

# High Potential Development Scheme (HPDS) Assessment Centre

*national* **AGENCY** POLICING

**Familiarisation Exercise**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### HPDS Assessment Centre Exercises

All HPDS Assessment Centre exercises are based on real policing scenarios – but they have been set in a non-police context. Being able to recognise the policing-relevant skills and tasks within an exercise will help you to formulate your approach.

All HPDS Assessment Centre exercises are designed to assess a particular set of competencies. Thinking about which competencies are being assessed, and how you might demonstrate them effectively is a useful way of preparing for any exercise. Being familiar with the competency areas is useful, but you should not excessively rely on your knowledge of these. How well you *demonstrate* the competencies in carrying out the exercise and how well you complete the tasks overall will be assessed, not your recall of the behavioural descriptors in the competencies. The Candidate Instructions for each exercise will tell you which competencies are being assessed.

### Familiarisation Exercise

This example exercise has been provided for your use, to help you consider how you might approach the types of exercises that will be used at the HPDS Assessment Centre (AC).

The exercise is an HPDS Interactive Exercise in which you as the candidate hold a meeting with two role actors who are acting the roles of the HR Manager and Finance Manager referred to in the exercise. This exercise is of an equivalent level of difficulty to the exercises you will undertake at the HPDS Assessment Centre. Whilst all exercises differ in their content, they all share some of the same features. Each exercise has Candidate Instructions that explain what you are to do in the exercises. Then there are Candidate Materials which contain a series of items which may include emails, letters, newspaper articles, websites,

policy documents, reports and memos. The length of the exercises varies – the one presented here is one of the shortest exercises you will do at the HPDS AC.

### **How to use the Familiarisation Exercise**

Reading through the candidate instructions and candidate materials will give you an insight into what to expect. Think about analogous situations you may have faced in your experiences both inside and outside the Police Service to date and how you approached these. Think about analogous situations that you may have observed Superintendents deal with and how you would approach these situations yourself. Think about how you might approach this exercise and how you would best demonstrate the competencies that are being measured: *Leading Change and Working with Others*.

You may wish to use the exercise to practice your approach. If so, read through the candidate materials within the time allowed and prepare for the exercise as you would for real. This will give you a clearer idea of the time demands of the exercise.

Once you have read the materials, try to highlight the issues within the exercise that are essential to deal with and those that you may want to deal with and then try to think about how you would go about addressing the issues in the exercise.

You may wish to discuss this with a manager, colleague or mentor. Please remember that the Interactive Exercise is just one of the exercises you will do at the HPDS AC. There will also be a Written Exercise, a Group Exercise, an Oral Briefing Exercise and an Interview. This example is designed to familiarise you with the format and style of exercises you will see and to help you practice how you might approach an exercise.

It is however important to remember that each exercise contains different tasks and assesses different competencies and you should approach each exercise accordingly.

## 2. FAMILIARISATION EXERCISE CANDIDATE INSTRUCTIONS

### Timing

After you finish reading these instructions you will have **20 minutes** to read through the papers that relate to this exercise and prepare for a meeting. The exercise will last a maximum of **15 minutes**. If you feel that you have addressed all the points that are necessary in the exercise before the 15 minutes is up, you can end the meeting at any time making it clear to the Role Actors that they may leave. In order to check for clarity the Role Actors will ask you if the meeting is over and that you are happy for them to leave.

### Background

In this exercise you will take the role of the General Manager of the Shefton branch of Ablesons Supermarket, in the county of Westshire. The supermarket is owned by Garner Retail, a corporation who own a small chain of supermarkets in the region.

The revenue of the Shefton branch of Ablesons Supermarket has been in decline in the last three financial reporting quarters. This decline of revenue is threatening the closure of the supermarket and Garner Retail feel that it is time to take action. The decline of revenue has been attributed to the opening of a similar supermarket five miles away in the town of Sandford. As a result of this, the Financial Director of Garner Retail has suggested a move to 24-hour opening at Ablesons Supermarket to follow the growing customer demand for 24-hour services.

It is anticipated that 24-hour opening will have a considerable impact on the staff at the supermarket most significantly those who have personal and family commitments outside work. As a result of this, the move is expected to be unpopular amongst staff at all levels.

### Your Role

Your role as General Manager requires you to organise the day-to-day running of the Shefton branch of Ablesons and oversee the work of the management team

and supermarket staff. The supermarket is staffed with shop assistants, supervisors, assistant managers, managers (including an HR and Finance Manager), office, security and cleaning staff. Although you are employed by Garner Retail your role is exclusively based at the Shefton branch of Ablesons. Yourself and the other supermarket staff have no input into the other businesses run by Garner. The supermarket managers report to you and you report to Garner Retails' Board of Directors.

### **Your Task**

You have been tasked with the job of integrating changes to the working hours of Ablesons, Shefton over the next six months. In two weeks time you have a meeting with the supermarket senior managers and a representative of Garner Retail. The meeting will be at the Garner Retail Head Office on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 2010. At this meeting, you will be expected to present a full plan of how you intend to implement 24-hour opening. For the purposes of this exercise the date today is the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2010.

In an effort to discuss an initial way forward before this meeting, Garner Retail have organised an initial planning meeting between yourself and two of the store managers who will be most closely affected by the change. There are four supermarket managers in total who manage different aspects of the supermarket. The two managers that you are meeting today are:

- Alex Edwards, Ablesons Finance Manager, Shefton Branch
- Chris Harrington, Ablesons HR Manager, Shefton Branch.

### **Competencies**

This exercise assesses the following competencies from the Policing Professional Framework (PPF) Personal Qualities:

- Leading Change.
- Working with Others.

### **During the Exercise**

You are not expected to be an expert in retail or supermarket management, but you are expected to apply general management skills, and use the information contained in your brief to consider the issues and devise a way forward.

You are allowed to make notes on the rough paper provided, and refer to these during the meeting. In addition you may make notes and highlight information on the candidate materials. Any notes you have made, and papers from the exercise, will be collected at the end of the exercise for reasons of confidentiality. Your notes will be destroyed. They will not be seen by the assessors.

Please remember to speak audibly and clearly in the meeting so that the assessors can hear and understand the points you are making.

**Please make sure you understand what you need to do. Please ask any questions now if anything is unclear. No questions can be answered once the exercise has started.**

**Please do not open the Candidate Materials until asked to do so.**

### **3. FAMILIARISATION EXERCISE CANDIDATE MATERIALS**

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**ITEM 1**

**Email from Jasmine Haslam**

**From:** Jasmine Haslam, Director, Garner Retail  
**Sent:** 31 July 2010, 09:00  
**To:** General Manager – Ablesons of Shefton Supermarket  
**Subject:** 24-hour opening

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Dear General Manager,

Forgive me for writing an e-mail but you will understand that I am extremely busy at the moment and simply cannot spare the time to meet with you personally.

I wanted to explain to you the rationale for our decision to move to 24-hour opening at your store, as I know this will not be an easy task for you.

Although you are relatively new to our company, you will be aware that we have seen a decline in customer numbers and consequently revenue, over the last three financial quarters. Research suggests that this is due in large part to the competitor supermarket (Fewstons) opening up a 24-hour flagship store in Sandford, five miles away from your branch of Ablesons.

It may be that in the longer term we could win our customers back, but at the rate we are losing money in this store, this is a risk I am not prepared to take. Further decline could see us having to close the store altogether. Following a compelling business case from the Garner's Financial Director, Howard Jenkins, the decision was made this morning to make a move to 24-hour opening.

I am sure that you will understand the need for us to make some radical changes. I believe, supported by our financial and operational experts, that a move to 24-hour opening is the best way to boost our revenue and ensure the return of some of our regular customers, plus some of those who may not have visited us before.

I am happy to leave the management of this change in your capable hands, and I have no wish to tell you how to do your job. However, I would like you first of all to have a meeting with Ablesons HR and Finance managers, and I have taken the liberty of asking your PA to schedule this in with them straight away. Your predecessor indicated to me that they may have some strong views about this proposal and I want you to ensure their commitment before moving forward with any implementation plan. A change of this nature is never easy and you will need the backing of your store managers' if you are to deal effectively with staff concerns. As you are aware, no formal communication has been made to staff, but you can be sure that the rumours are already in circulation since this idea was first suggested last month.

As you know, the Garner Retail Corporation has an excellent track-record in Human Resources and we have won best-practice awards in recent years. I would hate for our reputation in this area to be damaged by a badly handled change of this nature.

As ever, I am open to hearing your views, and will support you in any way I can, but I hope that you will appreciate my reasons for taking this step.

It is hoped that your meeting with the supermarkets Finance and HR will result in the following:

1. An initial way forward of how the changes to working hours will be integrated into your supermarket in the next six months.
2. A plan of how you will deal with concerns from supermarket staff.
3. Agreement reached between the HR and Finance Manager as to a way forward.

Best wishes

Jasmine Haslam

*Director - Garner Retail*

**ITEM 2**

**Email from Alex Edwards, Finance Manager**

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**From:** Alex Edwards, Finance Manager, Ablesons of Shefton Supermarket

**Sent:** 01 August 2010, 10:30

**To:** General Manager, Ablesons of Shefton Supermarket

**CC:** Chris Harrington, HR Manager Ableson's Supermarket

**Subject:** 24-hour opening

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Dear General Manager,

I am writing to confirm my attendance at a meeting with yourself and Ablesons HR Manager, Chris Harrington, to discuss an initial way forward concerning the integration of 24-hour opening at the supermarket. For your information I have attached a summary of the initial business case for 24-hour opening, drafted by Howard Jenkins, Garner's Financial Director, and circulated to us all last week. I hope you will appreciate that although rumours have been circulating for a while concerning changes to opening hours, I was only told that this was agreed yesterday and as such I have had little time to prepare anything else.

Despite this I am heartened by the speed with which we have been able to address the issue of implementation, as you know I have been supportive of these changes since day one, despite the hostility that I have received from staff who have not been in favour of the idea. I hope we can press on with these changes as quickly as possible, and get implementation started right away.

I have copied Chris Harrington into this email for information.

I very much look forward to meeting with you

Kind regards

Alex

*Financial Manager, Ablesons of Shefton*

**ITEM 2b**

**E-Mail Attachment from Alex Edwards**

**Summary Business Case for 24-hour Opening of Ablesons of Shefton Supermarket**

**Background and rationale:**

- The revenue of Ablesons of Shefton has dropped in the last three quarters by 29.6%. The continued decline of profit margins, if set to continue, will result in redundancies and perhaps closure of the supermarket.
- A consumer survey has been conducted that indicated that 78% of Shefton residents surveyed said that they would value having a supermarket that offered 24-hour opening, a further 62% of those surveyed indicated that they would be prepared to travel up to 10 miles to do their shopping out of normal working hours.

**What are the key objectives?**

- Offering 24-hour services to the local community in an effort to increase profit and turnover.
- Build resilience against the threat from the new Fewstons supermarket which has recently opened in the area.

**What is the aim of the implementation?**

- The aim is to promote a significant revenue increase within the next three financial quarters.

**What is the implementation time frame?**

- Six calendar months.

**Considerations and possible issues:**

- Current staffing does not have the resilience to provide 24-hour opening
- There is anticipated resistance to 24-hour opening from staff.

**What resources are necessary?**

- HR support to assist with intake of new staff to cover the extra shifts as result of 24-hour opening
- HR support to assist with the re-organisation of working hours
- Cost of staff recruitment, induction and training.

**Current staffing:**

Supermarket staff 245 in total;

- 1 General manager
- 4 managers (3 males, 1 female)
- 8 assistant managers (2 males, 6 females)
- 7 office staff (5 female, 2 male)
- 15 supervisors (8 males, 7 females)
- 150 shop assistants' (24 males, 126 females)
- 60 auxiliary staff: security and cleaning (20 males, 40 females)

**Current opening hours**

- Monday to Saturday 8am - 8pm.
- Sunday 10am - 4pm.

**Proposed working hours**

- Monday to Friday 24 hour opening
- Saturday close at 10.00pm
- Sunday 10am - 4pm.

**ITEM 3**

**Email from Chris Harrington, HR Manager**

**From:** Chris Harrington, HR Manager, Ablesons of Shefton Supermarket

**Sent:** 01 August 2010, 12:03

**To:** General Manager, Ablesons of Shefton Supermarket

**Subject:** 24-hour opening

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Dear General Manager,

I am writing to confirm our meeting to discuss the news of 24-hour opening at Ablesons of Shefton.

It is essential that if we go ahead with this scheme that the staff have their needs taken into account. Since rumours started flying around last month about a change to opening hours, staff have been very anxious. I have received a number of concerns which range from child care and security to transport and medical dangers. This indicates that the staff as a whole are very much against this arrangement and I must say I share their concerns.

I hope we can discuss this further in our meeting. I have taken the liberty of forwarding you one email which is typical of those I have been receiving from staff, which indicate the types of issue I have to deal with.

The truth is that the change to 24-hour opening that has been suggested would have a significant impact on everyone here and many of the staff fail to see how it will be worth the trouble. Staff are particularly unhappy that with all the rumours buzzing around they are the last to hear about the changes. I know that although you have moved to Ablesons of Shefton relatively recently, you have cultivated a good working relationship with Garner Retail who are open to your suggestions and ideas concerning the running of the supermarket and its staff. I am hoping that you can change their minds about this scheme.

It will be interesting to meet with yourself and Alex, our store's Finance Manager, to understand how the changes are to be justified.

Regards

Chris Harrington

*HR Manager, Ablesons of Shefton*

**ITEM 4**

**Email from Karen Dean**

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**From:** Karen Dean, Supervisor, Ablesons of Shefton Supermarket

**Sent:** 10 July 2010, 09:15

**To:** Chris Harrington, Ablesons of Shefton Supermarket

**Subject:** 24-hour opening

Dear Chris

As you know it is no secret that Ablesons are planning to start 24-hour opening – and as usual we the staff are the last to know!!

The prospect of this change is bad enough, but I also wanted to share with you a cutting from the Union of Retail Workers newsletter last week that carried the attached article about 24-opening. How can we make sure this doesn't happen here?

Regards,

Karen Dean

*Supervisor Ablesons of Shefton*

**ITEM 4b**

**Email Attachment from Karen Dean**

Union of Retail Workers, Newsletter Vol. 12

***Negative impacts of the 24-hour society***

Working unusual hours can affect social and marital life, according to the American Employment Journal. A recent study of American fathers, married less than five years, show shift work increases the risk of separation or divorce by six times.

A key cause of this is considered to be the lack of face-to-face contact experienced where one partner works at night and sleeps during the day. This figure has caused concern among American health care professionals who have pointed to research which indicates that the negative impact of shift work may be more far reaching than the social life of workers: "The physiological impact of shift work should not be underestimated" says Richard Carmichael, spokesman for the American Wellbeing Council, "Shift work, particularly that which requires night work, has a significant impact on the health of workers. This includes a 40% increase in cardiovascular disease, links to increase breast and colon cancer, digestive and eating disorders and even reproductive and neonatal complications."

This paints a pretty bleak picture and has raised heated debate here in the UK where trades unions report a marked increase in companies employing shift workers as a solution to the problems posed by the 24-hour expectation of the consumer.

Mark Garland from the UK Workers Union comments that: "It has long been acknowledged that the consumer society demands 24-hour access to products and services. This does however raise the question of how these services are made available. In the last decade we have seen a 72% increase in shift and night work in an effort to manage consumer demands, but this comes at a cost to workers."

The US government has tried to address the problems faced by workers with compulsory health checks, paid for by companies on a yearly basis, though many say this does not go far enough: "Health checks that identify and diagnose the health problems associated with shift work doesn't address the root problem that shift work makes people sick" says Mark Garland, "Our government will need to go a lot further to assure workers this side of the water that 24-hour opening is an option."