

## Case Study // Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service - Strengths-based Recruitment for a Specialist Role



**HAMPSHIRE  
FIRE AND  
RESCUE  
SERVICE**

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) provides emergency response to the county of Hampshire, including the major cities of Portsmouth and Southampton. In addition to attending every type of fire and working extensively on fire prevention, Hampshire's firefighters use their professional skills attending road traffic accidents, hazardous material incidents, rescue scenarios, animals in distress, and environmental pollution incidents. Supporting the work of the front line service, HFRS also employ many civilian staff who work in administrative and support functions, including community safety and fire prevention.

### The Challenge

HFRS were looking to recruit a Community Risk Intelligence Analyst. The nature of the role involved working with internal and external stakeholders to develop strategies aimed at the prevention of community risk, particularly through fire, and to add value to the service delivery process. This is a critical role that helps the service understand the risks in the communities and supports proactive prevention activities. Notably, this role was newly developed in HFRS, and as a result no prior data existed as to what might constitute successful performance.

### Capp's Approach

Capp worked with HFRS to develop a deep understanding of the role and the outcomes the role-holder would be expected to deliver. This involved:

- Interviewing key stakeholders and running focus groups to define the role outcomes
- Designing a strengths-based recruitment advert that was run in the local press
- Developing the strengths-based interview for the role
- Training the recruiting managers in how to deliver this interview process successfully.

### Outcome

HFRS attracted a strong field of candidates from which the selection could be made, and the strengths-based interview process proved highly effective at differentiating the best candidate - as the testimonial of the successful candidate shows.

Sophie Turner, the successfully appointed candidate for the position of Community Risk Intelligence Analyst, describes the process:

"It was a very brief advert - unlike others in the newspaper - but as soon as I saw it, I knew that I had the strengths for the role. I felt that the interview was extremely fair and personalised in terms of understanding my strengths and not just talking about my experiences. If I didn't succeed in the interview, I knew that it wouldn't because I wasn't good enough, but rather because the fit wasn't right for me."

Mark Rayner, Head of Training and Development Manager, HFRS, said:

*"Working with Capp has enabled the service to move beyond our normal competence-based approach to recruitment and really understand the key elements of this role from a strengths perspective. This has helped recruit a very effective person for the role who has fitted into the service extremely well and has quickly become a respected member of one of our key teams. The strengths-based interview was a revelation for our managers, and our HR team, who saw first-hand the individual strengths coming through clearly as the interview progressed."*

