

Fast Stream Assessment Centre (FSAC) 2021 Guide to Candidates

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Congratulations! You've reached the **Fast Stream Assessment Centre (FSAC)**.

This guide tells you what to expect on the day and what happens afterwards.

What is FSAC?

FSAC is a half-day online assessment centre that selects graduates with the calibre and potential to join the Fast Stream. Research shows that assessment centres make more accurate predictions about how you will perform at work than other recruitment methods. Fast Stream standards are high and to have reached the assessment centre is a significant achievement. You now have the chance to show that you have the skills and personal qualities to be a successful Fast Streamer.

Our aim is to measure each candidate's potential against set criteria and you will be completing, remotely, a variety of exercises, which include:

- a virtual written exercise
- a virtual leadership exercise
- a virtual group exercise

Exercise completion will be undertaken remotely, on your own laptop or computer and the exercise content will be presented to you via our virtual assessment centre platform.

You'll join a virtual meeting room to complete your exercise preparation, from here you'll be placed into other meeting rooms to undertake your oral assessments with FSAC assessors.

We want you to have a positive experience and we are here to support you throughout the process.

Please email us at faststream.applicationsupport@cabinetoffice.gov.uk, if you need to discuss alternative IT arrangements. We have dedicated virtual assistants available who can offer advice in this area.

How can I prepare?

You will need to complete some admin tasks prior to attending FSAC and these are listed below:

ID checks

Essential documents:

Prior to attending FSAC you will need to email us a copy of your Passport Personal details page. See below an example image taken from the Gov.uk website.

IT Checks

Now that the entire FSAC is run online, there are some logistical IT things you'll want to get right from the get-go. This should prevent any unwanted surprises on the day.

Here's an IT checklist to consider:

- ✓ We will be using **Google Meet** to communicate with you on the day and **a modern internet browser is required for Google Meet to run.**

We recommend using the current version of one of the browsers listed below:

Google Chrome Browser [Download the latest version](#)

Mozilla Firefox. [Download the latest version](#)

Microsoft Edge. [Download the latest version](#)

Apple Safari.

For the best user experience at FSAC Google Chrome is highly recommended.

Internet Explorer is not supported.

More information on Google Meet can be found on the [Google Meet Help Centre](#).

- ✓ Check your microphone and webcam are working.
- ✓ Ensure your laptop or computer has a strong WiFi connection. On the day if you're disconnected from the internet we might need to contact you via phone, so if possible have a mobile device available and fully charged.
- ✓ Arrange to complete your FSAC assessment in a quiet room with plug sockets and internet connection. Plugging your laptop into a charging socket will prevent it from running out of battery on the day.

Read the Briefing Email

You will receive a briefing email from your dedicated test administrator the day before your event (around 15:30). This will include some key information you need to consider, such as :

- The name and contact details of your test administrator.
- Key instructions about emailing in your Photographic ID ahead of FSAC.
- The URL virtual meeting room link you will need to click on to access FSAC on the day.

If you haven't received the email by 16:00 please check your junk or spam folder, if it's not in your junk folder please contact us via email to let us know at faststream.applicationsupport@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Other useful information

- We recommend having some paper, pens and a calculator available.
- You should wear what you would during an in-person assessment centre and what makes you feel comfortable.
- Sit somewhere with a strong WiFi connection and where you won't be distracted. Decide on an appropriate location beforehand so you won't be fretting about interruptions or unusual camera angles, this will mean your focus will be on your performance on the day.
- Make sure you can be seen in front of the camera.
- Try to remember the behaviours that your performance is measured against and have those in mind during the FSAC to help direct your performance.
- If you require reasonable adjustments and have shared this information with us at the application stage, we will implement the necessary adjustments required to ensure you can fully participate on the day.
- Read this guide carefully. It sets the scene and gives examples of the exercises you'll come across on the day.
- Find out about what civil servants, and particularly Fast Streamers, do. The Fast Stream website www.faststream.gov.uk has a lot of information on this.
- Get a good night's sleep before the event.

Please email us at faststream.applicationsupport@cabinetoffice.gov.uk, if you have any concerns regarding the above information. For example if you don't have a computer, or a quiet place to take your assessments please get in touch. We are here to help you through the process and can offer advice in this area.

Attending the Virtual FSAC

On the day

Specific event start and end times will be communicated in your FSAC invite. The majority of morning sessions will run from 8:00am to 11:40am and the afternoon sessions will run from 12:10pm to 15:50pm.

To join FSAC, you click the URL Google meeting room link previously sent to you in your briefing email. If you are due to attend the morning session you should click on the link at 08:00 and if you are scheduled to attend an afternoon session you should click on the link at 12:10. Please note these rooms will remain locked until the event begins.

You'll then be placed into a virtual meeting room with your test administrator and other candidates in your group. You'll need to have your microphone and camera switched on so we can communicate with you and complete the registration stage.

We'll brief you on the running of the day and give you access to your schedule and our virtual assessment centre platform.

It is from the virtual meeting room that you'll complete your exercise preparation and this will be timed by your test administrator. For the leadership and group exercise you will then join another meeting room to take part in your oral assessment with the FSAC assessors.

Please be reassured your test administrator is here to help and guide you through the process. It's important to have your phone on hand in case you lose connection and we need to contact you offline. If you've done everything you can beforehand to ensure a good WiFi connection and you are still disconnected from the internet, don't worry. These things happen and we'll work with you to create a solution.

To ensure your FSAC experience runs as smoothly as possible we have summarised some key points below:

- ✓ Complete your assessment in a quiet room with minimal distractions.
- ✓ You will need a stable Wifi connection.
- ✓ Download the latest version of one of the internet browsers listed above - we recommend Google Chrome for the best user experience.
- ✓ Check that the camera and mic are working properly on your computer.
- ✓ Have a laptop charger or plug socket nearby to plug in your computer if required.
- ✓ Have a fully charged mobile phone on hand in case you experience connectivity issues on the day. We may have to ring you to resolve the issue.
- ✓ You will need your login details to the Fast Stream application system.

- ✓ You will be completing a written exercise in Microsoft Word and we will email you the template.
- ✓ You will need access to your email inbox to receive your FSAC schedule and virtual URL room links.
- ✓ Have some paper, pens and a calculator available.
- ✓ Plan ahead and turn your computer on early so you are ready for the assessment centre to start on time. If you join FSAC late it's highly unlikely you will be able to take part on the day.

While at FSAC

Below are some useful tips to consider when attending FSAC:

- Stay relaxed and try to enjoy the day.
- Be yourself. There is no such thing as a typical Fast Streamer. The Civil Service is committed to increasing the diversity of the Fast Stream intake.
- Remember that assessors can only give credit for what you say and do. They are not trying to trip you up; they want you to do well and show what you are capable of.
- Remember that you are not competing with others in your group. You are all being assessed against an independent standard. All of you or none of you may be successful.
- Go into each exercise with a positive frame of mind. It is hard to do well in every exercise. In any case, you may not be the best judge of your own performance and the process is designed so that, if you do less well in one exercise, you have a chance to perform better in another.
- Read the exercise instructions and follow them carefully. If you are unsure of something, ask before the exercise begins. Don't feel embarrassed about doing so.
- All of the exercises require you to work reasonably quickly. This is to reflect the demands of Fast Stream jobs. Make sure you keep an eye on the clock and use your time as effectively as possible.

Who are the assessors?

“As assessors, our aim is for you to have a great candidate experience that gives you the opportunity to perform at your very best.”

Phil Wilson, Chief Assessor

Each group of candidates will be seen by specially trained assessors. These assessors are mainly civil servants. There will also be occupational psychologists with experience in assessing candidates, as well as some recently retired civil servants. We aim to select assessors that are as diverse as possible to represent the wider population.

What will be assessed?

Fair and open recruitment is important to us. We will assess you solely on your performance in the exercises.

The assessors will have no information about you except your name. They will not have seen your application form or your scores from earlier stages in the selection process. They will not know which university you attended or are attending (if you did go to university). Nor will they know whether you have applied before.

The Civil Service is committed to equal opportunities, so your socio-economic or ethnic background, gender, disability, appearance, age, sexual orientation, accent, political views, religion, personal beliefs or previous employment play no part in our final decision. We want you to feel free to express your point of view throughout the assessment.

You will be assessed against the following behaviours - if you wish to read the full criteria click on the following [link](#) and read the Level 3 descriptors.

Seeing the Big Picture

Understand how your role fits with and supports organisational objectives. Recognise the wider organisational priorities and ensure work is in the national interest.

Changing and Improving

Seek out opportunities to create effective change and suggest innovative ideas for improvement. Review ways of working, including seeking and providing feedback.

Making Effective Decisions

Use evidence and knowledge to support accurate, expert decisions and advice. Carefully consider alternative options, implications and risks of decisions.

Communicating and Influencing

Communicate purpose and direction with clarity, integrity and enthusiasm. Respect the needs, responses and opinions of others.

Working Together

Form effective partnerships and relationships with people both internally and externally, from a range of diverse backgrounds, sharing information, resources and support.

Developing Self and Others

Focus on continuous learning and development for self, others and the organisation as a whole.

Top tip

“Try to relax, sleep well the night before. Remember you will not do as well on all the activities so try hard to compartmentalise them and do not let a perceived bad performance in one affect you in the next – let it go.”

Maya Desai, Fast Streamer

Approaching the FSAC – a Fast Streamer’s view

“The FSAC can sometimes be a somewhat worrying prospect. All those exercises packed into a half day; all those activities provide numerous opportunities to trip up or just not do yourself justice. The more you think about the tasks the worse it becomes.

In preparing for my FSAC I received loads of great advice, such as: Don’t worry if you feel you performed better in some tasks than others. This is to be expected. Just don’t dwell on those you wish you could redo and focus on the next task ahead.

To save you from the hours of worrying I am going to let you into the best secret for success for the FSAC I was given. It’s not as practical as some of the advice you will hear and maybe harder to do when you first hear it, but I am convinced that when I was in your shoes it helped me pass and most importantly get this job:

Enjoy it.

Enjoy the experience. Enjoy the task that you are doing. And by enjoying it you will give it your best shot.

Having done this myself I know it works. I left the assessment centre exhausted, but reflecting on how it had been a great learning experience for me and I had done all I could to show not only how much I wanted a place on the scheme but also that I would also be capable of doing it.”

Jill Young, Fast Streamer

FSAC - a taste of life as a Fast Streamer

As well as giving us a chance to assess you, FSAC will offer you the opportunity to sample the life of a Fast Streamer.

To give you a feel for the type of work a Fast Streamer does, you will find that the tasks given to you whether in the group meeting, written exercise or individual meeting exercise, will give you a flavour of the varied work you might do as a Fast Streamer. They will show you the kinds of tasks which you might do from the start of your career.

The Group Exercise

This oral exercise is designed to test your ability to make decisions, to work with others, to show leadership and to communicate well. You will be given **25 minutes** to prepare for the exercise by yourself.

In your group of **4, 5 or 6**, you will be presented with a fictitious scenario where you and your colleagues form a task group set up to advise on a government objective or commitment. You will be given several options, typically in the form of different proposals or projects. The group will have **up to 35 minutes** (depending on group size) to agree which one of these should be recommended.

You will receive a brief summarising the overall scenario, which gives detailed information on the main issues and on the position you are representing. All group members will have the same core information about the scenario and an overview of the options. You will each also have **further information on two of the options; one option** you should **strongly support** as your first preference, and the **other option** you should **support** as your second preference. Your task is to gain the best outcome for the position you are representing as well as for the whole group.

All the information will be presented on your computer and will be provided in a variety of formats, which may include emails, videos, articles and data. You will also need paper to write notes on and you can annotate or highlight the text on your computer or laptop. You will be able to refer to this information and notes during the group discussion.

Tips on handling the exercise:

- Group members are regarded as equal; do not to appoint someone to chair the meeting.
- Not only will you be expected to present a strong case, you will also need to listen to what the other candidates have to say and then negotiate to come to an agreed position. All members of the group are expected to contribute to the discussion on all of the projects.
- Keep to the information in the briefs, remembering that the scenario is fictitious and avoid introducing information or assertions that contradict evidence from the brief.
- You are not competing with other members of your group. Seek to establish cooperative relationships within other team members, rather than try to score points off each other.

Your assessor will be evaluating your performance against three of the Civil Service behaviours:

- Making Effective Decisions
- Working Together
- Communicating and Influencing

Example of the Group Exercise

The following gives a flavour of this exercise – the actual exercise differs in content.

Recovering from Disaster

You are part of a task group in the Department for Foreign Affairs, Support and Development (FASD) and have been asked to review six aid options for supporting the small British overseas territory of Pérola Verde which suffered a hurricane six months ago. The UK government plans to commit £500 million in one “focused strategic intervention” to create a better long-term future for the island’s inhabitants, selecting one of the options.

Each of you represents a different government department and have been told to **strongly support** one specific option to the group, and another option to **support**, as your second preference.

From:	Christine Mills, Head of Strategic Development Projects
To:	You
Subject:	Pérola Verde aid project

In anticipation of your meeting, I thought it would be useful to share some background information on the current situation and what we're aiming to achieve through the intervention.

The disaster has led to many questioning the value that Britain brings to the Commonwealth, so it is important that we are seen to be supporting those most in need.

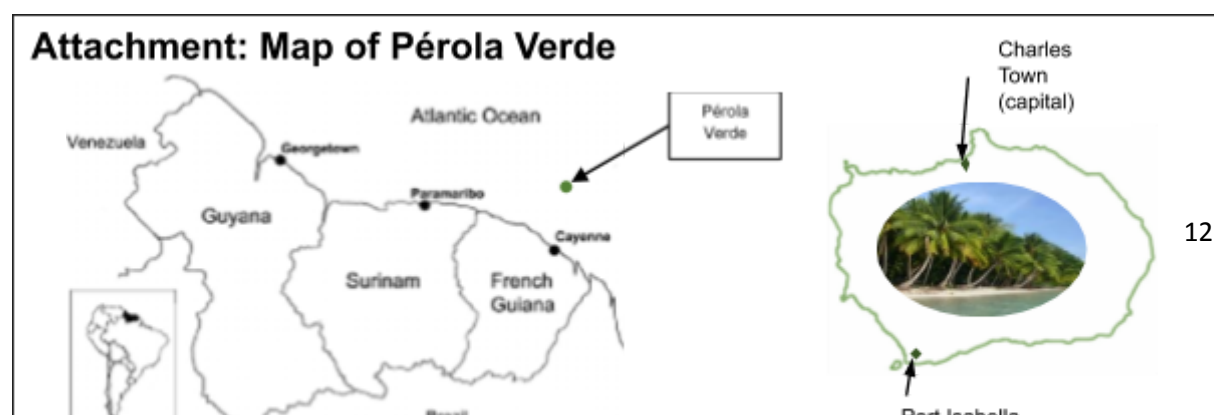
Much of the hurricane damage was made worse by inadequacies in building construction, emergency services, transportation, power supply as well as a breakdown in law and order. There is also a high level of corruption, with a lot of previous aid given to improve the island's infrastructure wasted.




There are various criteria you may use to evaluate the options, but these are not an exhaustive list. These include: resilience to future disasters; economic benefit to the country; promoting the UK's prosperity and reputation; complexity; and risk of failure.




I have also provided you with a map of the island and a link to a short documentary, which gives you information on the historical, social and economic background of the country. **[Please note the documentary link is not provided in this example exercise]**

I look forward to hearing your recommendations.

Christine



Project	Key Characteristics	Current Provision	Concerns Raised
<p data-bbox="129 772 229 801">Housing</p> 	<p data-bbox="312 600 751 965">10,000 homes re-built using island labour. Homes gifted or sold at discounted price. Most damaged areas of capital relocated further inland on land less prone to flooding. All homes built /strengthened with new polymer material (designed by UK University) which protects against wind/water damage and is more hygienic and secure.</p>	<p data-bbox="810 600 1118 887">Over 65% of housing classified as ‘inadequate’ with poor ventilation, built with poor quality materials, often located on flood plains with little protection from weather conditions. Over ¼ homes uninhabitable due to hurricane.</p>	<p data-bbox="1179 600 1485 887">Too focused on the capital – what about supporting other poorer regions? Some residents may be unwilling to move – will the Government force them? Building materials are unattractive – would people want to live in the homes?</p>
<p data-bbox="113 1137 245 1196">Emergency Services</p> 	<p data-bbox="312 987 751 1379">Creation of a volunteer police and fire & rescue service (F&RS) in rural areas, trained to provide basic emergency care. Volunteers will receive a financial allowance. Provision of UK designed Multiple Terrain Vehicles for police and F&R (at a discounted price) to navigate difficult terrain. Provision of additional medical and fire supplies throughout the country, including a new hospital.</p>	<p data-bbox="810 987 1118 1312">Limited police service seen as “complacent and lazy”; most crime (petty in nature) is rarely investigated. F&RS service in capital, but limited in remote regions with slow response times. Basic free medical care for islanders, but long waiting times.</p>	<p data-bbox="1179 987 1477 1245">How will the volunteer service be run and monitored? Scope for bribery and new equipment potentially being mis-used. How will volunteer service work with existing force? Will they be accepted?</p>
<p data-bbox="113 1541 245 1599">Anti-Corruption</p> 	<p data-bbox="312 1447 751 1783">Build infrastructure for “cashless” economy to enable digital transfer of money. Provision of 6G mobile communication technology (built using local workers). Distribution of cheap mobile phones, with cashless payment app. Support for poor people to open mobile bank accounts and get access to financial services.</p>	<p data-bbox="810 1447 1118 1738">Endemic corruption has meant that 40% of pre-hurricane aid did not reach target population. Very low business investment into the country. Local businesses often have to pay bribes to officials to operate.</p>	<p data-bbox="1179 1447 1485 1693">How accepting will locals be of a ‘cashless’ system? Many local banks, shop keepers and those living on tips may be resistant. Perhaps better to assume corruption is endemic and make island a tax haven?</p>

<p>Education</p> 	<p>Provision of immersive virtual classrooms to all students aged 16+ to increase accessibility to remote regions and improve standard of educational qualifications. All students provided with tablet computers.</p> <p>Increase number of scholarships to UK universities.</p> <p>Measures aimed at reducing unemployment by improving skills and qualifications of islanders.</p>	<p>Very poor standards of education, due to poor funding of state schools and shortage of teachers. Most students leave school at 16.</p> <p>Most skilled roles on the island are filled by migrants.</p> <p>Most of the population do not have internationally recognised qualifications.</p>	<p>Will scholarship beneficiaries return to the island?</p> <p>Appropriateness of virtual classrooms and providing tablets? Potential for mis-use.</p> <p>Would closer educational links with neighbouring countries be better?</p>
<p>Transport</p> 	<p>Build new deep water dock for cruise and larger freight ships.</p> <p>Extend airport to take larger aircraft.</p> <p>Extensive road building programme between Charles Town and Port Isabella.</p> <p>Additional funding provided by consortium of UK based travel and holiday companies to expand tourism on the island.</p> <p>Mix of local and skilled migrant workers needed to fill roles.</p>	<p>Island lacks a deep water port.</p> <p>Small airfield – cannot handle freight or intercontinental passenger aircraft.</p> <p>Single track road between Charles Town and Port Isabella.</p> <p>High costs of manufactured goods due to import costs.</p>	<p>Cruise ships don't contribute huge amount to local economy.</p> <p>Tourism is underdeveloped on island – may be better to focus on another industry?</p> <p>How beneficial will use of migrant labour be to the economy?</p>
<p>Energy Supply</p> 	<p>Improve energy network through renewables (wave, wind and solar).</p> <p>Remote communities have opportunity to set up energy collectives.</p> <p>Materials for energy infrastructure provided by UK company at a discounted price.</p> <p>Will lead to improved accessibility, reliability and affordability of electricity.</p>	<p>Electricity outages are very common especially in poor areas.</p> <p>Main power station runs on oil built in 1960s. Oil now imported from Venezuela.</p> <p>High electricity costs.</p>	<p>New equipment (e.g. sea wave platforms, wind turbines) may damage wildlife and unique eco-systems, and will be unattractive.</p> <p>High repair and maintenance long-term costs.</p>

Top tip

“It’s really important to remember that this isn’t a competition, it’s a time for you to show that you can influence other people in a positive manner. Making sure that everyone feels involved is a good way to start.”

Stephen Dick, Fast Streamer

The Written Exercise

This written task is designed to test your ability to develop ideas, relating to a government-type initiative and to identify practical issues about implementing those ideas.

You will have **50 minutes** to read some background information and then respond to the scenario.

You will receive a brief summarising a government initiative and then two shortlisted options to take this initiative forward. You should choose one of these options and then record your answer on a template.

All the information will be presented on your computer. You can write notes on paper or you can annotate or highlight the text on your computer. You will be able to refer to this information during the written task.

Tips for on handling the exercise

- You should choose the option that you feel most comfortable developing (from the two options provided). Our assessment does not depend on which one you select.
- You are not expected to show specialist knowledge about the subject area. Nor should you feel constrained by what you may know about current policy and practice in this area.
- We are looking for new and imaginative ideas to tackle the issues, but at the same time the ideas should be practical and realistic.
- You should use the information in the brief and explain any further assumptions you make that influence your proposals.
- Express yourself clearly and succinctly in writing – you may use bullet points but they should be full sentences and also grammatical.

Assessment criteria

Your assessor will evaluate your written response against three of the Civil Service behaviours:

- Making Effective Decisions
- Changing and Improving
- Communicating and Influencing

Example of the Written Exercise

The following material will give you a flavour of the exercise, however the actual exercise differs in content.

Background

This exercise, set in 2024 under a newly elected government, is entirely fictitious and has been designed solely for use at FSAC. For the purposes of the exercise you will be acting as a strategy advisor as part of a new department created by a recently elected Government. Your job is to develop ideas for implementing major policy decisions that have been made by Government and to review how they may be put into practice.

Your Task

Your task is to select **one** of the two options within the scenario set out in the attached paper, then record in writing:

- (i) your ideas for different ways of tackling the remit set out in your chosen option
- (ii) the practical issues raised in implementing these ideas in terms of risks and how you would overcome those risks

Scenario Healthy Living

Introduction

Over the last several decades the UK population has experienced growing affluence, more mechanisation at work and at home and greater availability of cars for personal transport. There are fewer jobs that require physical effort and travel to work is much less likely to be on foot or bicycle than in less affluent times. The time spent at work has fallen and leisure time has increased, though this is much more likely to be spent on non-physical activities than sports or other types of exercise. Increased spending power has been used by a large proportion of the population to consume greater amounts of food and alcohol which in many cases has led to obesity and alcohol-related ailments. Studies have shown that there has been a long term decline in physical fitness of the population and a rise in the numbers who will require additional medical attention because of their unhealthy lifestyles.

Many developed countries have seen similar growth in affluence and are experiencing the same long term effects on the health of their populations. However, in other developed countries these effects are less pronounced and their people are much more likely to exercise restraint in food and alcohol consumption and in some cases take much more regular exercise.

The Government wishes to launch at least one major initiative to encourage healthy living. It recognises the difficulty of persuading people to change their habits and that some will consider this intrusive. It therefore requires some ideas that will capture the imagination of those most at risk of unhealthy living and of those around them who might support them in changing. It has already considered a wide range of

approaches and has narrowed down the choices to two options (**just one is provided here for this example**).

Option 1 – Signing up to healthy living

In the 19th century there was a movement that encouraged people to sign a “pledge” that they would never drink alcohol. While this would be unlikely to have much effect in the UK today, the concept of “signing up” to healthy living may well be an effective way of encouraging people to adopt healthier habits in their eating, drinking and exercise. People are much more likely to make and keep to what initially are difficult changes in their lifestyle if they feel part of a community following the same path. There have been some successes with this approach when applied to losing weight or giving up smoking.

The Government would like to consider ways of encouraging people to join an extended community pledged to adopt healthy living. It recognises the difficulty of getting this started but believes that when sufficient numbers were taking part it would be self-sustaining. The introduction of such a scheme would need to capture people’s imagination and be sufficiently attractive to compensate for what might be initial discomfort.

You will need to come up with ideas for encouraging people to sign up to healthy living. For example this could be a large scale social media campaign. You should then indicate your ideas and also explain the main risks and issues that would be raised if they were implemented and how you would deal with these.

The Leadership Exercise

This is a one-to-one role play exercise in which you play the part of a Fast Streamer in a UK government department who has recently been given the responsibility for leading on an important initiative, task or project. You will have 25 minutes to review various documents and videos relating to the progress of this initiative, following which you will have a 25-minute meeting with the assessor who will be playing the role of someone with a particular interest in its success.

The initiative is typically multi-faceted, complex and in places, is behind schedule or underperforming. The exercise is designed to test your ability to take on a leadership role by dealing with team members, stakeholders and the various issues they present, including handling unexpected problems, and identifying any other actions that need to be carried out to ensure delivery against the strategic objectives.

All the information will be presented on your computer and will be provided in a variety of formats, which may include emails, videos, articles and data. You will also need paper to write notes on and you can annotate the text on your computer. You will be able to refer to this information on your computer and notes during the exercise.

Tips on handling the exercise

- Once you have watched the videos, make an initial skim through the rest of the material so you know how much you have to read and how to allocate your limited time.
- There is sufficient information to enable you to do well in this exercise, but you will still need to be able to think on your feet, so prepare yourself for the unexpected and be prepared to think creatively if necessary.

Assessment criteria

Your assessor will be evaluating your performance against the following Civil Service assessment criteria:

- Seeing the Bigger Picture
- Changing and Improving
- Working Together
- Developing Self & Others
- Communicating and Influencing

Example of the Leadership Exercise

The following gives a flavour of this exercise – the actual FSAC exercise differs in content and will be more detailed than the summary set out below.

Communities, not crime

It is October 2027. Violent crime is increasing in cities across the UK; central Government is



working closely with devolved national Governments and Mayors of Britain's major cities to tackle this. You are a Fast Stream Civil Servant recently seconded to the City Administration in Greater Bircaster, a major UK city. Greater Bircaster launched an initiative last year, following a sharp increase in the number of murders and violent street attacks in 2024-25. Your assessor will play the role of a more experienced leader who has been asked to

coach and support you through a critical stage of the project. Your job is to lead a project team of three with the specific objectives of:

- Reducing violent offences to keep people safe through preventing anti-social and criminal behaviour, particularly including drug-related crime.
- Strengthening communities – reducing deprivation, building resilient communities and protecting vulnerable people.

You report to the Deputy Mayor for Policing and are due to meet her tomorrow. She is a strong supporter of the initiative and has pledged to decrease violence on the streets. But, there has been media criticism that the initiative offers little new.

You are the second Fast Streamer to lead this team; your predecessor led it for the first year. Your line manager has suggested that you receive some coaching support from a more experienced manager from another part of the organisation, Chris Higson (who will be played by the assessor), to help you talk through the issues and develop ideas and solutions in preparation for your meeting with the Deputy Mayor.

The information available to you includes the following:

Activity	Key performance indicators (KPIs) to be achieved by end of Year 3 (October 2029) from 2026 baseline.	Status at end of Year 1 (October 2027) ¹
Reduced crime using weapons	Knife crime 15% reduction: gun crime 25% reduction: acid attacks 30% reduction.	Amber – Knife crime up 12%, gun crime 18% down, acid attacks 1% up.
Violence reduction unit	Unit created to coordinate work of education, social work and probation to reduce offending.	Green - Unit in place, meetings held regularly between the three areas.
Witness Protection and Victim Support Schemes	Annual surveys show crime witnesses and victims feel increasingly well supported, so witnesses prepared to come forward to police.	Green – Surveys show 20% increase in Protected Witness satisfaction and 24% in Supported Victim satisfaction.
Stop and search	15% reduced use, better targeted to prevent violent crime; 10% reduction in racial profiling complaints.	Red – Use of stop and search increased 20%, complaints re racial profiling increased 15%.
Community groups set up in high risk areas	New community groups active in 5 high crime areas.	Green – 4 groups in place, 5 th being formed, all overseen by Advisory panel.
Employment	Support to 350 violent ex-offenders & potential violent offenders to find work.	Amber – 75 placements achieved, though 7 have broken down.

¹ KPIs are reviewed on a “traffic light” scheme – Green (on track) Amber (partially on track) Red (problem).

Apart from yourself, there are three members of your immediate team:

- Aslam Aziz, your deputy, is an ex-policeman. Very effective, but focused on Stop and Search and Offensive Weapons to the exclusion of anything else.
- Elaine Souter has worked in administrative roles for many years but new to the team. She came to you this morning in tears to say she had inadvertently sent out email addresses of those receiving help through Victim Support to all those associated with the project. She said that she found Gary, the IT person on the team to be intimidating and unable to explain things clearly.
- Gary Southwell is the IT expert. In response to your question about the security breach he said he found it difficult to understand how Elaine could be so “clueless” about IT; he didn’t see why he should have to make up for her shortcomings. He told you confidentially that he had had some recent health problems which had meant he was less patient than usual.

Public opinion

A 2026 survey of public opinion in Bircaster produced the following results:

Question	Yes	No
Do you feel safer in Bircaster than five years ago?	20%	60%
Do you think that the stop and search policy works well?	40%	20%
Have you personally suffered from a violent crime?	10%	90%

Issues that have emerged include:

- It has become evidently clear that tackling violent crime needs community support in order to involve potential criminals in positive activities.
- Stop and Search (S&S) figures show some racial groups are questioned more than others; the Deputy Mayor pledged to reduce its use but it has increased this year.
- The police insist they are following the guidelines and have thwarted a number of drug related crimes.
- Violent crime has shifted towards younger victims and perpetrators, mostly male on male, often in gangs. Drugs are an important driver, particularly the increasing use of crack cocaine.

Assessor questions

Chris Higson (played by the assessor) will want to ask you a range of questions including; whether you think the initiative is working or not, and why; what you anticipate will be the concerns of the Deputy Mayor and what you might say to reassure her; how you might address some of the potentially negative media impacts associated with the initiative (e.g., the data leak); what you can do to build stronger relationships within and between the community and the police; the actions you need to take to get the project back on track and your ideas for adapting the project focus to make it even more effective in the future. You may also be asked how you might deal with a particularly difficult emerging issue that requires you to think on your feet.

Top tip

“Make the most of your preparation time to ensure that you feel comfortable talking about your ideas. Also, use this time to think of potential questions that the assessor might ask you.

If the assessor asks you something that you have not prepared, don't be afraid to take the time to consider the answer fully. Try to be positive and open to assessor questions, as the questions they ask may help you better develop your ideas, or give you the opportunity to present an angle that you missed.

Finally, remember to breathe! I have a problem with speaking too quickly when I am nervous. If you are similar, try to concentrate on slowing down and speaking clearly, this will help you keep to the allotted time.”

Alisa Harris, Former Fast Streamer

Top tip

“The assessment process is comprehensive, and the exercises are each considered separately, with all relevant assessors involved at different times. No final decision will be made until your performance in all the exercises has been fully evaluated.

The process is designed to be a little challenging and it's rare for a candidate to do well in everything. It's quite possible that you'll feel you haven't performed well in a particular exercise, but no single part of the assessment will rule you in or out. So it makes sense to concentrate on doing your best at each stage and not to dwell on what's happened earlier in the FSAC. Also, when you do FSAC, try to imagine you are already working in the Civil Service and the assessors and other candidates are your colleagues – your mindset and behaviour are then more credible and convincing.”

Phil Wilson, Chief Assessor

What happens after FSAC?

You will receive a report on your performance, regardless of whether you are successful or not. This will contain feedback on how you did in each exercise. You will be able to view your report from the Fast Stream homepage as soon as it becomes available after FSAC.

Please note: Make sure you save or screenshot your feedback report for your personal records as this information will be removed at the end of May 2021 you will not be able to request it after this date as it will no longer be available.

Final Selection Boards

Candidates for the following Fast Stream schemes who are successful at FSAC will be asked to attend a specialist assessment (or Final Selection Board). They will need to show evidence of further skills and particular strengths. Information regarding these specialist assessments will be offered in advance. The schemes are:

- **Diplomatic Service**
- **Houses of Parliament**
- **Science and Engineering**
- **Project Delivery**
- **Economist**
- **Social Research**
- **Operational Research**
- **Statistics**
- **Property**
- **Commercial**
- **Diplomatic Service (Economist)**

Generalist, HR, Finance and Digital, Data and Technology Fast Streams

If you applied for the Generalist, HR, Finance, or Digital, Data and Technology schemes, FSAC is the end of the selection process.

If you are successful, you will receive detailed information about what happens next. This includes a formal job offer, information about the pre-appointment check process and how you will be placed into your first post.

Please email us at faststream.applicationsupport@cabinetoffice.gov.uk, if you have any questions regarding the above information.

Good luck!

www.faststream.gov.uk