Character Building Rules Published

You'll find the current version of the character building rules starting on page 3. Please take a look and send us your character submissions, offers to crew, requests for us to fit you into the game where it helps us the most, or that you won't be playing the game (which will stop us nagging you!).

We've had some advanced notices from people already — we really appreciate them — but hopefully having actual rules will flesh out the player roster.
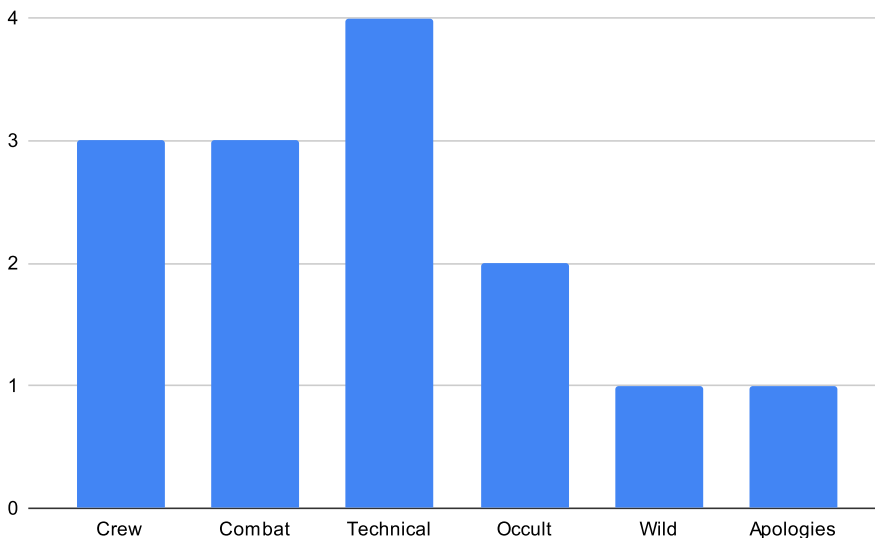
If you spot any errors or think something should be changed then we'd really appreciate the feedback.

The best way to contact us is by email to david@dorward.me.uk **and** emergencyjimhologram@googlemail.com.

We'd hoped to have these out sooner, and have updated the rest of the guide, but life has thrown some curveballs. If you have any questions about the setting or the rest of the rules, please get in touch.

Vulgar Graffiti Defaces Ambridge Village Post Office: Community Stunned

Ambridge, a village just south-west of Borchester, was thrust into turmoil by a vile act of vandalism targeting its cherished village post office. On Tuesday morning, residents awoke to a distressing sight: the once pristine walls of the post office defiled by crude graffiti, a grotesque departure from the tranquillity the village is renowned for.

The obscene display of lewd words and crude depictions of genitalia, sprawled across the exterior walls, leaving the community reeling in shock and disbelief. Susan Carter, the steadfast postmistress who has faithfully served the village since 2006, was visibly shaken as she surveyed the defaced walls, her dismay mingling with indignation.

Police Sergeant Harrison Burns, tasked with investigating the abhorrent act, arrived swiftly on the scene. With a furrowed brow and clenched jaw, he vowed to pursue the perpetrators with unwavering determination. "This vandalism is an affront to our community and will not go unpunished," he declared, his voice tinged with righteous anger. "We will leave no stone unturned in our quest for justice."

Speculation ran rampant among villagers, each grappling with the motive behind the brazen act of vulgarity. Some speculated it to be the reckless antics of rebellious youth, while others whispered of deeper animosities lurking beneath the surface. Yet amidst the conjecture, a shared sense of outrage united the community in solidarity against the violation of their communal space.

In the wake of the desecration, an outpouring of support swept through Ambridge as residents banded together to restore the post office to its former dignity.

The post office before the defacement

Armed with scrub brushes and solvents, neighbours laboured tirelessly to erase the offensive graffiti, determined to reclaim their beloved landmark from the clutches of debasement. Messages of defiance adorned makeshift banners, a testament to the resilience of the village in the face of adversity.

Through the chaos, Susan Carter emerged as a beacon of strength, her resolve unyielding in the face of vulgarity. "This post office is more than just a building," she asserted, her voice resolute. "It's a symbol of our community's values and aspirations. We will not allow this act of depravity to tarnish our spirit."

As Sergeant Burns and his team scoured the area for clues, he appealed to the community for assistance, urging anyone with information to come forward. "We need your help to bring these perpetrators to justice," he implored, his eyes ablaze with determination. "Together, we can send a clear message that such behaviour will not be tolerated in Ambridge."

In the days that followed, a sense of defiance permeated the village as residents rallied around their beloved post office. Local artists volunteered their talents to adorn the walls with uplifting murals, transforming the scars of vandalism into symbols of resilience and hope. Through their collective efforts, the community emerged stronger, reaffirming their bond in the face of obscenity.

As twilight descended upon the tranquil streets of Ambridge, the restored post office stood as a testament to the indomitable spirit of its residents. Though the scars of the graffiti vandalism remained, they served as a reminder of the village's unwavering resolve, a beacon of hope shining brightly amidst the darkness.

In the words of Susan Carter, echoing through the village, "We may be tested, but we will not be broken. Together, we will rise above this vile act and emerge stronger than ever before."

Character Building Rules

Characters in Laundry Files games are made up of Identity and Abilities. When designing your character you can determine them in either order or jump back and forth between them allowing each to suggest additions or changes to the other.

Characters are subject to GM approval so that we can try to make the game fun for everyone (e.g. doesn't include offensive characters, or six characters who all have the exact same obscure specialism).

Identity

Your character's identity is made up of their name and life history.

We think that having a character with an identity distinct from your real-life one adds to the role-playing aspects of the game and encourage you to come up with one.

A name, or at least a nickname, is important as other players will need to call you by it. Please remain within the bounds of good taste and PG rated films.

A new character's life history shouldn't be very long, there's no need to give yourself and the GMs several pages of fictional autobiography to memorise! A couple of paragraphs is plenty.

Laundry Files games tend to be driven primarily by external plot. We may work elements of backgrounds into games, but they will rarely be the focus on one.

The events of the games your character takes part in will add to their life history. You may wish to keep a record of this to refer back to.

Archetypes & Abilities

Abilities include learned skills, supernatural abilities, and the effects of physical training. Each has an associated cost which varies depending on which Archetype you select.

Archetypes

These are broad categories of character which help narrow your choices of abilities.

Combat

Almost all Combat characters will be members of the BLI. There may be the occasional civilian specialist such as an internal security operative, but they are rare as most Laundry security is handled by Residual Resources. Do not call them Zombies unless you want to be sent on a remedial diversity awareness training course.

Abilities that increase the range of guns and number of ability hit points are cheaper for Combat characters.

Technical

These characters have studied for their abilities. Most characters of this archetype will be scientists, doctors or computer experts.

Abilities that come easily to

characters of this archetype include medicine, science, and computational magic.

Occult

Some characters just have a natural talent for magic. They could be from a long line of sorcerers, a chance talent, or on rare occasions (consult a GM about your idea before spending too much time on it) something more esoteric, perhaps not even human.

They are able to carry out rituals, such as summoning or banishments, without the aid of modern occult technology. They are also more likely to have paranormal abilities such as precognition or telepathy.

Points

You have 4 points to spend on skills. Use the table below and your selected archetype to determine the cost of each skill.

	Combat	Technical	Occult
Weapon Skills			
Assault Weapon	0	2	2
Handgun	0	0	0
Shotgun	1	2	2
Sniper	1	3	3
Support & Heavy Weapons	1	3	3
Tool Skills			
Demolitions	1	3	3
Escape Artist	1	2	1
Pick Lock	2	1	1
Resilience Skills			
Armour Training	1	2	3
Basic Armour Training	-	1	1
Magic Resistance	3	2	1
Toughness	1	2	3
Willpower	3	2	1
Medical Skills			
First Aid	0	1	1
Medic (Requires First Aid)	1	1	2
Surgeon (Requires Medic)	2	1	2
Knowledge Skills			
English	0	0	0
Second Modern Language	0	0	0
Ancient Language	3	2	1
Modern Language Group	1	1	1
Science	2	1	2
Weird Science	3	1	1
Occult Lore	2	1	1
Basic Computing	0	0	0
Advanced Computing (Requires Basic Computing)	3	1	2
Magic & Psychic Skills			
Sorcery	4	4	2
Computational Demonology	4	2	3
Psychic Talent	2	2	1
Ritual Magic	0	0	0
Warrant Card	*	*	*

Weapon Skills

Handgun[1]: This allows the use of pistol weapons.

Assault Weapon: This skill allows the use of assault rifles, submachine guns and machine pistols.

Sniper: This skill is required to use a sniper rifle.

Support & Heavy Weapons[2]: Heavy machine guns, mortars, RPG's and shoulder-launched missiles all fall into this category. Field guns and missile batteries do not.

Shotgun: This skill allows the use of shotguns which are defined as short range weapons with a wide spread.

Tool Skills

Demolitions. Enables a character to set a demolition charge, provided they have the materials to hand. The skill also allows the disarming of a simple explosive device.

Pick Lock. A simple lock can be picked in a couple of minutes with a hairpin. More complex locks will require more time and specialised equipment.

Escape Artist. A character who has been tied up or handcuffed can escape with 5 minutes of obvious role-playing.

Resilience Skills

Armour Training: With a SIAB reports a Yellow or Red injury on a body part protected by armour (must be physrepped; full leg/arm armour required, knee/elbow pads are insufficient) treat the damage as one level lower for the purposes of ongoing injury (healing time is unchanged).

Basic Armour Training: As above, but you are limited to chest armour and a helmet.

Toughness: +2 hit point maximum

Willpower: +2 marble maximum

Magic Resistance: Draw 2 cards at the start of the game and pick one each challenge

Medical Skills

First Aid: A first-aider can stabilise a wounded character and slow the rate at which they bleed out. They cannot restore any lost hits.

Medic: (Requires First Aid). A medic can treat combat wounds and restore hit points in the field, but cannot cure persistent effects, such as broken limbs.

Surgeon: (Requires Medic). This adds the ability to remove persistent effects given a suitable work space. Disease and symptoms of poisoning can also be recognised.

Knowledge Skills

Ancient Languages: A lot of information about the occult is written in ancient languages, and many unearthly creatures have these as their native tongues. Many are used during the casting of spells and other forms of magic. Each time you select this skill select two languages from this list: Babylonian, Ancient Egyptian, Olmec and Old Enochian.

Without this skill, sorcerers will know just enough to cast spells, and may find their translations of written spells more error prone than a linguist's. They will not be skilled enough to hold a conversation in such a language.

English: All characters can speak English.

Second Modern Language: Optionally, any character may take a second modern language (e.g. French) for free.

Modern Languages[3]: This skill represents above average training in different modern languages. Each time you select this skill pick one of the following: Central America, Eastern Asia (including China), Eastern Europe

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[1] The handgun skill is costed at 0 for all characters. The use of lasertag is the unique selling point of this style of LARP so a design decision has been made to make the decision to take it or not one that is purely about roleplaying and not a tradeoff against another skill.

[2] Heavy weapons are not routinely used in games and the game is designed on the assumption that will continue to be the case going forward. Consequently the skill to use this type of weapon is costed cheaply as it will typically be used to say something about a character background more than have practical use in a game. That said, if people do take it, then games are likely to be written where they will have an opportunity to use it.

[3] We know language groups don't work like this in real life. We also acknowledge that we've taken this list from Spycraft Second Edition.

	Handgun	Assault Weapon	Sniper	Shotgun
Hands	1	2	2	2
Max Damage	1	2	3	3
Burst Fire	✘	✔	✘	✘
Fully Automatic	✘	✔	✘	✘
Shots per reload	∞	≤ 30	1	≤ 2
Iron Sight	✔	✔	✘	✘
Re-dot sight	✘	✔	✘	✘
Magnifying sight	✘	✘	✔	✘

(including Russia), Northern Africa, Northern America (including Greenland), Oceania (including Australia), South America, Southern Africa, Southern Asia (including Southeast Asia), Western Asia (including the Middle East), Western Europe.

Science: This is knowledge of conventional sciences, i.e. chemistry, physics, biology, earth sciences, mathematics. Choose a broad field of study and a couple of specialisations within it.

Weird Science. This is science as we don't know it. It will include xenobiology, xenolinguistics, parapsychology, non-human technology, hyperdimensional mathematics and such like.

Occult Lore: This provides you with a basic level of knowledge about a broad range of esoteric subjects. Example uses include the identification of cryptozoological creatures, determining the weaknesses of supernatural entities, recognising ancient languages, and knowing the characteristics of other realms.

Basic Computing[1]: This provides enough skill with computers to be able to perform office work

Advanced Computing: (Requires Basic Computing) This skill enables a broad range of activities using a computer including:

- Writing software for a variety of platforms
- By-passing computer security protocols
- Breaking encryption
- Implanting computer viruses

Magic & Psychic Skills

There are three skills which

[1] The basic computing skill is costed at 0 for all characters. It exists primarily to draw a distinction between basic computer skills and the capabilities of the advanced computing skill. For roleplaying reasons, some players may choose not to take basic computing.

> None of their specific beliefs matter. What matters is that if a cell or coven or parish or whatever get their hands on a genuine summoning ritual, the things at the other end of the occult courtesy phone aren't fussy about what they're called as long as the message is 'chow time.'
>
> – The Fuller Memorandum, Charles Stross

provide access to spellcasting (a list of spells is provided later in this guide). Grouped with them is Ritual Magic, which is related but doesn't use the spell list.

Sorcery: This skill enables the preparation and use of computations with esoteric effects (colloquially known as spells) directly in the mind of the caster (with the aid of ritual objects to focus that mind).

These computations attract extra-dimensional entities known as 'feeders' which munch away at the caster's grey matter. The use of this skill requires the expenditure of marbles.

When taking this skill, select 5 spells that you can cast. Additionally, take Detect Thaumic Field for free.

Computational Demonology: This skill enables the preparation and use of computations with esoteric effects (colloquially known as spells) via a computer. Field work typically uses a smartphone.

Feeders will munch down on silicone as happily as human brains so devices have their own "marbles" stat which, when expended, renders the device

useless.

Before each game (and during games when you have downtime, in a safe place, with Internet access (check with a GM)) select up to 3 spells to load onto the device. Additionally, take Detect Thaumic Field for free.

Psychic Talent: Most sorcerers undergo extensive training in order to cast spells. Some people have a natural talent which allows them to cast a single spell almost by instinct.

When taking this skill, select 1 spell that you can cast.

The core differences between these three skills are that Sorcery is very flexible, Computational Demonology is relatively safe, and Psychic Talents cost fewer skill points and tend to be less obvious when used.

Ritual Magic: Perform the right actions and say the right words, in the right order, with the right protection and BINGO! magic happens. Anyone can do it. Getting it wrong can have dire consequences. The chances of getting it wrong go down when you have a natural (psychic) talent for the arcane or are trained in Sorcery, Computational

> One of the things you learn fairly fast in the Laundry is that most people in the British civil service and armed forces don't know you exist. You - your organisation, your job, the field you work in - are classified so deeply that the mere knowledge that such a classification level exists is itself a state secret. So, to help me do my job, I carry something that we laughably call a 'warrant card.' It's a form of identification. It comes with certain Powers attached. When you present your warrant card for inspection, in the course of official business, the recipients tend to believe you are who and what you say you are, for the duration of that business. Not only that: you can bind them to silence. Of course, trying to use your card outside official business tends to attract the attention of the Auditors. And having attracted their attention once or twice, I've never been too keen on finding out what happens next…
>
> – The Fuller Memorandum, Charles Stross

Demonology and/or Occult Lore. The chances of getting it wrong go down a lot more if you are following a guide (there are a surprisingly large number of ancient tablets and tomes out there) and have a good understanding of the Ancient Language it uses.

Warrant Card

Cost: Special: Free for all Laundry personnel. Not available to BLI personnel or personnel on attachment from other organisations.

The warrant card operates much like the psychic paper that is a staple of modern Doctor Who. Players with one should bring a phys-rep. It is an effective way of handling civilian personnel who have stumbled across Laundry business. It may fail to work on the strong willed, those under psychic-influence, and non-humans.

Spells

The sorcerer is able to carry out summonings and banishments, open and close Gates, and set and neutralise Wards. A hacker manipulates sorcery through his technology, whereas a sorcerer needs a few ritual objects and the power of his will. Costs marbles to use, number depending on level of spell. Whatever way a character achieves one of these supernatural effects, the effect ultimately interacts with dimensions inhabited by unknowable eldritch entities. This can result in things going spectacularly awry if the spell is cast incorrectly (and sometimes even if it is not!)

Necromancy[1]: Traditionally this is the art of foretelling the future by consulting the dead. In practice it allows a necromancer to speak to the soul of someone recently departed. (Requires referee and costs 1 marble per question to use).

Raise Corpse: This technique summons an extra-dimensional entity and allows it to take up residence in a corpse after which it can use said corpse to walk and talk in our world. The consequences for such an entity getting loose can be dire. The practice of necromancy is banned under international occult conventions. Access to corpse raising software requires the authorisation of someone of SEO level or above. Unauthorised corpse raising is a criminal offence subject to a penalty of up to life imprisonment. Costs 2 marbles and periodic additional marbles to maintain control of the entity.

Precognition: This psychic ability gives a hazy glimpse of the future. The visions are nearly always ambiguous and can only be invoked 3 times in a 24 hour period. (Requires referee and costs 1 marble to use)

Telepathy: A psychic ability which allows the telepath to read another's thoughts. The telepath needs to be within easy conversational distance from the target. The ability is quite exhausting to use so can only be done 3 times in a 24 hour period. Contact with non-human minds can have unpredictable results but it is often traumatising. Use on

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[1] https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainer/grade-structures-civil-service

other telepaths has a strong chance of detection. Costs 1 marble to use.

Divination: Objects retain psychic echoes of their history and of those who have possessed them for a long time. The diviner can get a sense of this history by holding the object and concentrating on it. Costs 1 marble to use

Create Ward: This turns a focus (such as a crucifix[2] or ritual circle) into a barrier impassable by the target entity. Costs 1 marble to activate and then a periodic cost (variable dependent on entity and scale) to keep it running.

Deconstruct Ward: Carefully remove a ward (e.g. to unblock a path or release whatever is contained within). This is akin to picking a lock. Costs 1 marble, some time (depending on the complexity), and may require a challenge.

Break Ward: Quickly remove a ward. This is akin to applying demolition charges to a locked door. Costs 1 marble, may require a challenge, and risks harming anyone nearby.

Detect Thaumic Field: Determine if there is any kind of magical activity nearby. Costs no marbles, but does require active use.

Guidance[3]: Provides a vision of a course of action that leads towards a desired goal. The lead may not be the safest or most direct, but it will advance the plot. Costs 1 marble. This spell allows you to ask the GM for a hint as to what you should do next.

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[2] The classic defence against vampires; but it only works if you channel real power. When using computational demonology to create this kind of ward, it is traditional to render an image of the cross on the smartphone's screen.
[3] This spell is designed so that if the game has slowed down and you don't know what to do next, you can get some advice from the GM in order to inject some interest back into the day.

Word Search

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R	T	R	M	A	G	I	C	D	A	R	I	S	P
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