

The ABLE<sup>®</sup> (Aptitude for Business Learning) Series of exercises combines the richness of a work simulation with the objectivity of a psychometric instrument. Ground-breaking contextualised exercises that teach, then test to give a dynamic measurement of ability to learn.

## Helpline

Target group	Clerical, administrative and secretarial staff; call centre/customer service agents; receptionists, secretaries and PAs
Skills measured	Applicants need to obtain and manipulate information by using their ability to sift information and apply rules efficiently, using minimal judgement
Time required	30 minutes, timed, in a supervised setting
Qualification required	BPS Level A

### What is Helpline?

The Helpline test asks candidates to produce answers to customers' enquiries by integrating information from multiple sources and accurately following set procedures. The exercise make demands on basic numeracy and comprehension skills, but the main emphasis is on speed of learning and the accurate application of the procedures.

#### How will candidates be assessed?

The tasks in the test are set within the context of a crime prevention helpline. The questions in the *question and answer booklet* are structured in a way where a fictional customer asks the helpline for their expertise and services to protect properties.

#### An example task

An example of one of the tasks would consist of the following. A customer intends to change locks and improve other barriers and needs in his company so he has phoned the helpline to ask what barrier level is recommended. A *helpline manual* provides the candidate with details about different approaches to protect properties and how to calculate the total risk of burglary by consulting a *customer database booklet* and a *crime database sheet* for finding crime risk rating, neighbourhood, ease of entry etc. The candidate is expected to integrate this information and build up a pattern of knowledge on how to proceed and come to a conclusion in the decision- making process, to be able to recommend the levels of security needed to protect the customer



against crime. This knowledge of the decision-making process must then be applied to different cases.

The task is completed by indicating, in a separate *answer booklet*, a rating about what level of barrier and alarm will be necessary in each particular case.

### What information will be provided?

The information provided in the booklets is presented in either a written or tabular form in the different tasks. There are a total of 13 rating-grids in the *question and answer booklet*, six separate information sheets within the *helpline manual* and additional conversion tables. Candidates are assessed on their ability to sift information and apply rules efficiently, using minimal judgement. No prior knowledge of crime prevention helpline is required and candidates with knowledge of these sectors will not have an unfair advantage; the test assesses learning, not prior knowledge. A preparation leaflet is available which briefs candidates on what to expect.

### What skills will be assessed?

- Ability to learn new skills and procedures quickly
- Ability to sift and sort data
- Concern for order, accuracy and customer service
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Speed of working
- Basic numerical and verbal comprehension skills

### What comparison groups are available?

In occupational testing we interpret individuals' scores by comparing them against samples of applicants, incumbents etc. The following samples or norm tables are available:

- Call centre advisor and general administrative positions in a financial services organisation
- Communication operator posts in UK police service
- Customer service agents in former public sector business
- Applicants for customer service role in call centres
- Applicants for customer service roles in financial services call centre
- Applicants for sales, service advisor and team leader in telephone banking call centre

### What are the business applications?

The test is useful both within recruitment and selection and with more of a developmental focus to highlight strengths within people, and areas which may be desirable to develop.

### How long does it take to complete?

The test itself is timed and lasts for 30 minutes. Practitioners should allow up to fifteen minutes beforehand to brief the candidate as part of the administration and to account for two practice questions which the candidate is asked to work through before the start of the exercise. A suggested allocation time for one full assessment, including briefing, completion of the timed test and collection of the test would be one hour.

## With whom can I use Helpline?

Helpline is designed to be used across administrative, secretarial staff and customer service staff. The test is particularly suitable for customer service agents, but is highly relevant to a wide range of office work where the accurate implementation of a set of procedures, with little scope for the exercise of personal discretion, is the job demand.

## What materials do I need?

- Manual and users guide **AB0104**
- Additional preview information for candidates **JA0108** (10 pack)
- Manual, Customer Database and Crime Database **AB0106** (pack of 10)
- Questions and Answer Booklet (disposable) **AB0105** (pack of 10)
- ABLE Series manual and users guide **AB0001**
- Administrations Instructions (reusable) **AB0103**
- Score key (reusable) **AB0102**

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