on parts of a case study or put together a presentation. Plan time for this and don't leave it until the last minute.
- Be self-aware. To succeed at assessments you need to be aware, flexible and responsive.

Interview

Your interview will be with the line manager of the role and two other members of staff. We're looking for you to provide us with evidence of how you meet the skills we are seeking by using examples of previous experience. This is your opportunity to demonstrate your passion and enthusiasm for the RCN. We'll give you at least five working days' notice before your interview date and we'll email you all the information you need to prepare in advance.

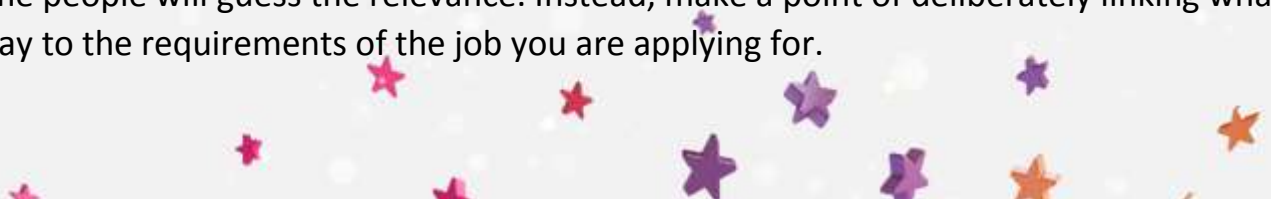
When it comes to an interview, you can never be entirely sure what questions you will be asked, but you can do a lot to help yourself by preparing for different types of questions in advance. Even if they do not all come up, simply having prepared for them should give you a confidence boost on the day. Often our interviewers like to ask for specific experiences that prove certain abilities or characteristics. These are easier to provide if you have thought of examples during your preparation.

Give examples

Being specific is much better than being vague. Always back up what you are saying with tangible, relevant examples of your experience, achievements and details of what you learnt from each experience. This is important both on your application form and, if shortlisted, in your interview. So rather than just saying: "I am a good team player", give examples of teams you have been part of, describe your role within those teams and explain what you achieved by working together.

Be clear

This is not just about speaking calmly and audibly – although both of those things are very important. It is also about letting the panel know what point you are making and why. For example, if you recount a story of a particular problem you faced in a previous job, do not assume people will guess the relevance. Instead, make a point of deliberately linking what you say to the requirements of the job you are applying for.



To help you stick to the point you could try keeping your answers to within a rough time limit and structuring your answers with three or four main points.

Be flexible

Not all interviews are the same, and you may find yourself surprised by something, such as the questions themselves, the tone of the interviewers or even the seating arrangements. As a general rule, try to keep in mind that things may not proceed exactly how you imagined they would. This can be a good thing – you will get the chance to show your ability to think and act on your feet.

Be yourself

Remember, the most important part of an interview is to sell yourself and to show why you are right for the job. But if you can, try to show the real you, not just someone who can learn answers to interview questions. Whether you get the job will be as much down to your demonstration of our Core Behavioural Competencies as it will to your skills and experience, and the answers you give.

Here are some top tips for your interview with us.

Check the details

Find out who the interview is with, where it is and how long it will be. This will help you understand what you need to prepare.

Research

Research us, the department and the role. Get an idea of what we do. Look at our role profiles, values and competencies. This will help you imagine what it might be like to work here.

Practise

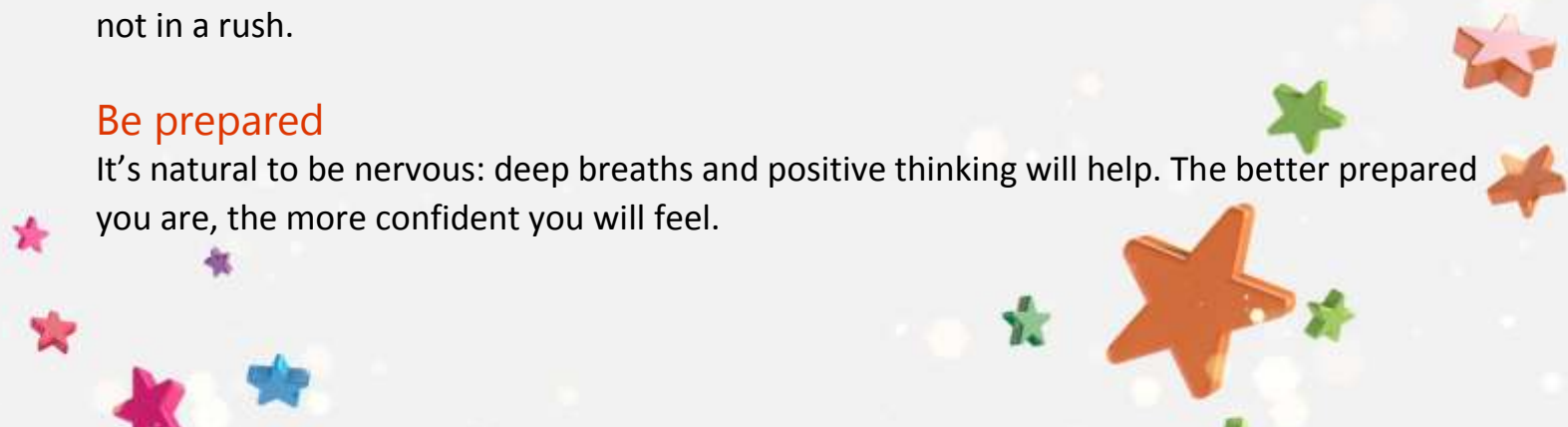
The more comfortable you are with your answers to interview questions, the more confident you'll be on the day. Try practising with a friend or someone at home and always prepare relevant examples of your experience and achievements. Asking us questions, which is always important in any interview situation, is the perfect opportunity to show us you are keen.

Plan the day

Decide what you're going to wear in advance. Work out how you are going to get here and check there are no transport disruptions. Make sure you build in some extra time so you're not in a rush.

Be prepared

It's natural to be nervous: deep breaths and positive thinking will help. The better prepared you are, the more confident you will feel.



Ask questions

This is the perfect opportunity to show you are keen.

Job Offers and Feedback

If you're successful in your application, we'll aim to tell you as soon as possible after the interview. We'll usually call you in the first instance to let you know and then follow this up with a formal offer in writing. If you're not successful, we'll email you and you can always ask for feedback to help you with future applications.

Once you've accepted the offer, we'll need to contact your referees. All offers of employment are made subject to receipt of satisfactory references and occupational health clearance.

Under employment law, we're also required to check that you have the legal right to work in the UK. You'll need to provide us with documentary evidence to demonstrate eligibility to work in the UK before taking up employment.

All confirmed appointments are subject to a six-month probation period.

Next: get onboard

Your first 100 days at the RCN will be critical to your success. You will want to make a positive impact and we will help you achieve just that.

Alongside your manager you will create your personal 100-day plan. This will include mandatory training and any development crucial to your new role. You will be crystal clear about what is expected of you – so there will be no surprises.

You will also attend the This is the RCN two-day onboard programme where you will find out all about our successes, hear from members who have received vital support from us and discover why your new colleagues love working here.

By the end of your 100 days you will know us inside and out. You will be familiar with our mission, goals and values and you will understand how you will contribute to the success of the RCN. We will help you orientate yourself and introduce you to the official – and unofficial – way we do things here.

But that's not all... We are constantly seeking ways to improve so you'll have the chance to rate your first 100 days and tell us how we did.

We only recruit the best and the best is what you can expect from us. Good luck!

