



Department
for Education



Care Leavers Internship Scheme Candidate Pack

July 2024



What is the Civil Service

The Civil Service delivers public services and supports the government to develop and implement its policies. The work civil servants do extend to all aspects of life in the UK from education to the environment to transport and defense. Civil servants are politically impartial. Together, we ensure the effective running of government and provide the best possible services to the public.

Please see [GOV.UK About us](#)

Overview of the Scheme

The award-winning Care Leavers Internship Scheme is designed to be a launchpad for care leavers to help them gain the skills and experience at the start of their working life. Working in the heart of government, you will have the opportunity to influence a wide range of policies and projects. The Civil Service wants care leavers with a thirst for knowledge to come and complete an 18-month internship where they will be able to develop skills and gain work experience. We hope that some of you may want to stay beyond the first 18 months and consider a career in the Civil Service.

Please see [Civil Service Internship Scheme](#)



Our hopes and expectations

The Civil Service is committed to offering opportunities to Care Leavers; providing you with the necessary skills to thrive in the Civil Service and help you further develop your career. Our goal is to offer you:

- a supportive working environment
- learning and development opportunities
- increased confidence
- financial stability

You will be expected to:

- commit to the internship showing enthusiasm and dedication
- follow your departments policies and processes in relation to:
 - absence
 - time management
 - holidays
 - office etiquette
- seek opportunities to stretch you and help you grow
- support your department to achieve their objectives
- be open and honest

Who can apply?

- Are you a care leaver? (To qualify for leaving care support, you must have been in care for a minimum of 13 weeks, some of which must have been after your 16th birthday.)
- Aged between 18 and 30 years old as of 30/09/2024
- Do you satisfy the nationality requirements? [Nationality Rules](#)

No qualifications required; but you must demonstrate you can meet the essential criteria in the job advert.

Currently undertaking Learning....

If you are currently undertaking any full-time learning such as a degree, we would strongly suggest you apply once your studies have been completed.

Anyone wishing to apply while undertaking part-time learning can do so, however the minimum days we could accommodate would be 3 depending on the business needs of the department you are allocated to.



Roles and Departments

In 2023 we had 142 roles from 17 department across England, Scotland and Wales. The departments taking part in the internship and the roles they offer varies year on year as each department must consider:

- their funds for the financial year
- what roles are forecasted for the year

If you have a preference of which department you would like to be allocated to this can be noted on your application however, we **cannot** guarantee this will be possible due to office locations and the roles available.



Typically an AO would:

- Provide administrative support
- Process data
- Handle inbound calls
- Support end users via email, calls, ticketing systems
- Organise meetings
- Manage inboxes

Typically an EO would:

- Lead on areas of work
- Create strong stakeholder engagement
- Provide administrative support
- Lead on policy making
- Problem solving
- Provide personal assistant support
 - Managing directors' diaries
 - Organise meetings

Further information on [Civil Service Careers](#)

These lists are not definitive and will vary from department to department

Examples of previous roles offered:

Admin Officer - Support Reporting Centres in managing their reporting populations by speaking to customers & creating interventions to progress cases to conclusion. Updating computer systems & issuing travel tickets and conducting interviews where appropriate.

Project Support - The opportunity to work on delivery of one of the Government's highest priorities. The role covers a diverse range of activities to support the delivery objectives of projects. You will be key, in enabling the project manager in the smooth running of the project by supporting in the operation of project management processes, including taking ownership of specific projects.

Diary Manager and Assistant Private Secretary to the Permanent Secretary - Running the diary and office for the Minister and Permanent Secretary. Advising on strategic diary management issues as well as running the day to day work.

Initial Investigation Officer Dealing with general customer enquiries - Responding to written and telephone enquiries from customers signposting them accordingly. Checking and deciding whether new customers meet the gateway criteria. Registering new cases on the ICE database. Identifying scope for resolution on the less complex complaints, agreeing resolution actions with the customer and relevant Business and drafting resolution letters. Drafting decision letters in respect of complaints, explaining the examination (expedited investigation) and rationale for those decisions.

Funding and Monitoring Officer - Raise e-purchase orders using the WG finance controls as required, track expenditure against budget on an ongoing basis, maintain electronic records on iShare, provide cover to monitor divisional inboxes as required, provide general administrative support as required, including providing back up support to other teams as required, prioritise tasks to meet the needs of the team and manage own time, work collaboratively with other teams to deliver specific projects, arrange meetings, collate and distribute papers, attend meetings and take minutes as necessary, assist with internal and external queries via Teams, telephone, e-mail and written correspondence, always ensuring that a high level of customer service is maintained

Please note you are unable to request a specific role, you will be allocated to a role based on grade and location.

What our interns think....

Toby – Welsh Gov

I would recommend the scheme to other care leavers who feel that they are in search for a role to find out what they want to do in the future of their careers. The advice I would give to anyone thinking of applying for the scheme is to be yourself and to put all your effort into self-improvement and learning new skills within the scheme and take advantage of the chances it will give you.

Gabby – HMRC

Being in the internship is helping me to build my confidence social skills as I've always been a bit nervous around new people. Working in data analysis and through the training I have received already, I am improving my IT skills and knowledge of various systems and packages, i.e. Microsoft. The financial stability that the internship brings is also making a big difference in my life. I am really enjoying my role and would love to pursue a career in the Risk and Intelligence Service (RIS) further through being made permanent or in other opportunities in the Civil Service.

Joseph – Border Force

When I was told that I would be working at Border Force Heathrow, I had no idea what to expect. The only knowledge I had of Border Force was from TV shows such as Britain's Busiest Airport. At the beginning, I did suffer a bit from Imposter Syndrome, but my amazing colleagues quickly put me at ease, and I got stuck in. My line manager and team were extremely sympathetic to my background and treated me with dignity and respect, whilst also ensuring that I was as involved as other team members with respect to both the variety and challenge of work available. Don't get hung up on whether you think you will "fit in"; the United Kingdom is a place of diversity, and the Civil Service should reflect that diversity, both in its people and in its work.

Scheme details, how to apply and hints & tips

Contract: This is a fixed term appointment for 18 months with a possibility to have this extended or made permanent. You will be subject to a 6-month probation period in line with all new civil servants, with the expectation you will meet goals and objectives set by yourself and your line manager.

Proposed 2024 Recruitment Timeline:

- Advert closes 30th September 2024
- Sift results to be released – 16th October 2024
- Interview results to be released – 31st October 2024
- Department allocations – You will only be allocated to a department once evidence of your care leaver status has been provided
- Starting in post – indeterminate, start dates will only be agreed once pre-employment checks have cleared

Above dates are subject to change

Pre-employment checks: Checks can cause some stress and anxiety as the time taken for these to clear will vary from 30 days to 6 months. The reason for this is depending on which level of check is required in your department.

There are 4 main levels of national security clearance: Baseline Personnel Security Standard (**BPSS**) Counter Terrorist Check (**CTC**) Security Check (**SC**) Developed Vetting (**DV**).

The higher the level of security the longer the process can take.

Tips for pre-employment checks:

DO be honest on your pre-employment checking forms and fill these out as quickly and as accurately as possible

DO upload/send your ID to your department's pre-employment checking team as soon as possible

DO NOT ignore emails requesting further information as this will delay the process

DO NOT resign from your current employer until your re-employment checks have cleared

Working hours: We operate a flexible working policy. Your fulltime working hours will be 37-40, part time hours will need to be discussed and agreed with your appointed department as business needs will be considered. Your hours worked are managed through our flexitime policy with core hours being set by your line manager.

Salary: Your salary will depend on which department you are allocated to but the minimum is £20,126

How to apply

Create a Civil Service Jobs account and search for the job advert, hit 'apply'.

Application: You will be asked to complete an application form providing an example of your experience against the 5 essential criteria listed in the advert.

All applications are sifted blindly (all personal information removed) to ensure a fair unbiased assessment of your application.

Success profiles : Experience

Interview: If successful at application stage you will be invited to an interview over Microsoft Teams. We aim to provide you 1 weeks' notice of the interview and a link will be sent to you by the interview chair the day before the interview slot. Interviews will last around 45 minutes and will consist of questions on experience linked to the essential criteria and some strength-based questions.

Success profiles : Strengths

DfE does not offer mock interviews, we would advise you to reach out to local charities or your personal advisor.



Hints and tips when applying - [Chris Webber, March 2020](#)



Use examples rather than just making claims: responses to behaviour questions can sometimes amount to a series of unsupported claims about how good or experienced the applicant is. We've never shortlisted or offered a job to someone who does this. **We need detailed examples.**



Use the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) or CAR (Context, Action, Result) model to structure your responses: lots of people use too much space explaining the situation and task. It's much better to cover the situation and task in a short sentence or two before concentrating most of your effort on a detailed explanation of what you personally did to tackle the challenge. Explain as many steps as you can. Note the result in a sentence.



Use 'I' rather than 'we': a relatively common mistake is candidates using 'we' rather than 'I'. This makes it difficult to know what you personally did to tackle the challenge you're describing. It's much safer to stick with 'I'.



Examples used do not necessarily have to be work placed examples, you can use situations from college, university or home.

FAQ's

- 1. I am unsure if I meet the definition of a care leaver, how can I check that I am eligible before I apply?** Email leavers.care@education.gov.uk we will check if you meet the eligibility criteria.
- 2. I have the right to work in the UK but don't satisfy the Nationality requirements can I apply?** No. You would not be eligible to apply for the scheme as you must have the right to work within the Civil Service.
- 3. I am not a British national, but I am a national from the EU. with settled or pre-settled status can I apply?** Yes, you would be eligible. Check Nationality Rules
- 4. I am currently at university and will be continuing my studies, Is this internship suitable for me?** Most roles are full time or part-time in accordance with business needs. If you are at university then this scheme would probably not be suitable for you. We would recommend applying when you have graduated and can commit to suitable hours.
- 5. I live in a town or city which wasn't in the advert, can I still apply?** Yes. You can still apply, but we will only be able to offer you a role in a location that was advertised, so if the locations are not within daily travelling distance, then we would advise you not to apply.
- 6. I have not passed Maths or English can I apply?** Yes, No qualifications are required for the Care Leavers Internship Scheme, but you must be able to demonstrate that you satisfy the criteria specified in the advert.
- 7. I have never worked within an office or within the civil service before, can I apply?** Yes, No relevant work experience is required.
- 8. Can I gain any qualifications during my internship?** Some departments are offering voluntary apprenticeships but that will depend on the department to which you are allocated. You will, however, gain valuable work experience and skills to take you forward in your career.
- 9. I was put into kinship care am I eligible to apply?** We would need to check to see if this was formal kinship care or informal kinship care and when it ended, please email leaver.care@education.gov.uk and we can advise on your eligibility.
- 10. I have a question about the scheme who can I contact?** Email Leaver.care@education.gov.uk. We will reply within 2 working days.
- 11. I was classed as an estranged student by my university am I eligible to apply? Are you a care leaver?** if so, yes you are eligible. If you are unsure, please email leavers.care@education.gov.uk.
- 12. Can I work part-time?** The Civil Service offers flexible working patterns, any part time work would be discussed and agreed with the allocated department and depends on business needs.