



HM Prison &
Probation Service

An insight generator not a sorting hat

How occupational
psychologists and Java
experts created a Match
Me Tool like no other.

And the impact it's making?
By encouraging more people
to apply for the full range of
HMPPS careers – the right
jobs for them – it's playing
a vital role in public safety
and offender rehabilitation.

Interested in
variety

Like
community
work

Good in
a team

Enjoy getting
to know
people

Role Match

- Community Payback
- Residential Worker
- Operational Support

Strategy

Done well, match-me tools are invaluable.

Especially around that seductive word: fit. But here's the thing. Everyone has one now. They're **everywhere**.

And, too often, the lack of sophistication is obvious: they've become a shiny way to dress up basic filtering logic. Too much keyword bingo with a slick UI.

Swerving the usual

His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) needed a whole different level of smart. Together we created a solution that goes well beyond surface-level fit. It swerved the usual formula of set, pre-determined answers based on a response, 'powered' by decision-tree or chat bot functionality.

Highly tailored

With a multifaceted scoring system behind the back-end development, this tool shows each candidate a cluster of highly tailored roles, complementary paths, and unexpected combinations based on how they think, how they behave and what they value. **Not just what they've done.**

Unprecedented collaboration

It's the result of an unprecedented collaboration between **Assessment Design Psychologists** and a specialist **Java Developer**. Translating a wealth of job analysis data into coding, with a comprehensive testing and fine-tuning loop, they built a match-me tool that's an insight generator not a sorting hat.

Truth not TV

The realities and range of roles on offer.

Everyone's heard of Prison Officers. We've all seen Prison Break or Time or The Outlaws. But a) how do you get **the right people to apply for roles based on the truth** not the TV, and b) how do you make people **aware** of the realities of all the other extraordinary jobs that exist in prison and probation?

People were applying for the Prison Officer role without being fully aware of what was involved – from shift working to gang culture. Candidates were dropping out part-way, without realising there were lots of other opportunities that might have been perfect. Cue: Match Me Tool.

Our solution helped potential candidates understand the different roles – from Community Payback to Probation Services – directing them to the ones they were best suited for, with really promising results.

Reality



TV



Delivery

We designed the Match Me Tool (MMT) to provide quality, meaningful output. It started with research and job analysis.

We conducted **intensive insight gathering** and multiple stakeholder engagement, including a focus group and senior stakeholder interviews.

Working closely with the HMPPS Occupational Psychology Team, job analysis activity included:

- Desk-based research to understand the responsibilities and required behaviours for the 11 roles.
- Reviewing the similarities and differences between roles, assigning tags, and modelling responses to support technical development.



Prison officer



Probation officer



Probation services officer



Operational support grade (OSG)



Prison Caterer



Prison education, skills and work



Approved premises – residential workers



Case administrator



Community Payback



Psychologist



Youth justice worker



A responsive tool, accessible across multiple devices

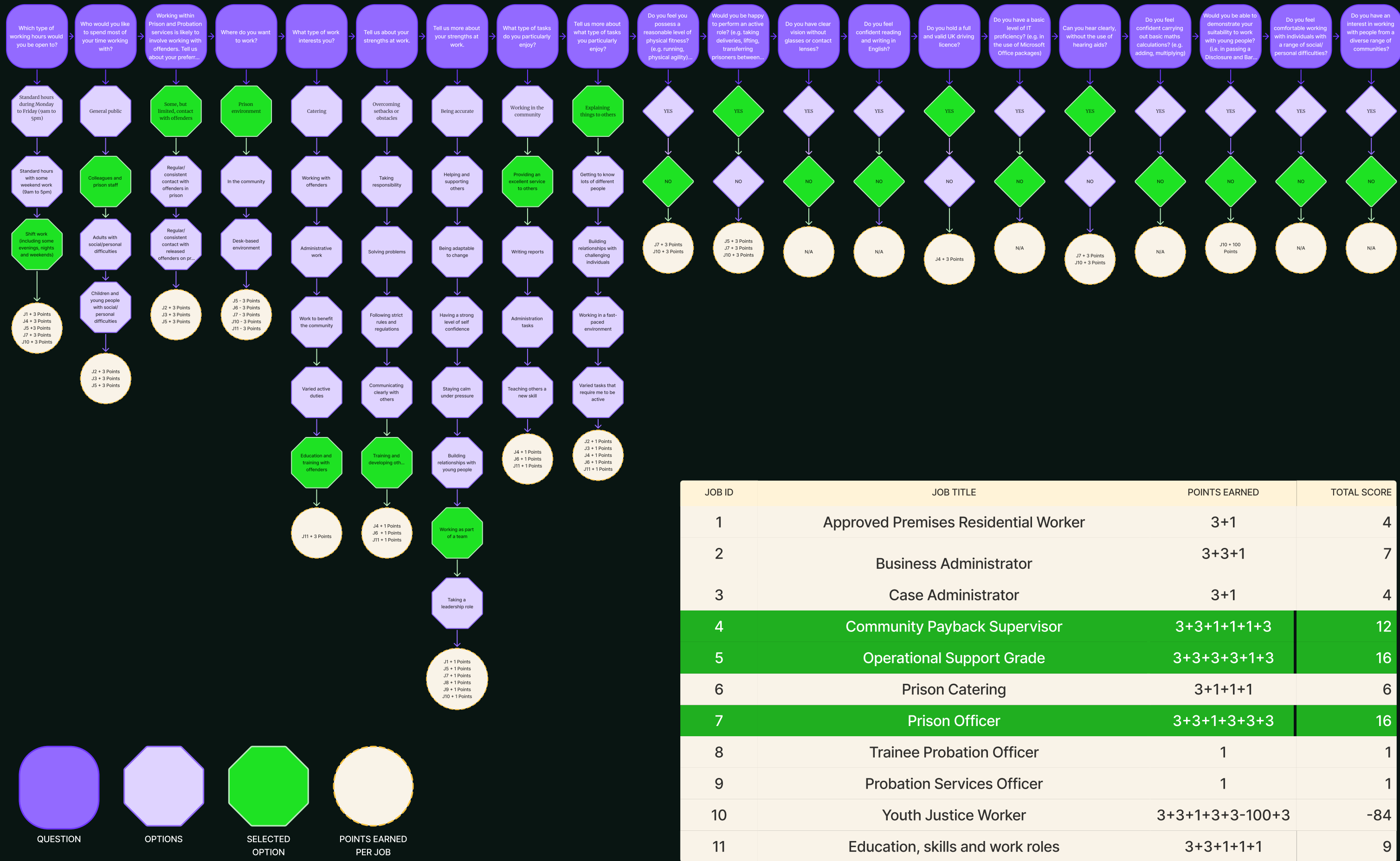
How it works

Built as a ‘container’, the MMT opens in a full-screen overlay, which can be closed at any time.

Directing people through a series of questions, the MMT scores roles based on user’s responses on preferred working environment, and behaviours, qualifications and skills.

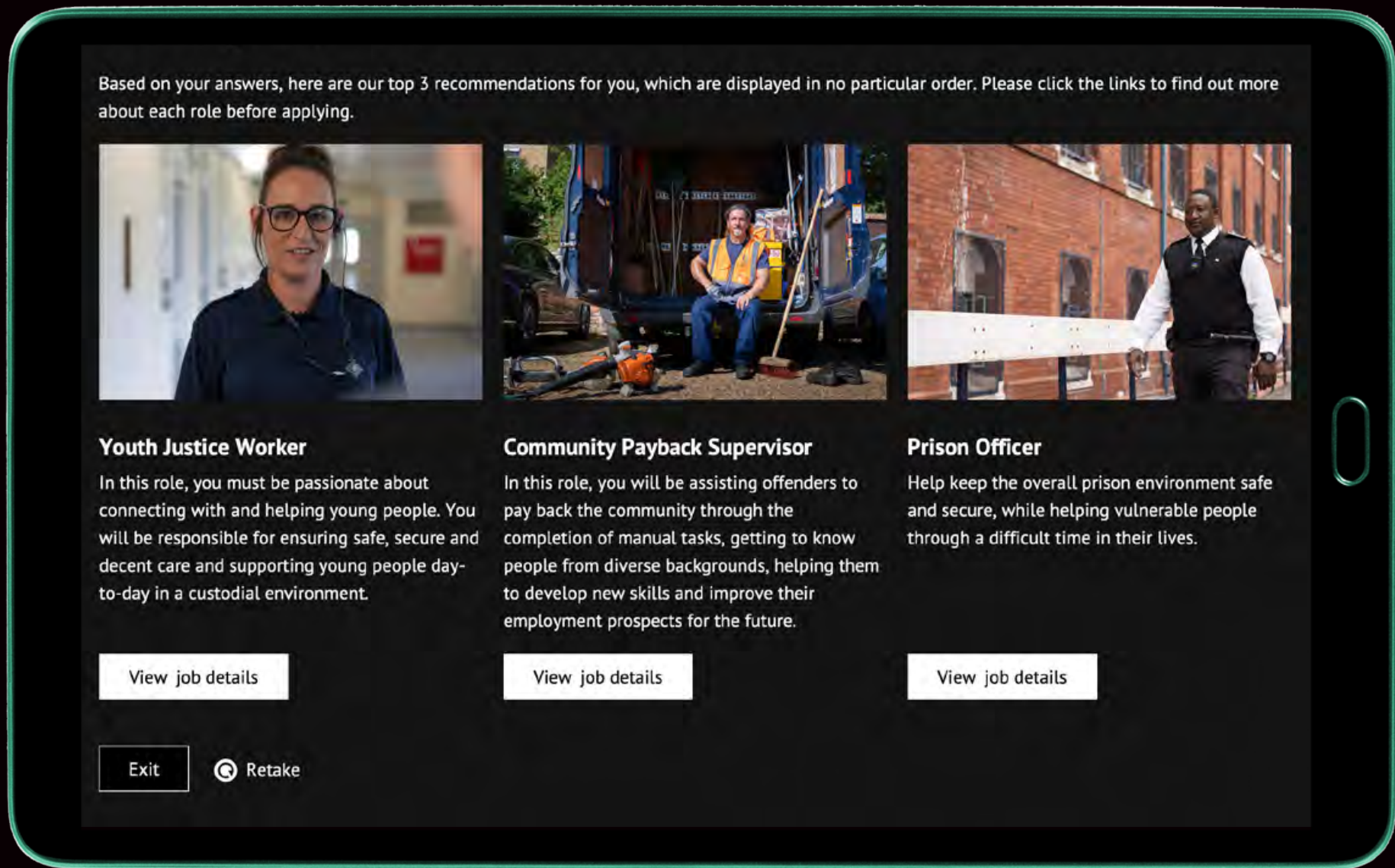
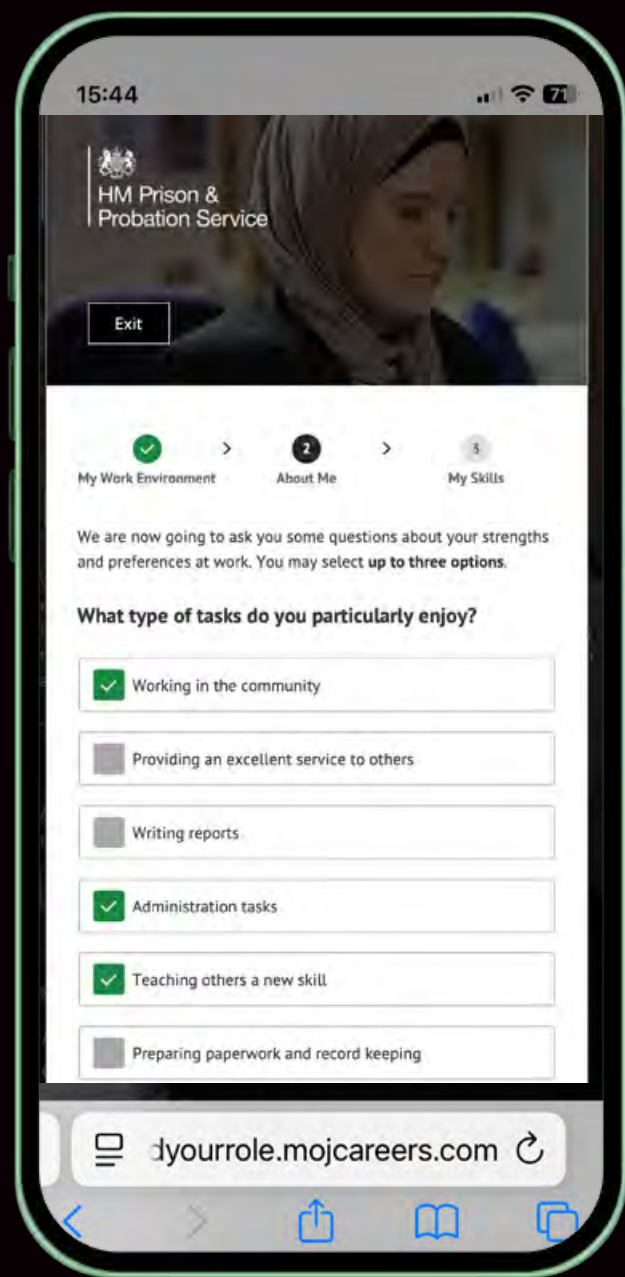
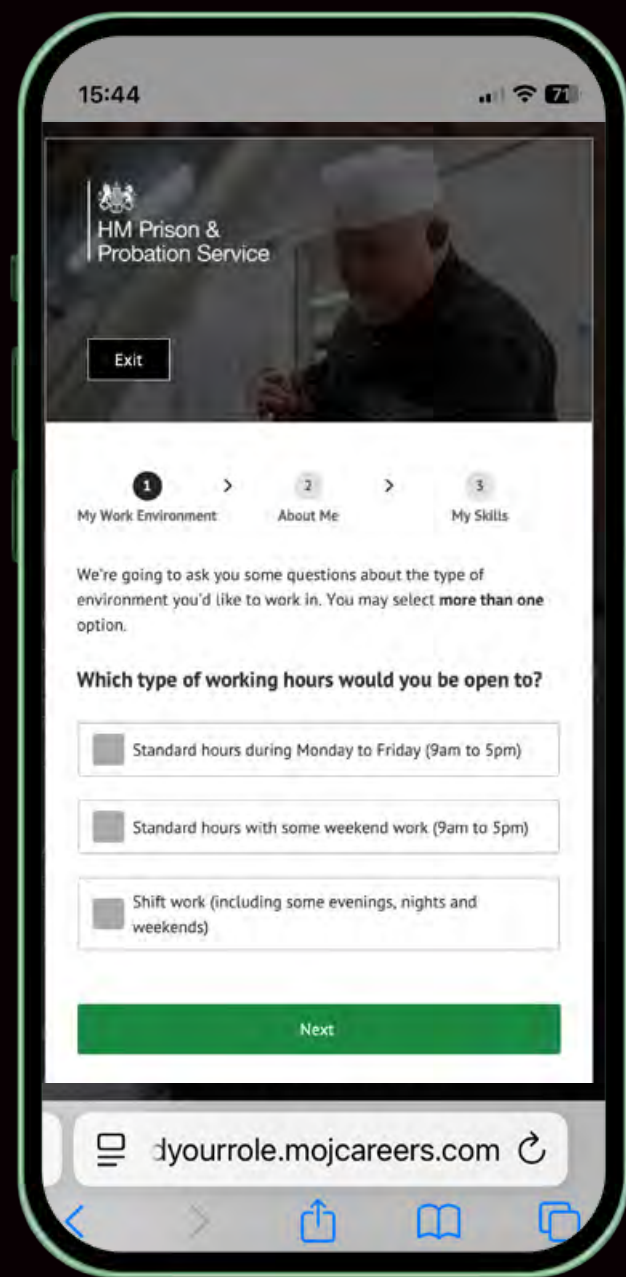
The scoring system weights answers on the backend, measuring job suitability, so that the most appropriate 3 options appear in the results. For example, if the user doesn’t want to work shifts, prison-based roles are down weighted. Responding that they prefer not to work with children or young people means an extreme penalty is put on the Youth Justice role so no amount of other positive indicators are able to put it forward as a suggestion.

An example flow of answers



Delivery

After answering all the questions, the user is presented with three recommendations of suitable roles. Recommendations are given based on the highest scoring roles, according to users' responses.



Measurement

We used Google Analytics to monitor and measure the tool’s performance across key engagement points. Our primary focus was understanding user behaviour. Specifically, how many people started the MMT, how many completed it, and what actions they took afterwards. Completion rates gave us a clear signal of how well the experience was holding attention from start to finish.

We also tracked broader engagement metrics like bounce rate, average time spent on the tool, and overall usage.

A low bounce rate told us users were sticking around, while a higher average time spent indicated they were actively engaging with the questions and exploring their results.

Wherever possible, we tracked actions taken after the MMT – e.g. clicks through to individual role pages – to measure how effectively the tool was guiding users toward deeper exploration of HMPPS career opportunities.

All of these metrics made one thing clear. The MMT wasn’t just being used. It was driving real, meaningful engagement.

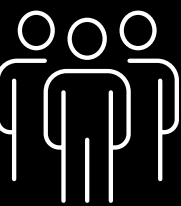


Results

The MMT is proving to be a valuable attraction and engagement tool, as well as a great preview into the world of HMPPS and its Prison and Probation career opportunities.

It's doing exactly what it set out to do. Candidates are exploring a more diverse range of opportunities – finding and applying for the right roles for them.

The proof is in the results.

 **38,426**
people used the tool

 **5.18**
minutes average time spent –
indicating strong engagement

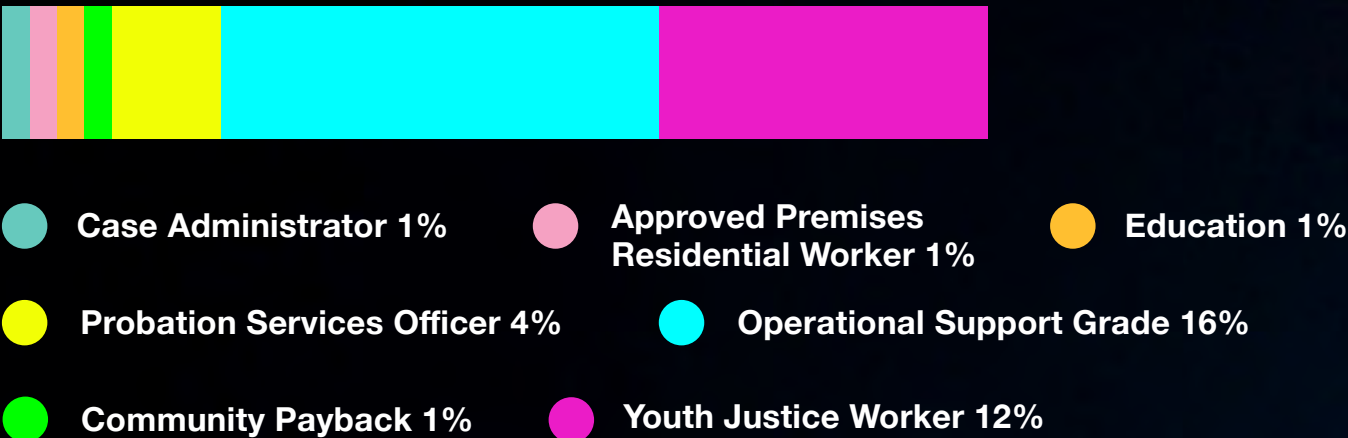
 **85%**
completion rate

 **15,878**
outclicks to the landing site
with information about the roles

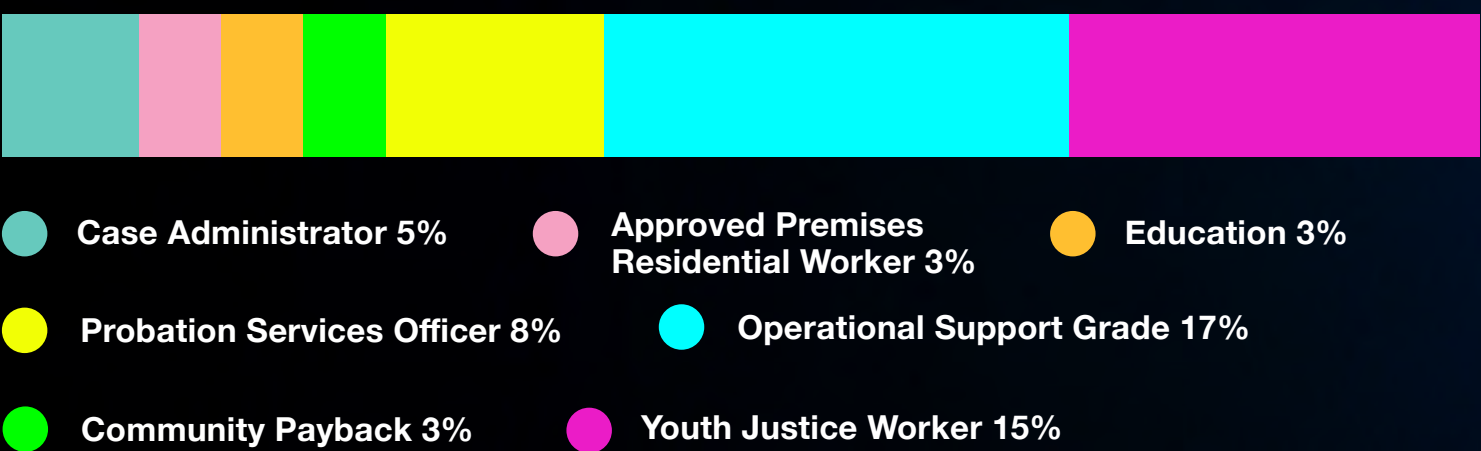
Total website traffic increased by an impressive
1,988.9%

More importantly, **the share of total website traffic visits across the least popular roles all increased and prison officers decreased.**

Before Total HMPPS Job Site Visits 2023



After Total HMPPS Job Site Visits 2024



% share of total website traffic in 2024

