

Application and Interview tips

Thank you for your interest in working for the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority. Please read the following guidance notes to help you complete your application. Remember this is the first step in the process which may lead to an interview and possibly a job offer. You should therefore complete it to the best of your ability. It is worth taking the time to get it right.

Firstly, read the information provided about the job, personal requirements etc and possibly research further on our website.

Some of the skills, knowledge and experience will be essential for the role and you should explain in your application how you meet each of these. You won't be invited for interview unless you at least match these.

There may be some skills, knowledge or experience that are desirable, that will enable you to perform the job more effectively. These will be used for deciding who to invite for interview, if a large number of applicants have all the essential criteria.

When completing the "Statement in support of application", use the person specification to help you to structure the relevant aspects of your experience, skills and knowledge. Aim to give evidence in your application that matches each of the criteria on the person specification.

It is important that you use examples to show clearly how you meet the essential and desirable criteria. Examples don't need to be from your work experience - they can be from other areas of your life eg domestic responsibilities or social activities. So don't put "I communicate well, both verbally and in writing" tell us how, for eg "As secretary of the local wine tasting society, I negotiate discounts with local wine merchants and organise several Society visits to Calais each year."

It is important that you include all the relevant information on your application, we won't guess or make assumptions if you leave out information. Don't rely on being able to tell us at an interview - if your application isn't completed fully, you won't get an interview.

You might be surprised to learn that as many as 75% of candidates perform poorly at interview. In most cases, it comes down to them not having the necessary interview skills rather than them being unsuitable for the job. So if you find interviews a daunting prospect, the following advice should come in quite handy.

Pre-interview preparation:

The first step towards any successful interview is the preparation.

Do your homework:

- Before the interview try to find out as much as you can about Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and the Authority

- If you are lucky enough to know anyone who works for us then find out as much as you can from them.
- Research will improve any presentation you may have to make. The interviewers will be impressed by your knowledge and the effort you've put into your preparation.
- Make sure you know where the interview will take place and plan your journey.

What might we ask at interview?

- You are likely to be asked a number of questions about your previous experience, for instance the responsibilities you've had and your achievements.
- And we will be looking for 'evidence' of how you match the criteria listed on the person specification. For example, if we want a good communicator, we will expect that to show in the interview.
- We will ask for examples of how you have acted in the past in similar situations to that expected in the job here. So think about the information you gave in your application, be clear about how you meet the what we are looking for. And make sure you think of some examples.

Also show that you are interested in us!

Decide if you have any questions about the job, benefits, career development and training and make a list of these to take to the interview with you.

We may ask you to do an ability/skills/aptitude 'test' as part of the interview, or perhaps a presentation.

If you are well-prepared, you are likely to sound confident, organised and motivated as well as being in a good position to do your best.

The interview

- First impressions count, so dress appropriately and smartly, be polite. Arrive on time.
- Try to stay focused on the person asking the questions – give them your full attention. Don't be distracted by the fact that the interviewers will be taking notes during the interview.
- Sound positive about yourself and your achievements, focus on your strengths.
- Don't be negative about your previous employer.

- Give yourself time to think – don't be afraid to pause if you need to think about your answer.
- Be clear and try not to ramble. If you know you tend to talk too much when nervous, then watch out for this and try to think in advance how you can control it. If you tend to clam up when nervous, then the preparation you've done should help, because you'll have things ready to say.
- Always be prepared to give real life examples to back up any points you make.
- Ask the interviewer for clarification if you're not sure what they are asking.
- Don't under-estimate your skills and abilities.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, say so. There's nothing wrong with being honest.

Always come prepared with questions of your own to ask at the end of the interview. For example you may wish to know about the working environment, whether you'll be working alone or as part of a larger team, what the prospects for training and promotion are etc. They all show that you've given the role some serious thought and are genuinely interested.

You can also make notes on any other points which come up in discussion and which you may want to clarify later in the interview.

Make sure that by the end of the interview, you have all the information you need to decide whether you want the job or not, and if you do, then make that clear at the interview.

We should let you know what happens next (eg if there will be a second interview, or when we will be in touch with the outcome) but if we forget, then please ask.

Good luck!