The Public Service Capability Framework

CMG Training

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Brand New Horizons

What we’ll work on today

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Read a grade profile and recognise capability in everyday work.

Use the framework to support decisions about people and services.

Today’s running order

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09.30 Introduction and the four dimensions
11.00 Morning break | Resume at 11.15
11.15 Grade expectations, cases and development conversations
13.00 Lunch | Resume at 14.00
14.00 Skills audit or interview design, then implementation
14.35 Comfort break | Resume at 14.40
15.30 Finish

Why capability matters now

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Civil Service Renewal 2030 sets a direction for better services and a workforce ready for future demands.

Delivering that change depends on what people can do in their roles and the support they have to do it.

What the Civil Service’s own evidence tells us

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Competence was the strongest factor associated with coping with change.

60% said learning and development had improved their performance.

51% said changes were made without talking to the people involved.

Civil Service Employee Engagement Survey 2023 | 26,862 responses

A shared description of capability

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The framework describes capability relevant to a role. It informs recruitment and can support development.

Use the profile to clarify what people need to demonstrate, then consider what evidence would show they can apply it in their work.

Why this matters in your role

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As the work changes, so does what people need to be able to do. The Capability Framework gives us a way to describe what good work looks like, from making sound decisions with the evidence available to working with others when priorities change.

How the framework fits into the reform programme

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2021 | Civil Service Renewal 2030 set out the reform strategy.

2024 | Publicjobs introduced the Capability Framework, updating the earlier competency model.

The review aimed to reflect current and anticipated requirements for Civil Service roles.

What it takes to respond to change

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When demands change, organisations have to decide what to prioritise and how to organise the work. Teams need the skills and support to take on new responsibilities while continuing to deliver existing services.

Using the profiles to develop roles and people

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When the work changes, use a relevant capability profile to clarify what the role now requires and what good performance would look like. Use that as a starting point for agreeing what someone needs to practise and how you'll review their progress.

How to read a grade profile

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Building Future Readiness

Evidence Informed Delivery

Leading and Empowering

Communicating and Collaborating

Each profile describes the expectations for a particular grade.

What the capability approach adds

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Earlier competency model

Management & Delivery of Results

Organise work and take responsibility for agreed objectives. Put checks in place to maintain quality.

Current capability profile

Evidence Informed Delivery · Delivering Excellence

Plan and prioritise work, and track progress and quality. Seek feedback and check whether the work achieved the intended outcome.

Both describe what good work looks like. The capability profile makes feedback and evaluation more explicit.

Breakout discussion | 6 minutes

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Open the HEO comparison handout before joining your Zoom breakout room.

Compare the two descriptions. What is familiar, and what does the capability profile make more explicit?

Choose one capability that matters in your work. Give an example of what someone would do to show it.

Choose a spokesperson. Bring back one observation and one workplace example.

When a team has to work differently

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Your team is asked to take on a new priority while keeping its existing work on track. Some of the work depends on other teams, and colleagues have different levels of experience with the tasks they're being asked to take on.

How would you decide what to change and what support people need?

Building Future Readiness

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Work out what people need to learn before taking on unfamiliar tasks. Consider where a digital or AI tool could help and where people still need to exercise judgement.

Evidence Informed Delivery

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Use evidence about demand and capacity to decide what to prioritise. Check whether existing work stays on track as the new work gets under way.

Leading and Empowering

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Agree who can take responsibility for the new tasks and what decisions they can make. Give people support while they build experience.

Communicating and Collaborating

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Agree what each team will deliver and when. Decide how to raise problems early so that other teams can act.

How the dimensions work together

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Early checks show existing work is slipping. The manager uses that evidence to reset priorities and agree where staff need support. The teams involved revise what they will deliver to each other.

Your assigned dimension | 10-minute breakout

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Your room will be assigned one capability dimension. Choose a role or team you know, or use the team-change example from slide 14.

Agree one action that demonstrates your dimension. Explain how a second dimension helps that action succeed.

Choose a spokesperson. Bring back a one-minute example explaining the action and the difference it would make.

What would we see in practice

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What would someone do? How would that make a difference to the work?

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Morning break



Back at 11.15

The same change at different levels

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One team is asked to take on a new priority while keeping its existing work on track. The same change is now being introduced across several teams, each with different workloads and skills.

How do the decisions change when you’re responsible for one team or coordinating the response across several?

What an HEO might do

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Reorganise work within the team and agree who needs support with unfamiliar tasks. Check whether existing work stays on track as the team takes on the new priority.

What an AP might do

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Agree priorities across teams and decide where limited support is most needed. Check whether the response is working across teams and act on issues they cannot resolve individually.

Using the comparison in development

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Someone who has helped their team take on a new priority could coordinate one part of the change with another team. Agree what they can decide, who can support them and how you will review progress.

What a capability question can explore

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"Tell me about a time your team took on a new priority while keeping existing work on track. What did you do personally?"

"What information helped you decide what to prioritise?"

What can we tell from this answer

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"I reorganised the team's work to take on the new priority. The team met its existing deadlines."

What would you ask next to understand the person's actions and the evidence behind their decisions?

Case workshop | 20-minute breakout

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Read your room’s assigned case. Agree a recommendation and the evidence supporting it.

Connect two capability dimensions to the actions you recommend. Decide who would act and when you would review the result.

Choose a spokesperson and someone to take brief notes on paper or in their own document.

Back in the main room, give a one-minute spoken report using your notes.

Case 1 | A faster reply, but is the issue resolved?

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A central support team helps local offices resolve requests they cannot deal with themselves. The dashboard shows that 9 in 10 requests receive a reply within two working days. Local offices say they still chase answers, and some people using the service have had to explain the same issue more than once.

The service manager wants to shorten the reply target. The team has four weeks to improve the service with the staff it already has.

What would you change first? What evidence would tell you the service had improved for the people using it?

Case 2 | Who is the grant scheme reaching?

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A public body has piloted a grant scheme to widen access to community activities. Most awards went to organisations with paid staff. Smaller volunteer-led groups said they struggled to provide the same level of detail in their applications.

A senior decision-maker wants to extend the scheme nationally within the same budget. You can keep a single application process or test a simpler route for smaller grants.

What would you recommend, and what does the decision-maker need to know before agreeing to it?

Case 3 | Is the team ready to launch?

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A new HR system is due to go live in six weeks. It will change how 600 employees submit requests and how managers approve them. Training completion is at 95%. In a practice exercise, only 12 of 30 managers completed a routine approval without help. Some staff who work away from a desk also reported difficulty accessing the system.

The launch date has been announced. The sponsor wants your recommendation in two weeks. Would you launch for everyone, start with some teams or delay? What would you need to see before making that recommendation?

Case 4 | One change, several organisations

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A government department, a public agency and a local authority need to explain an upcoming change to a service they all help deliver. The department sets the policy, the agency runs the service and local authority staff answer questions from the public.

The change takes effect in three weeks. Staff are already getting questions, but the organisations are giving different answers about what will change and when. Each organisation has its own approval process.

What should the organisations agree together before they brief staff and inform the public? Who will own that work?

Breakout discussion | 20 minutes

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Agree your recommendation and keep brief notes. Use evidence from your case and connect two dimensions to specific actions.

You will receive new information partway through. Decide whether it changes your recommendation.

Prepare your one-minute spoken report. Include who would act and when you would review progress.

Case feedback | One minute per group

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Your spokesperson gives the group’s recommendation and the evidence behind it.

Explain how two capability dimensions appear in the actions you propose.

Finish with who would act and when you would review progress.

What changed the decision

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Which new information changed your recommendation?

Where would you use the same reasoning in your own work?

Development conversations

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Start with a specific piece of work. Agree what good performance would look like.

From case studies to development

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We have used the framework to make decisions about services and change. Now we will use it to help a colleague strengthen their capability through everyday work.

A colleague produces accurate reports but repeatedly misses shared deadlines. Other teams get little warning. The colleague says requests arrive late and priorities change.

Use a development conversation to understand what is happening and agree what the colleague and manager will each do to improve delivery.

Paired practice in Zoom breakout rooms

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12.40–12.54: 14 minutes, including moving into and out of rooms.

First minute: choose Person A and Person B. Use the reporting scenario and capability reference sheet.

Round 1, 6 minutes: A is the manager, B is the colleague. Have a four-minute development conversation, then give two minutes of feedback.

Round 2, 6 minutes: swap roles and repeat. Agree an action for each person and a review date. Keep brief personal notes.

Final minute: return to the main room. Be ready to share one useful question or agreed action.

Back in the main room: development debrief

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12.54–13.00: six-minute discussion in the main Zoom room.

The purpose is to see how the framework helps turn an everyday work issue into a specific development action, with support from the manager.

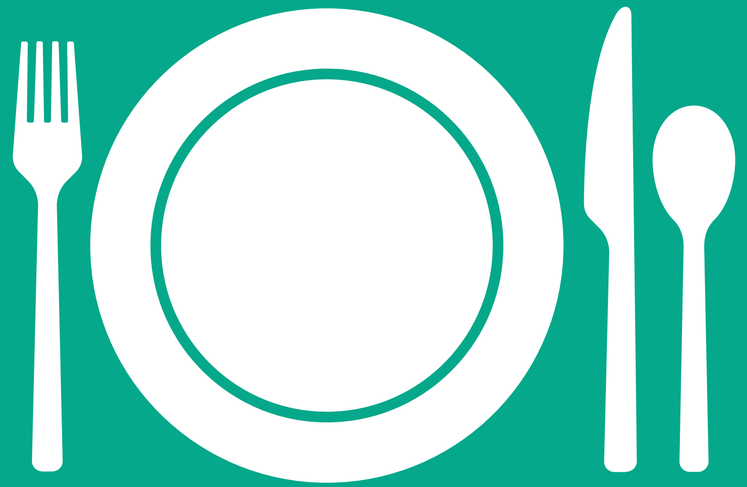
Which question helped you understand the issue? What did the colleague agree to do, and what support did the manager agree to provide?

Connect your agreed action to a capability. How would you review whether it helped?

We will hear a few brief contributions, using your personal notes.

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Lunch



Back at 14.00

This afternoon: putting capability to work

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This morning we explored what capability means and how to recognise it in everyday work. This afternoon we will use that understanding in your own role.

Choose a practical activity: identify skills and development needs, or design interview questions that reveal relevant evidence.

After the activities, we will explore how to get support for a small change in your workplace.

You will leave with a first step to take and a way to review whether it helps. The focus remains on evidence of what people can do and the support they need.

Choose an application lab

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A | Skills audit. What can people already do and what support would help?

B | Interview design. What question would help a panel see relevant evidence?

Type A or B in chat. Choose the activity that’s more useful in your work.

Skills audit: Delivering Excellence

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Use the HEO reference handout. Focus on Delivering Excellence, within Evidence Informed Delivery.

A team is introducing a new grant process. Your task is to establish whether staff can check eligibility accurately and explain their decision.

Agree what good work looks like and what evidence would show it. Decide how you would distinguish independent performance from a need for support or an opportunity to practise.

Choose one development step. State what you would review afterwards to see whether it helped.

Interview design: Delivering Excellence

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Use the HEO reference handout. Focus on Delivering Excellence, within Evidence Informed Delivery.

Your candidate is applying for a role involving service improvement. Write one opening interview question and one follow-up to explore this capability.

Look for evidence of what the candidate personally did, how they used information to make a decision and whether the improvement worked.

Test your questions with someone in your group. Refine them if the answer leaves the candidate’s contribution unclear.

Breakout rooms: your worked example

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14.09–14.27: 18 minutes, including return. Join the room for your chosen activity, A or B.

Appoint a spokesperson and someone to keep brief notes on paper or in their own document. Prepare a one-minute spoken report.

A, skills audit: show one eligibility-check task, the evidence of good work, and a development step with a review point.

B, interview design: share your opening question and follow-up. Explain what evidence your test answer revealed and what remained unclear.

Return to the main room by 14.27. We will hear an example from each activity.

Lab debrief

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What did your example allow you to establish?

What evidence would you still need?

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Comfort break



Back at 14.40

Using the framework to plan development

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14.40–14.48: main-room discussion. This example prepares you to build your own plan.

Use the relevant grade profile to choose a capability expectation. Agree what good performance looks like in your work.

Example: HEO Delivering Excellence, within Evidence Informed Delivery. Colleagues practise checking grant eligibility and explaining decisions, with protected time and feedback.

After two weeks, review a fresh independent sample. Compare decision accuracy and explanations with the starting point, then agree further support.

Your plan: one change in your own work

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14.48–15.00: 12 minutes of individual planning in the main room. Keep your plan in your notebook or own document.

Choose one work issue within your influence and one capability that would help. You can build on today’s activity or use your own example.

Describe what people will practise and what good work will look like. Name who needs to agree the support or time.

Record your starting evidence. Decide what you will review, when you will review it and what improvement you would look for.

Testing your plan with the group

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15.00–15.10: main-room discussion. A few volunteers share their existing plan, taking about one minute each.

Use this prompt: “I want to improve… The capability is… People will practise… The support I need is… At the review on…, I will compare… with our starting point.”

As you listen: is the practice clear and realistic? Will the proposed evidence show whether the work has improved? Suggest one useful adjustment.

Everyone: use the feedback to strengthen your own plan. Check that you have a named person to approach for support and a review date.

Today’s learning: what you can apply

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Explain why the framework matters and how capability builds on familiar competency approaches.

Read a grade profile and recognise how the four capability dimensions work together in everyday work.

Use relevant evidence to support decisions. Apply the framework to development needs or the design of interview questions.

Agree supported practice through a development conversation. Build a workplace plan and review evidence of improvement.

Your first step after today

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15.12–15.15: three minutes in the main room. Use the same plan you have just developed.

My first step will be… by…

I will speak to… to agree the support needed.

I will review… on… to see whether the work has improved.

Keep this commitment with your plan. You may share your first step in chat.

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Thank you

Questions and discussion