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EMPLOYMENT

TOP TIPS & GUIDANCE FROM THE PEOPLE WHO RECRUIT

'I want a job but I don't know where to begin. I don't know what employers are looking for and I'm not even sure what jobs are out there or what I would be suited to.' (Anonymous, age 18)

The prospect of looking for employment can be incredibly daunting for anyone, but it's especially hard if you've never had a job before. How do you find out what employers expect from you as a candidate? How do you write a CV? And how should you get ready for a job interview?

Don't panic – this guide is here to help. It is packed full of advice that is directly based on what the people who recruit say – what they look for when they pick out the best job applications, the kinds of questions they ask at interview and how they choose who to give the job, apprenticeship or work experience opportunity to. It also includes helpful hints from people who, like you, may have recently left school, college or university, and have successfully gone on to get a job or work experience. You'll also find a section on what to do if you haven't got any work experience – including information on volunteering and how it can boost your chances of finding a job.

If you are thinking about your future career, applying for work experience, an internship or an apprenticeship or if you're just considering finding a part-time job to earn some money while you study, this guide is for you. It includes information on:

- How to explore career options, think about your skills and what jobs you will be suited to [\[Page 3\]](#)
- How to get experience – volunteering, work experience placements, internships and starting your own business [\[Page 9\]](#)
- Where to look for job vacancies [\[Page 22\]](#)
- How to plan job-hunting [\[Page 27\]](#)
- How to apply for a job – writing a CV, covering letter and application and how to stand out [\[Page 30\]](#)
- What to expect from a job interview, how to prepare for it, how to dress and how to stand out [\[Page 39\]](#)
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1. How can I explore my options and what jobs I would be suited to?

This section includes information on how to research types of work, as well as how to identify which skills you have and what kind of work you would be best suited to.

Where do I start?

There are loads of types of work – the difficult part is figuring out what sort of job would be right for you. But these things can help:

- Talk to family, friends, teachers, youth workers or tutors about their experiences and job roles; build a network of people who could help you think about the world of work.
- Think about your interests and what kind of job you would like to do. Be realistic when you think about this – if your dream job is to be a singer, you'll need to work hard and be ready for setbacks. It is always useful to have other options. Also, try to be realistic about the level of job you go into – most people start out at the bottom of the job ladder in their first job; over time you can work your way up and into the role you really want.
- Consider where you would like to work, this could be in an office or you might prefer to work outdoors and be more active. Also, think about whether you would like to work near to where you currently live or if you would be prepared or able to move or travel further for work.
- Think about which companies are in your area and the sorts of jobs they offer – try to speak to local employers directly about the different kinds of work available; you can also find this out by looking on their website. Take advantage of any careers fairs or employer talks at your school/university or in your local area (these might be organised by your local Job Centre Plus or local council).

Remember

'Most people don't start out in the job they will do forever – so it's also okay to try out a few things before you figure out which job you are best suited to. One great way to test out types of work is to volunteer or get a work experience placement or internship – the extra experience can also boost your chances of getting a job.' (Alan MacKinnon, IHS)

Types of work opportunities:

Work experience

Normally a one–two-week unpaid placement with a company or organisation to give you a taste of what it is like to work there (more information on page 9).

Volunteering

Any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone/a group of people (not including your family and close friends) (more information on page 11).

Internships

A method of on-the-job training, usually used for office jobs and professional careers. It can last anywhere from six weeks to a year and should be paid. (more information on page 17).

Traineeships

A new scheme for young people who want to work, but who need extra help to gain an apprenticeship or job. Traineeships provide you with the opportunity to gain work experience and the skills that will help you to find a job (more information on page 18).

Apprenticeships

A job with training so you can earn while you learn and pick up recognised qualifications as you go. If you live in England, are over 16 and not in full-time education, you can apply (more information at www.apprenticeships.org.uk and on page 19).

Saturday/weekend job

A good way to earn some money and get experience if you attend school, college or university during the week. It involves working during the weekend and often includes jobs such as working in a shop or restaurant.

Temporary job

This is a job that is advertised for a fixed amount of time – such as Christmas seasonal work. For a certain number of weeks or months you will have a job, but when your contract ends the job will be over.

Full-time permanent job

Usually this involves working 35+ hours per week and the job will continue unless you resign or are made redundant. Although most jobs will give you an induction and, in some cases, additional training, this is usually less than you receive when an apprentice.

Part-time job

A job that involves working fewer than 35 hours per week.

Self employed

This is where you work for yourself – you might set up your own business, selling products (such as clothes) or a service (such as graphic design) to customers (more information on page 20).



How do I identify my skills and why is this important?

When looking for work you will often hear people talk about 'skills' – these are the proven abilities you have that will be useful to a potential employer.

Examples include:

- Communication
- Team working
- IT skills
- Foreign languages

Or more job-specific skills, such as:

- Money-handling
- Car maintenance
- Child care
- Gardening
- Customer service

Your skills are important because they are what make you stand out when applying for a job. They are separate from your qualifications or education – but you could have gained them at school, at home, via hobbies or previous work experience. Speak to a family member or friend to help you think about the skills you have and how that can help you decide what sort of work you would be suited to. For example, you could have proven your childcare abilities by looking after younger siblings or cousins – this might make you well suited to working in a nursery or children's shop. A website such as www.Plotr.co.uk can help you explore types of work which match your interests.

Researching your options

Using the Internet, careers advice services at school/college/university or family and friends can help you match your experience, skills and interests to different job roles.

These websites might also be able to help you with your search:

National Careers Service

<http://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk> - the careers advice section of this website features over 700 job profiles across a wide range of different sectors – a good place to look for inspiration. They also have a helpline (0800 100 900 – free from landlines or you can arrange for them to call you back on a mobile) and a free face-to-face service for those aged 19+.

Plotr

www.plotr.co.uk - this is an interactive website that provides loads of information about different kinds of job roles – the Career Worlds section features 29 different sectors for you to explore. You can also chat online to an adviser via the site if you want more advice.

National Apprenticeship Service

www.apprenticeships.org.uk - Provides information about different types of apprenticeships and allows you to search and apply for roles.

Prospects

www.prospects.ac.uk - this site is aimed at those with a degree or thinking about their career post-university.

What should I expect from my first job?

It's good to be ambitious but you also need to be realistic, especially when you are just starting out:

'When beginning your career, starting salaries can be low. Don't let this put you off. Think about the skills and experience you stand to gain and where the job might lead.' (Neil Morrison, Random House)

'I got my first job at 17 working in a bar. This wasn't what I wanted to do but at least it gave me something to talk about in interviews and to put on my CV. This experience helped me get a job in retail which is what I really wanted to do – I now work in Top shop which was where I wanted to work all along.' (Shoyaine, 20)

'The industry isn't always glamorous, so remember this when you're applying for roles and try and be realistic.' (Catherine Schleiben, ITV)

'Some people are put off by the level of job and won't take it because they think it will be boring, remember - you can always work your way up.' (Katrina, 24)

'It's quite normal to begin at the bottom and work your way up in an organisation. Everyone starts this way, and it takes time to accumulate skills, experience and knowledge of a business. Many of our hotel managers began working with us on the hotel reception desk – it shows how you can work your way up over time.' (Liz McGivern, Red Carnation Hotels)



2. How can I get experience?

Guidance on how to get work experience, how volunteering can help boost your chances of finding a job and important information on internships, traineeships, apprenticeships and being self employed.

Work experience

Getting work experience is a great way to see what it's like to work and test out different career options – it can also help you to build up your skills and be more likely to secure a job in the future.

- Work experience placements typically last one–two weeks and can be undertaken at any age – providing the employer is willing to offer you the opportunity.
- If possible, it's good to start thinking about work experience when still at school – some schools will arrange work experience opportunities for you – but there is nothing stopping you from setting something up yourself during the school holidays.
- A good work experience placement will usually involve a bit of time working alongside someone else to see how they work – perhaps joining them in a meeting or watching them serve a customer. To get the most out of your experience you should also be undertaking some tasks yourself; you will be able to talk about this in future job applications or interviews.
- Family and friends might be able to help you find a work experience placement – but remember that the employer will be more impressed if you contact them directly:

'I am more likely to give someone an opportunity if they have contacted me directly, if they have taken the time to write to me, email or call, it shows they are really keen – I can also tell straightaway that they are someone who can behave in a professional manner.' (Jackie, HR Assistant, CIPD)

- Some employers may ask for you to send in a CV or letter to highlight why you want the experience – more information on this is in the next section. Unfortunately, not all employers are able to offer work experience – but don't give up – the fact that you have shown your enthusiasm is a good thing:

'I always wanted to work in retail, so I called around loads of shops to get some work experience. I went into some shops on an almost weekly basis and would ask the manager if they had any opportunities. They got to know me and liked my passion and persistence. It paid off – eventually I got a part time job in one of the shops.' (Shoyaine, 20)

The Prince's Trust Get into

Need some work experience to help you get a job? The Prince's Trust runs short courses called Get into that for UK residents aged 16-25 who are unemployed. On the course you get intensive training and experience in a specific sector. This could be sport, construction, logistics, cooking, customer services - or one of many more. To find out more and see whether any opportunities are available in your area visit: princes-trust.org.uk/need_help/courses/get_into.aspx.



Volunteering

Volunteering is any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone/a group of people, outside of just your family or friends. It can be a formally organised activity, with a group such as the Guides/Scouts, or it could be organised by yourself – for example, you might help an elderly neighbour with their shopping every week.

Volunteering is one way you can get experience that can help boost your job prospects. In some ways, it can help you more than getting a work experience placement. Good-quality work experience opportunities can be hard to find and even if you do one, they will often last only one to two weeks, whereas volunteering can last for a much longer period of time.

Volunteering has loads of benefits, as these volunteers explain:



'When I started volunteering I didn't know what I wanted to do. Now I have a much better idea. It can help you think about the sorts of work you want to do. You should also be open minded when you volunteer – you might be asked to do something you don't want to do, but it's still learning and you don't know what opportunities you might get out of it.'
(Sarah, 22, Young Ambassador for The Prince's Trust)



'Volunteering has really helped me develop my skills, I was involved in a scheme that involved helping older people with their IT skills. I now feel confident when talking to people of different ages, including senior business people. Volunteering also proves that you can be enthusiastic and dedicated to something, which is what employers want.'
(Shoyaine, 20, Youth UK Volunteer)



'It has really boosted my confidence – I hosted an event on domestic violence in my local community – I had to welcome everyone and introduce each session – this gave me public speaking experience but also helped me to generally feel more confident when I speak to people. I also learnt how to work under pressure and that you can't leave things to the last minute.'
(Elizabeth, 17, volunteer, domestic violence project - Envision)

'Volunteering is a two way thing. You get skills, opportunities and contacts, whilst giving something back to your communit. One of the best thing you can gain through volunteering is meeting people – this can help you create a network of people who can lead you on to future opportunities. Tapping into networks has been a really key part of my volunteering experience.'

(Laurence, 21, Youth UK Volunteer)



'If you left school or university and haven't got a job, volunteering helps you show an employer what you've been doing. It shows you're dedicated and proactive, It can also give you a reference to put on your CV. Some schemes even give you the chance to win awards and prizes, which also look great to employers.'

(Katrina, 22, Young Ambassador for The Prince's Trust)



'Volunteering helps you into a routine, which then becomes second nature by the time you get to work, which impresses employers. It also gives you a sense purpose and something to be proud of – I feel good about helping others.'

(Husayn, 23, Research Volunteer)



Where to look for volunteering opportunities

There are loads of volunteering opportunities for young people – ranging in commitment and outcomes. Some popular examples include:

- › Opportunities via Girlguiding or the Scouts Association
- › Volunteering at local charity shops
- › Helping out at an old people's home
- › Volunteering at a local youth club or community centre
- › Being a volunteer sports coach

The websites below might help you to find an opportunity that is right for you:

- › www.vinspired.com
- › www.do-it.org.uk
- › www.volunteering.org.uk
- › www.csv.org.uk

The Duke Of Edinburgh's Award

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) is the world's leading achievement award for young people. The programme is adventurous and fun and has three progressive levels; a Bronze, Silver or Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award, split into four sections; Volunteering, Physical, Skills and Expedition, with an additional Residential section at Gold. Participation enables young people to broaden their skill-set and demonstrate self-management, team working, commitment, a positive attitude to work, self-confidence and perseverance; all of which are highly valued by employers.

The Volunteering section is hugely beneficial to both society and the DofE participants who give their free time, valued at £24+ million per year.

DofE programmes are delivered under licence throughout the country in centres such as youth clubs, voluntary organisations (like the Scouts and Guides), schools, colleges, universities and businesses. For more information on how to start your DofE, visit our website: www.dofe.org.

The Scout Association

The Scout Association is the UK's largest mixed-youth organisation for boys and girls aged 6–25 years old. As well as taking part in a diverse range of exciting activities and challenges, such as kayaking, abseiling, learning first aid and computer programming, it's also a great way to do volunteering activity.

As a Scout, you'll be asked to do volunteering in your community, such as helping coach your local football team or cleaning up your local park. You can also take part in Scouts Community Week (2–8 June 2014), where you'll work with others on an exciting project and receive funding, advice and skills training from B&Q staff to bring your plans to life. Not only is volunteering great fun, but it helps develop the skills employers are looking for, including teamwork, time management, initiative, organisation, communication and commitment. Including your Scout activities and skills on your CV will show an employer that you are ready for the world of work.

'Being a Scout means you can go to an employer and give practical examples of times you've shown particular skills or done practical things. You can really tell a young person whose volunteered, and the best thing is everyone can do it!' (Simon, the Scout Association)

To find out more about becoming a Scout, you can visit www.scout.org.uk/getinvolved

Starbucks Youth Action

In partnership with Starbucks, UK Youth supports young people to improve their local communities. Starbucks Youth Action offers young people grants of up to £2000, plus staff volunteer time, for eight cities across the UK. The programme runs in London, Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Dublin, Edinburgh, Leeds and Manchester. Starbucks Youth Action aims to encourage and inspire a generation of young people to take action and create positive local change. The process involves taking young people's ideas from an online application to community action and involves local politicians, media representatives, as well as Starbucks staff and UK Youth's trainers.

Girlguiding

Girlguiding is the UK's largest charity for girls and young women. Girlguiding offers a range of flexible volunteer opportunities for men and women that fit around your skills and your schedule.

Girlguiding also offers a number of volunteer opportunities specifically for young volunteers. Young women between the ages of 14 and 18 can become a qualified Young Leader, taking an active part in planning and running meetings for Rainbows, Brownies and Guides. Becoming a young leader provides valuable experience in leadership and responsibility and can really help to boost your CV. And there are many other opportunities for volunteers to gain valuable skills and qualifications such as First Aid, Food Hygiene or even becoming a peer educator, helping to deliver sessions on issues such as bullying, self-esteem, and communication. Girlguiding is passionate about supporting all volunteers to gain a great set of new skills, the courage to take part in new activities and valuable experience for employment.

'Volunteering provides amazing skills, experiences and fun for everyone taking part and it doesn't need to take up much of your time. The opportunities within Girlguiding are flexible and can fit around your skills and your interests. Whether they're running activities with a youth group, supporting with administration or leading a development project overseas, all of our volunteers are amazing at what they do!'
(Ruth, Girlguiding)

There are so many rewarding and fun ways to get involved, find out more at www.girlguiding.org.uk.

The Prince's Trust Team Programme

The Prince's Trust Team programme is a 12-week programme of personal development, helping 16-25 year olds - the majority unemployed - to develop their confidence, motivation and skills through teamwork in the community. Find out more at: princes-trust.org.uk/about_the_trust/what_we_do/programmes/team_programme.aspx

How to sell your experience to employers

'Think carefully about the skills and experience you've gained through volunteering. If you've organised an event for example, don't focus on the event itself but think about what useful things you learnt by doing it.'
(Marcus Lee, Santander)

When talking about your volunteering, don't just say what you did – explain the background, your role, the results and the skills you learned. For example, you might have helped do up your local community centre. You shouldn't just say 'I painted a wall'; you should remain honest but expand on this to fully highlight your experience and achievements to the potential employer. For example, you might say: 'I worked as part of a team to redevelop the local community centre. I was involved in discussions about the project and took a lead on the redecoration of one room. I chose the paint colour and led a team of other volunteers to ensure we were co-ordinated in our efforts to repaint. The result was a new bright space for the local community to use. This experience taught me teamworking abilities and time-keeping – as the room had to be painted by a certain time.'

'Volunteering has helped me to prepare for professional life and how to work with other people effectively and compromise. I will talk about all these experiences in a future job interview – I won't just explain what I did but how I did it, what I achieved and the new skills I learnt and why these are useful for the employer.'
(Elizabeth, 17, volunteer, domestic violence project - Envision)



Internships

An internship is a method of on-the-job training, usually used for office jobs and professional careers. Interns are often university students or recent graduates, but internships can be open to people who haven't attended university. An internship is usually full-time and can last anywhere from six weeks to 12 months. Increasingly people who want to go into certain careers – for example, finance, media and communications – are expected to have completed one or more internships before they will be considered by employers for a permanent vacancy.

Some internships are very competitive and you will have to go through the same sort of process to get one as you would for a normal job. However, the good thing about an internship is that they should be paid and are designed for people who are just starting out in their career – they can also be a good way of testing whether the particular job is right for you. Sometimes, if the internship goes well, you might be offered a permanent job once your internship is completed – however, it's important to remember that there is no guarantee of this.

Be aware – some employers will offer unpaid internships or volunteer placements – to find out more about the difference between volunteering and an internship, and whether you should be paid, and how to report an employer if you are not, visit www.internaware.org.



Traineeships

Traineeships are a new scheme to help some young people get the key skills and experience they need to get a job. Anyone who does one will get work preparation training, maths and English support as well as unpaid work experience.

Traineeships are an ideal opportunity if you are keen to get a job but currently lack the skills and experience that employers are looking for. If you have been applying for Apprenticeship vacancies but not getting the job you could be an example of someone who would be a good candidate for a Traineeship. However, they are not designed for anyone who is educated to A-level standard or above or who already has a job (or work for less than 16 hours per week). Traineeships are starting to be offered in different areas across the country. Look out for the latest information at www.apprenticeships.org or call 08000 150 600 to find out more.



If you are keen to continue learning, alongside working, you might consider doing an apprenticeship. An apprenticeship is a real job with training so you can earn while you learn and pick up recognised qualifications as you go. If you live in England and are over 16, you can apply. They take between one and four years to complete and cover 1,500 job roles in a wide range of industries, from things such as engineering to financial advice, veterinary nursing to accountancy.

There are lots of benefits to doing an apprenticeship. You can earn while you learn, and learn in a way that is best suited to you – through hands-on experience on the job. For more information on the benefits of doing an apprenticeship, visit www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Be-An-Apprentice.aspx.

How to apply

The steps you need to take for applying for an apprenticeship are slightly different from other jobs. There is an apprenticeship website that allows you to search, view and apply for apprenticeships online: www.apprenticeships.org.uk.

A step-by-step guide on how to apply can be found here: www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Be-An-Apprentice/Applying.aspx



Self-employment or starting your own business

Becoming self-employed or starting your own business can have loads of advantages. Many people like the idea of being their own boss and deciding themselves what they do on a day-to-day basis. You can also be helping to boost your local economy; all businesses had to start somewhere and who knows how your idea might grow. It can also be an option worth considering if you are struggling to get a job but know you have an idea or set of skills that someone would be willing to pay for.

There are some drawbacks to becoming self-employed at a young age which are worth considering. You might struggle to get the money together to start your business or train yourself, although the Government does offer start-up loans and mentoring for some young people. Also, if you do decide to work for someone else in the future, it will be more difficult to provide a reference. You will also not be paid on a regular basis and if you are ill or take holiday, this will be unpaid.

However, some people have great success as a result of their business idea but it does take a lot of hard work and commitment. As Irina Alionte, a young business person who has recently founded a new business – club cardio events explains: 'Every no brings you closer to a yes – you have nothing to lose. A positive mindset is important and not being deterred by the no's.'

The CIPD will be releasing new research that will be full of other examples of young people that have started their own business. If you would like a copy of this when it is published please email research@cipd.co.uk.

Some examples of the sort of work that many people do on a self-employed basis are listed below, but the full range is much bigger than this.

- Graphic designer
- Gardener
- Painter/decorator
- Musical instrument teacher

If becoming self employed is an option you are considering there are a lot of resources out there that might be able to help you:

- The **Citizens Advice Bureau** website provides helpful information for those wishing to become self-employed: www.adviceguide.org.uk.

- **The Prince's Trust** runs a programme called Enterprise which is designed to help young people with setting up their own business. Their website also has loads of helpful advice and can point you to the best places to look for information on issues including health & safety considerations and your legal requirements. Visit princes-trust.org.uk and search for the Enterprise programme.
- **Start Up Donut** – written in bite-sized chunks, this website helps to explain everything you need to know in the early stages of setting up your own business: www.startupdonut.co.uk.
- **Greatbusiness** is a Government backed website that helps people to start and run their businesses: www.Greatbusiness.gov.uk.
- **Rockstar Youth offers** 18-30 yr olds an opportunity to develop their business ideas and get the right support and funding to launch and grow: www.rockstaryouth.co.uk.
- **The Start Up Loans Company** is a government funded scheme that can provide a start up repayable loan together with a business mentor for anyone looking to set up a business across England and Northern Ireland: www.Startuploans.co.uk.



3. Where do I look for jobs?

Here you will find information on the best places to look for job and apprenticeship vacancies.

Employers advertise vacancies using a wide range of methods. Here are just a few examples of places to begin your search.

Online:

- The company website – their own website is often the first place employers will advertise vacancies. Many have either a 'Work for Us', 'Careers' or 'Jobs' page that highlights positions. So make a list of the local employers or companies in the relevant sector you want to work for and take a look.
- Job sites or job boards – These websites can be a useful way of searching for jobs as they allow you to view a wide selection of vacancies in one place. Some of the best ones are:
 - www.gov.uk/jobsearch - official Government Universal Jobmatch website
 - www.monster.co.uk
 - www.Totaljobs.com
 - www.Jobsite.co.uk
 - www.fish4.co.uk
 - www.milkround.com – for university graduates.
- Many of these sites also let you sign up for job alerts tailored to the types of roles you are interested in, so you will receive an email outlining new vacancies. Although, remember to keep track of any you apply for and that some jobs will be advertised on more than one site.
- National Apprenticeship Service: If you're looking for an apprenticeship, www.apprenticeships.org.uk is the best place to start.
- Social media:

'We use social media to let more young applicants from a variety of backgrounds know what jobs we have on offer. Facebook and Twitter are regularly updated, so make sure you keep an eye on them when looking for jobs.' (Neil Morrison, Random House)

Some employers, like Neil, will use social media – LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter are the most popular websites, so try searching for an employer’s page, profile or fan pages that then link to the company’s job site. When applying for opportunities, it’s important to always remain formal – even if you did find out about it on Facebook. Also, make sure your profiles are up to date and any photos or anything you might not want a potential employer to see is hidden from public view. More information on using social media is on page 29.



Remember

'Always keep a record of which jobs you've applied for and if you are applying online it's better to save things in Word and then copy it over – sometimes you can lose information on websites – which is particularly frustrating when it's a job application.' (Laurence, 21)

More information on how to plan your job search can be found in the next section.



Recruitment agencies

Many employers use recruitment agencies to help them recruit people for job vacancies. Most have an office (you might spot them on your local High street) and often have a website. They will advertise roles on behalf of the employer – placing adverts on job websites and in newspapers – but usually they won't reveal which company the job is with – just an outline of what the job is and the skills they are looking for. Recruitment agencies can be a good way of finding a job, particularly as you get more experience and become more specialised in your career, however, when you are just starting out at looking for work, there are a few things you should remember, as this recruiter says:

“For some job vacancies I will consider people who don't have direct experience but they need to have a really good CV that highlights their transferable skills. I take a particular interest in reading the candidates profile as I think that's a good way to see if they have done their research in terms of the job. I also like to see specific dates on CVs (not just the year) so it's obvious what their history is – only then will I consider putting their CV in front of the employer.”
(Rebecca, Recruitment Manager)

More tips on writing a CV can be found in section 5.

Other ways to find opportunities:

- **Jobcentre Plus:** Your local Jobcentre Plus will have information about jobs available in your local area. Visit www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus to locate your nearest one. As a young job seeker you may also be eligible for additional support, including benefits or loans for things like transport and from interviews.
- **National and local newspapers:** Many employers still advertise roles in newspapers or on newspaper websites – particularly for vacancies in the local area.
- **Develop a contact network:**

'Word of mouth is one of the best ways to hear about jobs.' (Katrina, 23)

See if you can develop a contact network of friends, family, teachers and tutors who may have heard about jobs being advertised, or have ideas about where to look for opportunities. This is also why volunteering, work experience placements and internships are so important. It's not just about putting something on your CV, they give you access to those networks.

- **Careers fairs and talks by employers:** Attending jobs fairs organised by your school, college, university or local council can be a perfect way to meet employers and find out about job vacancies in your local area.
- **Go direct to the employer:** Once you've identified a company you want to work for, why not get in touch with them directly to see if they have any vacancies or opportunities. Even if they don't, an employer will be impressed by your motivation and may consider you for opportunities in the future.

'Lots of employers are concerned about hiring inexperienced young people. By picking up the phone and asking to speak to someone, they will be impressed. It shows that you are confident and able to speak to people you don't know - a skill that is useful, particularly if the job will involve speaking to customers.' (Husayn, 23)

For jobs in shops, restaurants, coffee shops or cafes (this also applies to bars or pubs if you are over 18) it is also worth checking for adverts in windows or popping in to ask directly whether they are recruiting.

Remember:

Don't ever think because you have not got a specific placement / job you won't ever get a job there – it's worth trying again, many people get a job after a while. Persistence can pay off:

'Some people apply three or four times or even more and then they will get a placement. I always tell them, if you don't succeed on the first try, apply again but make sure that every application is as polished as the first.'

(Neil Morrison, Random House)



4. How can I plan my job hunt?

Ten step plan for job hunting

- 1 Finding a job can take time – many people find it difficult to keep motivated. Finding work can feel like a job in itself, but your hard work will pay off. To keep on track, think about setting yourself a plan. Here are ten steps that will help:

You should begin by being clear on the type of role or roles you are looking for and the location you would like to work in. Don't be too narrow as you might not be leaving yourself with many options; however, if you look too broadly you could become overwhelmed – it's important to give yourself enough time to spend on each application.

- 2 Think about where you could work – do you know which local and national companies offer the types of jobs you are interested in? Try to think broadly – for example, you might be interested in finance – many organisations employ finance people, not just banks and accountancy firms. You can research organisations online or ask friends, family or teachers/tutors for their thoughts. However, remember to stay realistic – you might have to start out doing something else before moving on to what you really want to do.
- 3 Make a list of ten organisations and start a spreadsheet to help you keep track – a template for this can be found here: www.cipd.co.uk/ypemployment.

'I use an Excel sheet to help me stay on top of the application process. Once you feel more on top of the process you feel more confident and motivated.' (Husayn, 23)

- 4 Find out if any of the ten organisations you have identified have any job opportunities that would be suitable for you (see the previous section for hints on where to look). You can then choose the vacancies you want to apply for. If this is your first job, you are going to be looking for an entry-level role – without experience, you will be wasting your time if you apply for a managerial role. There are a massive range of job titles in use so you may not understand what level the position is and what experience is required until you read the full job description. Look out for job titles that include words such as 'Assistant', 'Officer', 'Coordinator', 'Executive', 'Analyst', 'Researcher' or 'Administrator'.

- 5 Make sure you read a job advert properly; make a note of important information such as the company name, contact details and application deadline, as these will come in handy later on.
- 6 Now you can start applying for the vacancies – start with the ones that have the nearest closing dates so you can get your application in on time. Keep copies of your application/CV/cover letter on file so you have something to refer back to if called for an interview. The content can also help you with future applications (if it is handwritten, try to keep a photocopy).
- 7 Make sure your application is tailored to every role – some of the content (such as education) will be repeated, but make sure you read the job description carefully and make your application relevant. Don't forget to check every application for spelling and grammar. More information on applications can be found in the next section.
- 8 Remember to keep adding to your list of organisations as some may not have any vacancies that are right for you. Keep them on your list so you remember where you have applied and then research new ones you can add.
- 9 Within a few weeks of the application deadline you should start to hear back from employers if you have made it through to the next stage. Some organisations don't have time to let unsuccessful applicants know, but you can follow up with them to ask whether the vacancy has been filled and if it is possible to get any feedback on your application (more information can be found on pages 48-49).
- 10 Be persistent and ask for feedback! If your search is not producing the results that you would like, don't blame yourself. Talk to other people, ask them what they did when looking for work and grab yourself some free advice. If you do get any feedback from an employer, make a note of it and use it constructively to make changes to your future applications; you are more likely to get better results next time.

Advice on social media

Some employers will use social media to check people's profiles before offering them a job – there are no laws against doing this and so the best thing for you to do is make sure that whatever they find when they search for you will not put them off. You can help yourself by:

- › Making your profile on sites such as Google+, Facebook and Instagram restricted to just your friends. All of these sites have pages that allow you to set your privacy settings.
- › For some sites, such as Twitter, you might be less keen to only allow your friends to follow but you should make sure that anything that is open to the public is suitable.
- › There should be no bad language, references to alcohol or drugs and any opinions expressed should not be offensive to others – if in doubt, don't post it (or delete it if it is too late).
- › Be aware of any photographs you are in that might be visible to the public – think about whether they are photos you would mind a potential employer seeing.
- › Remember that things on social media sites stay on there – there have been cases where people have lost their jobs over things they posted when they were much younger. With your public profiles, don't forget to scroll down to check for anything unsuitable.
- › LinkedIn is the social media site used by professionals – it is now possible for anyone aged 13+ to set up a LinkedIn account – where you can put information about your skills and experience, similar to what you include on your CV. It can be a good way to network with people who work in the type of job you want, but remember it's not suitable for updates relating to your social life – keep it professional.

5. How do I apply for a job?

This section includes advice on how to write a CV, covering letter and application form, including how to make yourself stand out.

Some employers will ask for a covering letter and CV; others will ask you to fill in an application, either online or in paper form. In most cases you will need to provide some sort of written documentation when applying for a job role.

Remember

Check the presentation, spelling and grammar of any CV, letter or application before sending it to employers – including online forms. Ask a family member or friend to check that it reads well – a fresh pair of eyes will spot any small errors that you may have missed. This is really vital:

'If we get 500 application forms, the ones with the coffee stain or the doodling in the margin are immediately filtered out.' (Jo Ward, Nestle)

What is a CV?

Your CV, short for curriculum vitae, is a short document completed by you, about you, which can be used to sell yourself to a potential employer. It should highlight that you have the right skills and experience (not just paid work experience) for a job role within their organisation, as well as detail your motivation to succeed and why you are the type of employee they are looking to recruit for that particular job.



Basic tips for preparing your CV

- › Make your CV a maximum of two A4 sides long - if your CV is too long, the employer won't have time to read it.
- › Keep the design simple, use a font size no smaller than 10 and use a normal font such as Arial or Times New Roman - if an employer can't read about you, they won't want to meet you.
- › Use simple, plain and positive English with clear and concise content – don't waffle!
- › Make sure your CV is laid out in a way that is easy to read and nice to look at. Look at a 'standard CV template' online and then add your own small touches to make yours different.
- › Print out your CV on quality paper. And make sure that you save a copy on your computer so that it's ready for any other applications. There is no need to include a photograph.
- › It's important to be honest – don't make things up to make yourself sound better.
- › Don't include reference details unless specifically asked to – instead say 'references available on request'. (When requested, for your first role it is okay to give the details of a teacher, or perhaps a volunteer leader or sports coach as reference.)



Sections to include in your CV

Contact details

- › Your full name should be at the top of the page.
- › Full home address including postcode.
- › Mobile phone number and home telephone number if possible.
- › An email address – make sure this is appropriate (using an email such as ilovesweets@gotmail.co.uk is not appropriate and employers will sift you out straight away).

Personal profile

- › This is the most important and useful part of your CV because it highlights you as a candidate and why you are different from others.
- › Make it a short and snappy paragraph.
- › Ask someone you know to give you a few points on the type of person you are; this should help you highlight your best personal qualities.

Key skills and achievements

- › Use bullet points to highlight your key skills here; for example, highlight your IT or public speaking skills.
- › If you have key any achievements (awards or certificates) that are relevant to the job for which you are applying, you can also list them. For example, you may have won a prize at school, undertaken your Duke of Edinburgh Award or raised money for charity via a fun run or something similar.
- › Don't put anything and everything here (an employer won't want to know about every swimming badge you ever won) – stick to key highlights that can show you in the best light.
- › If you don't have any relevant achievements, it's nothing to worry about. You can leave this out.



Work and voluntary experience

- › List your most recent job (even if it was a summer job), work experience or voluntary work first and work your way back. Employers will want to see your up-to-date experience at the top.
- › Don't forget to list your job title and the dates you were with the organisation. Also highlight your main responsibilities and any key achievements.
- › Find out more about voluntary activities – hints on how to get involved and how to highlight your experience to employers on page 16.

Education and training

- › List your education (school/college/university) and qualifications, highlighting the dates and where you attended (go in reverse date order but not as far back as primary school).
- › If you have them, include your grades – put 'grades pending' and the likely date if you are yet to take your exams or receive your results.
- › If you have done any additional training at school or as part of any voluntary work or summer jobs, also list this here (for example, a food hygiene certificate).

Interest and hobbies

- › These may sometimes be used as an 'ice breaker' if you are called for an interview, so make sure that they are genuine interests.
- › Remember to include relevant hobbies to the job for which you are applying, for example cooking if you are applying for a chef's role.
- › Make sure that you have examples to back your hobbies up if called for an interview.

Remember

Don't worry if you have little or no work experience. There are plenty of other ways to show employers that you have the right skills and abilities to work for them and highlight that you are the best candidate for their company. Think about including the following examples in your CV, covering letter or application form:

- ▶ Were you part of a club or group at school/college/university where you had responsibilities? Have you helped to arrange any events? Did you have to keep records? Hold meetings? If so, these are perfect examples of being organised, working in a group, using your initiative and sticking to deadlines.
- ▶ Have you taken part in any Duke of Edinburgh awards or similar? These are also examples that you have worked within a team and followed instructions.
- ▶ Have you ever played a team sport? Think about the skills and behaviours you have gained: dedication, reliability (turning up for training/matches), motivating others (if you've just lost a game!), organising and leading others.
- ▶ Have you done any voluntary work? Girlguiding? Local charity shops? Local elderly home? Helped at a local church group? These are good examples to use as well.



The letter or email you send with your CV is your opportunity to grab the attention of the employer and get them interested in reading more about you. Here are some things you should consider when writing an effective letter:

- The focus of the letter should be on what you can bring to the organisation that you are applying to and how you can help them achieve their goals.
- This is your chance to tell the employer what specific skills/experience/interest you have that could be useful to them. Show the employer what value you can add to their business.
- Have a 'draft' copy saved on your computer so you can tailor it each time you apply for a job.
- Don't just copy generic paragraphs from another covering letter – the employer will spot this. You need to tailor it to the role you are applying for as much as possible.
- Remember to begin by telling them why you are writing to them – and include the specific role you are applying for if there is one.
- You should also look to explain what interests you about the job and the company – show you have done your research – more information on how to research an organisation can be found in the next section.
- Point out your key skills, experience and/or qualifications that are relevant to that particular job. Expand on the points that you have highlighted in your CV.
- End the letter in a positive way, expressing your willingness to discuss your application at interview.

Style of your covering letter

- Make sure the letter is typed and is in the same font and size as your CV.
- Stick to one page of A4 – it doesn't need to be too long – three or four paragraphs is acceptable.
- Address it to a named person if possible; if not, use 'Dear Sir/Madam'.
- Make sure any names you have included are correct – including the name of the company you are applying to!
- Keep to the point – don't waffle.
- Finish the letter with 'Yours faithfully' if you don't know the name of the person you have addressed it to, or 'Yours sincerely' if you do and sign your name (type it if you are sending it electronically).

Example covering letter

Your address

99 Long Road
Chesterfield
CH68 1PP

The company's
address

Next
33 Chesterfield
Chesterfield
CH00 4TW

Include the
position you are
applying for

Position: Sales Assistant (weekend)

If there is a named
person to apply to in
the job advert, put their
name here instead

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to apply for the position of Sales Assistant at the Chesterfield High Street branch of Next. Having recently completed a successful work experience placement, I have keen to take on a permanent role in fashion retail, and feel I would be a good fit for your store.

Highlight why you
want to work for that
particular company

I have experience in a customer facing environment, acquired during my placement and also in my role as a paper delivery assistant, a part-time job for two years. I am passionate about helping customers and feel that my experience (your store), makes me a good candidate for this part-time role.

If applicable, highlight
your flexibility

As a student, completing my GCSEs in Business Studies, English and Maths, I am keen to put my business knowledge to use in Next, a well known and popular company. I am also flexible, and can take on additional hours during holidays, if this is required.

Keep your examples
relevant to the role

Key skills:

- Experience within the retail sector: Undertook a work experience placement in a retail environment, which consisted with stock management and customer service. Completed my Business Studies for A-level and achieved an 'A' in the subject. I am a social team player, confident and friendly in all social situations, developed through my experience as captain of my local five-a-side football team.

Point out your key skills alongside practical examples of how you have demonstrated them

Thank you in advance for taking the time to consider my application, I have also enclosed a copy of my CV which provides more detail on my experience in more detail. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries.

Yours faithfully,

If you are sending a copy
via the post add your
signature here

Remember to include
your CV with your
covering letter!

Steven Jones

Companies may ask you to register yourself on their website and apply for their vacancy via an online application form; others may have a paper form that they want you to fill in and send back to them. A lot of the information you put together for your CV – such as your education, skills and experience – will also be useful for your application. Depending on the organisation, they might also ask you a number of specific questions to demonstrate your suitability for the role, or ask you to do this via writing a profile of yourself. It's really important that for these sections you have read the job description carefully and can give examples of how you match the requirements they are looking for.

When it comes to online forms, remember:

- Make sure you have filled in all the sections before clicking the 'send button'.
- Many organisations filter by grades (GCSEs or UCAS points) during the first stage of the application – make sure you meet the minimum requirements, otherwise you might waste your time by filling in the rest of the application.
- Remember not all sites will have a spell-check facility – use a dictionary if you're not sure.
- If you are having problems submitting your application, don't just hope for the best. There is always a helpline number or email address to contact. This will ensure that your application is received properly and on time.
- The company will probably have a lot of online applications to sift through, so you need to make sure that yours will stand out from the other applicants'.



How can I make my CV and/or application stand out for the right reasons

Once an employer receives an application, they will immediately discard it if:

- › It fails to meet essential criteria or minimum educational standards.
- › There is key information missing (e.g. name and phone number).
- › It is poorly presented or in any way unclear.
- › It includes spelling or grammatical errors.
- › It mentions the wrong company or the company name is spelt wrongly.

There is a lot of competition for vacancies - standing out from the crowd is therefore essential. Here are a few ways to do it:

- › If you are applying for a job that requires a specific skill, for example, a gardener, make sure that you highlight this skill – you have to show that you are capable.
- › Use the job description for the vacancy. If you don't have one, look at the company's website or use any brochures you can find. This will help you to establish the kind of candidates that particular company is looking for.
- › Use words from the job advert and put these in your CV. This can also be included in your covering letter. This will prove that you have read the advert properly and paid attention to detail.

'Really look at how suitable you are for a role before you apply. Carefully read the job advert and job description and make sure you are clear about how you are suited to the role. You are much more likely to be shortlisted if you do.' (Martin Hottass, Siemens)

'Looking for jobs can be a competitive process. Think of ways to stand out from the crowd, either by highlighting a particular skill on your CV or mentioning things in your covering letter that you think others may not have done.' (Jo Ward, Nestle)

6. What should I expect from a job interview?

Information on how to prepare, how to dress and the sorts of questions you are likely to be asked

There are several types of interview and, depending on the role/organisation you are applying to, there might be multiple stages in the interview process. These are not designed to put you off – they exist so employers can find out which candidates will be the best fit for the role/company

Types of interview

Telephone/Skype interviews – These are quicker for employers to set up than face-to-face interviews and are often used as a first stage. If you take part in this sort of interview, make sure that you conduct the interview from a quiet place and that your equipment works and you have a signal. You do not want to miss or be late for your interview because of technical problems – you might not get another chance to impress.

Assessment Centres – These enable employers to assess your performance in a range of situations. Activities are usually timed, which also allows employers to see how you work under pressure. The assessment centre might combine a mix of face-to-face interviews, group activities and tests.

Group interviews/exercises – Often included as part of an assessment centre day – you might find you are asked to take part in an activity with other people who have applied for the same role. This form of interview will be used to assess your teamworking skills, and whether you stand out as someone that is a good fit for the role. Although the other people in the room are your competitors, it's important to keep it professional and that you shine for the right reasons.

Informal interviews/chats – Some organisations like to meet candidates in a less formal setting first so they can gauge your personality and work out whether you're right for the job. The word 'informal' can be a bit misleading – remember you still need to sell yourself in the best way possible. They might not have a structured list of questions prepared to ask you, but they will still be keen to see how you present yourself and talk about your skills and experience.

Formal interviews – The most common type of interview is a sit-down, face-to-face interview where you will be asked questions by usually one, two or three people from the organisation. They will often run through a list of questions, taking brief notes of what you say, and might ask additional questions in response to your answers. This type of interview can typically last anywhere from 30–90 minutes. More information on the kinds of questions and how to sell yourself during interviews is on page 44.

Interview tests

Some employers may ask you to complete a test as another way of assessing your suitability for the role. These could take many different forms, but common ones include:

Aptitude tests – These allow employers to see how candidates perform on tasks or react to different situations. They are often computer-based (although sometimes done on paper) and are used to assess a range of things including numerical and verbal reasoning. If you know in advance that you have one of these as part of the interview process, try to get information on what kind. There are various free online practice tests you can take that could help you prepare and get used to taking the same sorts of test.

Work based tests – If you are going for an office job they may ask you to complete an 'in-tray exercise', which will assess your ability to prioritise and complete tasks. Alternatively, if you are going for a customer service or sales role, you might be asked to take part in a role-play exercise or even complete a trial shift. For an administration job you may be asked to complete an IT test, for example to assess your typing speed or ability to use certain computer programs.

Personality tests – Some organisations like to check whether and how your personality will fit in with the company culture. There are several types of test but most involve filling out a multiple choice questionnaire. There is never a right or wrong answer to these – just relax and try to answer the questions honestly.

Interview preparation

Before the interview

- Always confirm that you will be attending by phone, email (or in some cases letter)
- Do your research on the job/apprenticeship and company before hand – see the box for hints on how to do this.
- Practise your interview technique – get a friend or family member to help
- Make a practice trip to the interview location so you know where you are going and approximately how long it will take to get there. If you are travelling by public transport, remember to factor in time for delays!
- Save a contact number in your phone, in case you are delayed and need to let the interviewer know.

Researching a company

'Take time before an interview to thoroughly research the company you're applying to. Your level of knowledge, however small, shows your commitment. Try the company's website as a starting point.'
(Liz McGivern, Red Carnation Hotels)

In order to impress an employer you need to go out of your way to research the organisation before an interview – its purpose, its products, even its history.

This sounds like a huge task, but fortunately there are lots of resources you can turn to that will help you in your search. In your search for information this step by step guide might help:

Step 1: Call or send an email to people in your 'network' you think may be able to help. Perhaps a relative or friend knows someone who works for the organisation – you never know so it's worth asking around.

Step 2: Search on the Internet – enter the company name into Google (or a search engine of your choice) to see whether they have a website or LinkedIn/Twitter page.

Step 3: Look for the relevant pages on their website: 'About us' 'Our people', 'Careers' or 'Working with us' sections might be particularly useful. The organisation might also have its Twitter feed or LinkedIn page – have a look to see if any information on there might be of use.

Step 4: You want to find out what the company culture is like – what is really important to them – so, if they have one, make sure you look at the 'Mission statement' or 'Values' page on their website. If they have a 'News' page this might also be helpful as it will give you an idea of the current issues that are relevant to the company.

Step 5: Make a note of useful words and phrases that you come across in relation to the organisation, and think about how you can link these to your knowledge, skills, and attitude within your application or interview.

What to wear

As a rule you should always dress smartly for interviews. Your dress sense is clearly very personal and individual to you; however, these guidelines might help:

- › Go for a formal look, even if you think the job will not need you to dress that way or provides a uniform. Jeans, leggings or sportswear are not appropriate.
- › Wear clean, fresh and ironed clothes; make sure your shoes are smart and clean too – trainers or flip flops aren't a good option.
- › Clean hair, nails and breath is vital - remember, some jobs may mean that long nails and nail varnish are not allowed, for example nurse/carer/caterer.
- › Whatever the fashion, please keep underwear under clothes; plunging necklines, visible bra straps or visible boxers can give the wrong impression.
- › Keep make-up and jewellery at a minimum (unfortunately some people are still negative about piercings so take them out).

'I like to see candidates who are dressed smartly – you don't have to spend a fortune but looking your best for an interview is really important – it shows you are motivated and professional – this creates a good impression and I am more likely to want to recruit a person who has those qualities – even if the day to day job doesn't always require them to wear a suit every day.'
(Jackie, HR Assistant, CIPD)

Men

- › 2 piece suit – light grey to dark colours, shirt with collar and tie, proper shoes and socks.
- › Or smart dark plain trousers, plain sweater/ pullover or contrasting jacket and shirt with collar and tie, shoes and socks.
- › You could substitute collar and tie for smart plain polo shirt or short- sleeved shirt.



Women

- › Skirt or trouser suit (any colour) with blouse/shirt and proper shoes and tights (very high heels are a bad idea).
- › Or a plain, smart dress with proper shoes/sandals and tights (if wearing a skirt).
- › Or skirt/trousers, sweater/pullover, shirt/blouse and shoes.



During your interview

- Arrive ten minutes early: Smile, and be polite to everyone. Remember to look people in the eye.
- Speak clearly and always say 'please' and 'thank you'. Never use rude, offensive or swear words. If a bad word pops out by mistake, apologise immediately.
'Motivation and passion are the key ingredient we look for. Make sure you show it throughout the recruitment process.' (Shaun Meekins, Barclays)
- Having the right attitude can make all the difference between flying and flunking your interview. Above all, employers are looking for candidates who show a willingness to learn and enthusiasm.
- Don't let nerves get the better of you: Everyone suffers from nerves in one form or another, but learning to keep them in check will really help when it comes to interviewing. Try and ensure you appear interested in what is said at all times. Remember – first impressions count!
'Explaining your skills and experience can be tricky. Try talking about a project or hobby and explain the things you've learnt through doing them, such as organising others – remember, any example is better than no example.' (Martin Hottass, Siemens)
- Be yourself: Employers want to see the real you – but remember you're there to be assessed on your suitability for a particular role, so it's important to remain professional, polite and engaged at all times.
'Before your interview think of real life examples which highlight your experience. Practice with a friend or parent in advance so you have time to prepare unique answers which show you've truly thought about what you're going to say.' (Jo Ward, Nestle)
- Employers are looking for people who not only have the qualifications they need, but also have strong personal skills, including an ability to communicate, positive attitude and a good work ethic. Companies are looking for someone who is the 'right fit', with personality and motivation. Therefore, being able to show an employer that you have these skills will boost your chances of successful.
- When the interview is over: thank the interviewer for their time and shake their hand. Leave them with an impression that will make them want to call you back!

Remember

A lot of the tips around how to behave during your interview also apply if you are lucky enough to get the job – more information on what to expect from your first job can be found on page 51.

Interview questions will vary according to organisation, but essentially all interviews are designed to find out:

- Your suitability for the job or apprenticeship – skills, knowledge, experience (this could be voluntary rather than paid work experience)
- Your enthusiasm for and interest in the company/role – including why you want the role and what you already know about the organisation.
- Whether you will fit in with the rest of the team and organisation.

Think about these questions in advance, using real-life examples to illustrate your points.

Tell me about yourself...?

This is a standard opening question used in many interviews. When you answer this question, think about the following:

- Don't be tempted to give a short response – use this time to introduce yourself to the employer in the best possible light.
- Your response to this should be well rehearsed, confident and relevant. Don't reel off your life history – instead, focus on things that relate to the job you're going for.
- Include some impressive achievements – awards you have received, competitions won, leading a school club or society, volunteering activities or charity fundraising.
- Talk about how enthusiastic you are about the job and the organisation – do your research beforehand so you know what to say.

Q. What do you know about the company/organisation?

Many employers want to test whether you have researched the company you are applying to. For those that have, it shows that you are interested in the role and are someone that prepares for things. However, when you don't, you look unprepared and like you might not really want the job. Use the tips on page 41 before your interview so you can be prepared for this question and practice what you will say if you are asked it.

Q. Why do you want this job?

Your answer should reinforce why you are a good fit for the job and convey your enthusiasm for the role. You should mention:

- The good match between your skills and what the job requires – including what you will bring to the company
- Your interest in the organisation's area of business/products, for example, if you are going for a role at New Look and you always shop there – say so!
- The job being an exciting challenge for you.

Q. What are your key skills/strengths?

Focus on what you know they are looking for, even if it has only been a small part of what you have done to date. Take another look at the job advert and download the job description from the company website, work through it carefully and think about how your experience and skills meet their requirements.

Q. What are your weaknesses?

Nobody is perfect and everyone can identify areas for improvement. However, when thinking about yours, make sure they are relevant to a professional context:

- Don't tell your interviewer that you watch too much TV or you're bad at time – even though it relates to your spare time, this will create a bad impression of you that will be hard to shake off.
- Think about areas that you know you need to develop, or that teachers/tutors or even your parents have singled out for improvement.
- Remember to acknowledge that improving on your 'weaknesses' is important to you and, where possible, show how you are working to develop them. For example, you might be someone who is shy, but you purposefully make an effort to talk to people as you recognise this is an issue.

Q. Where do you see yourself in five years'?

Your interviewer might want to know how the job or apprenticeship you are going for fits in with your long-term plans. It's okay if you haven't worked out the next 20 years in your head – very few people have. However, you should have a general idea about what your interests are, what kind of areas you would like to work in and even perhaps where you see yourself in the next few years.

Tell the interviewer how the job and how their organisation fits in with these ideas – perhaps the organisation offers lots of opportunities for training and development, which in time will help you progress.

Q. Do you have any questions?

Most interviews will end with the interviewer asking you this. As a rule, it is good to ask your interviewers a question or two as it shows an interest. Here are some questions you might consider asking:

- How many people are in the team I may be working in?
- What's the best thing about working here?
- When can I expect to hear your decision?

Remember

Don't ask the interviewer how they think the interview went. You won't get immediate feedback and it will not reflect well on you. Interviewers will understand you being nervous but you will appear far more confident and self-assured if at the end of the interview if you shake their hand, thank them for seeing you and tell them you look forward to hearing from them.



7. I haven't heard back – what do I do?

Advice on what feedback to expect, how to get it and how to use it.

Waiting to hear whether an application has been successful can be a nerve-wracking experience. It can also be disappointing when you receive little or no feedback from an employer you've contacted. Feedback is important because it allows you to understand whether there are any improvements you can make in terms of your application or interview – ensuring that you can do the right things next time.

Many employers will send an automated email confirming they have received your application, and some may also use this method to inform applicants if they have been unsuccessful; however, this is not always the case.

Most employers want to help you become more successful, but face too many applications and too little time. However, there are things you can do:

- Request confirmation: When submitting an application form or CV, politely ask to be notified once it has been received. This will prevent unnecessary concern, and show that you're enthusiastic about the opportunity.
- If possible, try and find a contact name to address your application to: Having a name will make following-up your application easier.
- If your application has not been successful, and it has been confirmed that you will not go forward to interview: you may ask the reason why – however, it's important to bear in mind that if the response is automated, you may not receive an answer. This is much easier when you have the name of a person to ask.
- Read the small print: Most advertisements will include a closing date and guidance around when you can expect to hear from them (which can be anywhere between 2 weeks and a month in some cases). Make sure you don't chase until the deadline has passed, or you can look too pushy, which can put prospective employers off.

If you have not been successful after an interview or attending an assessment centre

'We're more than happy to provide feedback after your interview, but be proactive and contact us. It can be tricky for us to contact you due to sheer volume.' (Claire Fuller, Asda)

If you have not been successful at interview or assessment, you should request feedback. This feedback will usually be given by someone who was involved in assessing you. Good feedback will focus on areas for improvement, not criticism, and is designed to help you do better at your next attempt. Feedback can be delivered in a number of ways:

- You may receive an automated email which lists the most common reasons why you were unsuccessful.
- You may be offered an opportunity to receive telephone feedback, where your assessor or interviewer will discuss the reason for their decision and advise you on what improvements you can make.
- You may be provided with a feedback form, which the assessor completed following your interview or assessment. Often, these forms often contain useful links to other sources of advice and information.

How to handle feedback

'I always ask for feedback after an interview – it's important so you know what points you can improve on – it also shows the employer how enthusiastic you were able the role – you never know they might consider you in the future for something else.' (Laurence, 21)

Remember

- Try to be gracious when listening to feedback: Make sure you listen carefully and take on board the points being made. Say thank you and let them know how useful their time and pointers have been – it will encourage them to continue providing it to others who come after you.
- Write down the feedback you receive: And use it when you apply and interview for other opportunities.
- Unless asked, don't provide the person you're speaking to with feedback on how you thought the interview went.
- Try not to be defensive: Sometimes it's tempting to fight back, but don't. It may mean you're not considered for subsequent opportunities with them. Leave them with a positive lasting impression of you.

If you want more help or support

There are many free resources available aimed at improving your interview skills and performance. Here are just a few of them:

- **Websites** such as Monster.co.uk and National Careers Service provide helpful sections on interview tips.
- **If you're at university** try visiting your careers office for help. They often hold workshops to improve these skills, and some continue to offer their services for up to a year after you leave.
- **YouTube** contains a number of helpful videos and online tutorials giving general advice on Interview 'Do's and Don'ts'.
- **Practice!** Interviewing is a skill, and takes practice and repetition. The more you do, the better you become. So make sure you practice regularly. Ask a family member or friend to interview you or you could even organise an event at your school, college or youth club, where you could interview each other and provide feedback.



8. Your first job

What to expect in terms of hours, pay, holidays and training

Once you get your first job, well done – your hard work paid off! However, you may still have questions about your hours, your pay and what to expect in terms of training and how an employer treats you.

Some of the basic advice is listed below, but you can find more detailed information at: www.adviceguide.org.uk/ and www.acas.org.uk.

Your employment contract

All employees, regardless of the number of hours they work per week, are entitled to receive a written statement from their employer, within two months of starting work. The statement describes the main terms of the contract of employment.

The statement must give details about your job title, wages, hours of work, holiday entitlement, sick pay, pension schemes, notice period (how long either you or the employer must give before leaving or ending the job as well as the grievance, dismissal and disciplinary procedure. If you do not receive this you are well within your rights to ask for this information.

Hours

You have a duty to work the number of hours per week that are stated in your contract – if your job is part-time, your employer has a duty to shift you on for these hours. However, a number of employers will also employ people on 'zero-hours contracts', particularly in jobs such as shop or restaurant work. It is not illegal for an employer to do this and can be beneficial if you want your job to fit around being a college or university student, for example. However, it can also be difficult as it's harder to manage your time and finances – as the fewer hours you work, the less you will be paid.

Workers don't usually have to work more than 48 hours a week on average, unless they choose to. However, in some full-time jobs you might be expected to work more hours than are stated in your contract (full-time hours normally range from 35–40 hours per week) but not be paid for them. Generally, it should be your choice if you are prepared to do this – an employer should not expect it or insist on it.

If you are over school-leaving age and under 18, the law says that you must not work more than eight hours a day, or more than 40 hours a week.

You must have 12 hours rest between each working day, and two rest days per working week. You are also entitled to a 30-minute rest break when you work for longer than four and a half hours.

Pay, tax, national insurance and benefits

In the UK employers are legally obliged to pay you the National Minimum Wage if you are aged 16 or over – information on the current rates can be found at www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates.

Before accepting a job you should find out what the pay is – remember that when you receive your pay cheque some of the money will have already been taken off by the Government in tax and National Insurance – so the money you actually receive in the bank will be less than the role was advertised for. For more information on the rates of these, visit www.hmrc.gov.uk/rates/taxes-ni.htm.

The Citizens Advice website includes tool for budgeting that you may find useful to ensure that you keep to your limits in terms of what you spend on day to day living out of your first pay cheque. To access it visit: www.adviceguide.org.uk.

Remember

If you are in receipt of any Government benefits such as housing benefit or job seekers allowance you must inform the relevant organisations of your change in situation. If you don't and you continue to receive these payments then you may be committing benefit fraud which can lead to a fine or in some cases a criminal conviction.

Holidays

If you are under school-leaving age you are not legally entitled to paid holiday from work. If you are over school-leaving age, you are legally entitled to paid holiday and are entitled to 5.6 weeks of paid holiday a year. To work out how many days' holiday you can take a year, you need to multiply 5.6 by the number of days you work in a week.

For example:

- If you work a five-day week, you are entitled to 28 days' paid holiday a year (5.6×5).
- If you work 2.5 days a week, you are entitled to 14 days' paid holiday a year (5.6×2.5).

Training

If you are aged 16 or 17 and have not yet achieved a certain standard of education or training, you are entitled to reasonable time off work for study or training. The time off should be paid at your normal hourly rate.

If you are aged 18 or over, you may be entitled to ask for time off for training (although the employer does not have to give it to you and, if they do give it to you, they don't have to pay you for it). You have the right to ask for time off for training if:

- You are employed.
- You work for an organisation with 250 or more employees.
- You've been working for your employer for at least 26 weeks when you make the request.

You can ask for time off to do any training which would help you be more effective at work, and improve the performance of the business you work for. The training can be training that leads to a qualification or that helps you develop skills at work. There's no time limit on the amount of time you can ask for. Some employers may encourage you to do training as part of your job or be impressed that you have shown enthusiasm for the role by asking to take time off for it.





The **CIPD** is the professional body for HR and people development. It has over 130,000 members internationally working in HR, learning and development, people management and consulting across private businesses and organisations in the public and voluntary sectors. As an independent and not for profit organisation, the CIPD is committed to championing better and working lives for the benefit of individuals, business, the economy and wider society people. For more information visit www.CIPD.co.uk

Learning to Work is an action-focused programme led by the CIPD to promote the role of the employers in reducing youth unemployment. More details can be found at: www.cipd.co.uk/learningtowork



Youth charity **The Prince's Trust** helps disadvantaged young people to get their lives on track. It supports 13-30 year-olds who are unemployed and those struggling at school and at risk of exclusion. Many of the young people helped by The Trust are in or leaving care, facing issues such as homelessness or mental health problems, or they have been in trouble with the law.

The Trust's programmes give vulnerable young people the practical and financial support needed to stabilise their lives, helping develop self-esteem and skills for work.

Three in four young people supported by The Prince's Trust move into work, education or training. The Prince of Wales's charity has helped more than 700,000 young people since 1976 and supports 100 more each day.

Further information about The Prince's Trust is available at princes-trust.org.uk or on 0800 842 842



UK Youth is a leading national youth development charity supporting 700,000 young people. We do this by developing, promoting and delivering a range of innovative education programmes in partnership with a national network of member organisations. Our work is all about supporting young people to gain life-skills and accredited awards that build confidence, resilience and make them more employable. Our aim is to enable young people all over the UK to raise their aspirations, realise their potential and have their achievements recognised.



Envision inspire and engage young people to take positive action in their local community whilst supporting them to develop key skills and competencies. Young people are supported to lead their own social action projects and through practical experience they learn skills such as communication, team work and determination. Through facilitation from Envision staff, community and corporate volunteers young people feel motivated and able to make a difference and gain the confidence to continue leading positive change.

The prospect of looking for employment can be incredibly daunting for anyone, but it's especially hard if you've never had a job before. How do you find out what employers expect from you as a candidate? How do you write a CV? And how should you get ready for a job interview?

This guide is here to help. It is packed full of advice from employers and young people who have successfully found a job or work experience opportunity. It has been put together by the CIPD, the professional body for HR and people development with support from The Prince's Trust, UK Youth and Envision.

We would particularly like to thank the young people who shared their real life experiences of looking for work with us. You will find quotes from Laurence, Kieran, Shoyaine, Katrina, Sarah, Nisha, Husayn and Elizabeth throughout the guide. The design and artwork included in the guide was produced for the CIPD by two young freelance designers, Nikki Layton and Jimmy Gregory.



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