



# OUTPLACEMENT SUPPORT

October 2022

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## Outplacement guide

This guide is designed to help you to transition to the next stage of your working life following a change in your current circumstances. It offers tools and techniques that may help you cope with the change and make positive moves forward. The guide includes the following sections to help focus on all the options available and to make the right choices for the future, including:

- CV writing
- Searching for jobs and how to sell yourself:
  - Personal Branding
  - Recruitment agencies, job boards, networking and social media
- Interview preparation
- Considering retirement
- Emotional & financial wellbeing: advice and support
- Government support available

The sections within the guide are to provide support through the process and give you a 'route map' to help you find your next job. However it is also important to take time out to reflect on what you might want to do. Often redundancy allows us the opportunity to look at other options; we might decide to follow a long held dream or passion, whether that be starting your own business, retiring, studying or travelling. You may want to do something different, consider what your transferrable skills are or take the opportunity to learn something new.

# CV writing

## What is a CV?

(sometimes referred to as a Resume)

Your CV is your personal brochure and should reflect you and what you wish to project to a potential employer. It's used to explain to employers what you **can do** and what you **have done**, so a good CV looks forwards as well as accounts for what you did in the past. A CV should present your knowledge, learning, skills and competencies in a positive, honest way. There are no golden rules, but here are some guidelines to help you.

## Where to start with your CV

Putting together a CV can feel overwhelming, but the benefits are clear. It is a great investment in your future and a good CV will double your chances of getting an interview. Make sure your CV is well presented and includes all the relevant information. Most potential employers see hundreds of CVs and yours may get less than a minute of their time if it is not presented well.

In **Appendix 1** there is **Personal Career Appraisal** worksheet which you might find useful to establish what your **key strengths and attributes** are. Dedicating time to complete this worksheet can help you understand yourself better and get you thinking about what you're good at, what you enjoy doing and how can you sell yourself to a new employer. It will also help you identify the transferrable skills you have if you're considering a different kind of job.

## What does a good CV look like?

Here are some useful links to CVs and templates for different job types:

<https://www.totaljobs.com/advice/cv-templates>

<https://www.cv-library.co.uk/career-advice/cv/cv-templates/>

<https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/getting-job/building-cv> - contains a handy CV building tool

Most people follow a historical CV format; covering your employment history starting with your current or last role to show your career progression. Whatever format you choose, your CV should look clear and tidy with all the information easy to find. Here are some useful tips:

### Consider:

- Using a confident tone and positive language
- Concentrating on your achievements, not just your responsibilities or duties. This means listing things you have done such as projects, sales increased and awards won not just re-writing your job description
- Making your most relevant experience and skills noticeable, to encourage the employer to read on
- Keeping it snappy and to the point and ideally around 2 or 3 pages (depending on how many jobs you've done and how long you've been working)
- Checking thoroughly the spelling and grammar - spotting errors is a quick way for potential employers to reject candidates
- Asking someone to read through your CV, as this will help to spot errors and

- spelling mistakes
- Having a generic CV but be prepared to tailor it where required to fit specific jobs

### What should be included in a CV

<b>Contact details</b>	Name, address (don't include if you are posting your CV on a job board – just include your nearest town), mobile phone number, email address and LinkedIn profile (if you have one).
<b>Personal profile/statement</b>	This is optional but a short statement to "sell" yourself and summarise your key skills and experience. You also have the option of including this in a covering letter if you prefer.
<b>Employment/work experience</b>	List the most recent role experience including; the employer, brief description of company, dates of employment, describing your work experience in short sentences or bullet points using straight-forward and positive language.
<b>Responsibilities</b>	Include key skills and strengths you have demonstrated in each role.
<b>Achievements</b>	Include information about key achievements in your role(s).
<b>Qualifications</b>	Add your qualifications, especially those relevant to the role you are applying for including certification or role specific training you have done.
<b>Education</b>	This should be a brief summary, with the highest/most relevant qualification first. You don't have to include dates unless they're qualifications with expiry dates.

It's important that your CV is tailored to the needs of the potential employer and the particular job. If there is a job specification, job description or advert show how you're a good fit by giving examples of how your experience, knowledge and skills fit the requirements of the job, paying particular attention to the ones marked 'essential'. If there is a gap between jobs, it's often best to explain why. Unexplained gaps can leave the potential employer questioning why.

#### Reasons for gaps may include:

- Contract ended
- Left to continue education
- Took a career break to raise a family or care for someone else
- Redundancy
- Relocation

#### Preparing a personal profile/statement

A good way to make an immediate connection with the potential employer is to use a personal profile/statement. This is usually a punchy paragraph at the start of your CV that includes:

- Who you are and where your experience lies
- What role you're looking to do next
- What your personal strengths are
- What you can contribute to the business you are looking to join

If you are unsure on what your strengths are, you could approach this by asking those who know you best and will find it easier to provide an objective view such as your manager, trusted colleagues, close friends or immediate family. Ask them to be honest and to share with you an example of how you demonstrate this. Remember to tailor your personal statement to the job you're applying for or cover the points you want to make in a covering letter.

### **Examples of personal statements:**

"A dedicated Account Administrator who works well under pressure to consistently meet strict deadlines. Enjoys working as part of a team, using own initiative, effective communication skills to achieve and exceed objectives and goals"

"An experienced and enthusiastic Personal Assistant with a history of working at Board Director level within large multinational organisations. Computer literate, with strong organisation and problem solving skills, completing all assignments in a confident and reliable manner"

### **Should I include a covering letter?**

Yes, a covering letter will enable you to further tailor your application to the needs of the job you are applying for. This is your chance to show potential employers why you'd be good at the job and get them interested. Get it wrong, and that perfectly crafted CV you spent so long on could have been a complete waste of time.

Take time to write your covering letter, it doesn't have to be long but tailoring your application can give you an advantage and show you've thought about your suitability for the role. This is your chance to market yourself and it's important that you present your personality and career in the right way.

### **It's all about me!**

It is important to highlight your key achievements and skills in your CV to tell the new employer what contributions you have made in the positions you have held throughout your career and which you can bring to the role you are applying for.

**In Appendix 1** (at the end of this document) there is a **Personal Career Appraisal** worksheet. This can help you identify what your key strengths, attributes and achievements are.

Think about the main purpose of the jobs you have done - answering the following questions will help identify your skills and competencies:

- What was your role?
- What kind of problems or tasks was your role involved in solving?
- What action did you take?

- What was the result?
- You may like to mention awards or feedback from a manager/ colleague showing how well you did
- Describe your career history in terms of achievements
- What have you done over and above your job description?
- Where have you gone the extra mile?
- Where have you demonstrated flexibility, creative thinking or innovation?
- What projects have you been involved in and what was your contribution to the outcome?
- What legacy have you left behind?
- What did the team/business look like when you left compared to when you started and what part did you play in that?
- Describe your career history in terms of progress you've made
- Use numbers to highlight your accomplishments – think money, think time, think amounts

Once you have this, you can begin to create a list of achievements and contributions from your previous roles. It should highlight what action you took in your role and what results were achieved which are relevant to the role you are applying for. You then need to pull this information together into a paragraph/ bullet points that can then be used in your CV. For example:

- Efficiently entered customer details onto a database whilst handling high call volumes, keeping mistakes to a minimum and ensuring records were easy to understand for other colleagues.
- Reduced overall cost by 15% in one year by introducing a competitive tendering process.
- Consistently exceeded company 'outbound' call targets to collect overdue payments. Exceeding targets ensured arrears were collected from customers and helped to drive both personal and team performance.
- Handled customer complaints by listening and using empathy skills offering swift and appropriate solutions and maintaining an excellent standard of customer service, which retained customer loyalty.
- Was awarded 'Employee of the Year' from a team of 300 Customer Support Agents by achieving excellent customer feedback ratings consistently over the year.

### **Useful words you may want to use in your CV**

To make sure your CV gives you the best return, why not review it and see if you can use another word? You need to make sure every word counts and adds value to the picture you are trying to paint about yourself. Here's some alternative word suggestions:

<b>PLANNED</b>	<b>STARTED</b>	<b>CHANGED</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTED</b>
Administered	Built	Altered	Conducted
Arranged	Conceived	Combined	Demonstrated
Assembled	Created	Converted	Effectuated
Centralised	Devised	Modified	Enacted
Compiled	Established	Re-designed	Executed
Composed	Founded	Re-organised	Formulated

Co-ordinated  
Designed  
Developed  
Organised  
Prepared  
Proposed  
Scheduled

**ACHIEVED**  
Accomplished  
Attained  
Completed  
Ensured  
Negotiated  
Overcame  
Saved  
Succeeded  
Traded  
Won

**INCREASED**  
Accelerated  
Broadened  
Doubled  
Enlarged  
Exceeded  
Expanded  
Extended  
Heightened  
Strengthened  
Surpassed  
Widened

**MANAGED**  
Directed  
Headed  
Instructed  
Led  
Ordered  
Piloted  
Regulated  
Steered  
Supervised

Generated  
Initiated  
Installed  
Instigated  
Introduced  
Launched  
Originated  
Piloted  
Renewed  
Setup

**ADVISED**  
Approved  
Counselled  
Forecasted  
Guided  
Judged  
Liaised  
Prescribed  
Promoted  
Proposed  
Recommended  
Selected  
Specified  
Suggested

**MAINTAINED**  
Consolidated  
Continued  
Preserved  
Supported  
Updated  
Conserved  
Sustained

**OBTAINED**  
Acquired  
Bought  
Captured  
Collected  
Employed  
Hired  
Purchased  
Recruited  
Retained

Replaced  
Re-structured  
Shaped  
Transformed

**URGED**  
Encouraged  
Inspired  
Led  
Motivated  
Spurred  
Stimulated  
Taught  
Trained

**IMPROVED**  
Corrected  
Enhanced  
Rectified  
Refined  
Remedied  
Repaired  
Rescued  
Resolved  
Restored  
Revised  
Saved  
Transformed

**PREVENTED**  
Anticipated  
Averted  
Avoided  
Completed  
Diverted  
Eliminated  
Ended  
Eradicated  
Evaded

Negotiated  
Processed  
Produced  
Undertook  
Utilised

**WROTE**  
Documented  
Drafted  
Edited  
Interpreted  
Outlined  
Publicised  
Published  
Revised  
Translated

**LESSEned**  
Decreased  
Halved  
Lightened  
Lowered  
Minimised  
Reduced  
Shortened  
Streamlined

**RESEARCHED**  
Analysed  
Appraised  
Appraised  
Audited  
Calculated  
Collated  
Defined  
Estimated  
Evaluated



Taught  
Trained

Secured  
Halted  
Liquidated

Finished  
Forestalled

Examined  
Highlighted  
Identified  
Investigated  
Monitored  
Surveyed  
Tested  
Uncovered  
Verified

### Common mistakes in CVs

With lots of CVs arriving in potential employers' mailboxes every day, you want YOUR CV to stand out and not be discarded, keep this in mind and review the most common mistakes below:

<b>Spelling errors and poor grammar</b>	You don't gain anything by getting it right, but you lose a lot when you get it wrong. Check every word, then double check it before you send it off. Consider getting a friend to look it over.
<b>Too duty-oriented</b>	If you're copying your job description into your CV, you're missing the point. Potential employers already know what the job is; your CV should highlight what you've achieved whilst you've been doing it.
<b>Inaccurate dates</b>	Potential employers want to know where and when you worked to understand your working history. Dates of employment may be used for background checks. Include specific ranges in months and years for every position. If you have gaps, explain them, either in your CV or covering letter.
<b>Poor formatting</b>	Different typefaces and boxes may look nice on paper, but as your CV goes through various email formats and IT packages electronically, it can get distorted. If you want everyone to see your CV in the same format, keep it in plain text.
<b>Long paragraphs</b>	Focus on the skills and accomplishments that are relevant to the job applying for and put them into snappy bullet points. Every word counts, don't dwell on every detail of the job, but the highlights, specific to getting the potential employer's attention.
<b>Unqualified candidates</b>	You may want a job, but if you don't have the skills and experience needed, potential employers will feel you're wasting their time. If you think you have what it takes, look at the job description and highlight the skills they're looking for in your personal statement along with your relevant qualifications at the top of the document.

<b>Keep it relevant</b>	With the limited time potential employers spend on your CV, you don't want to distract them with your age, height, weight and interests unless they're directly related to the job you want to do. You need to think about what an employer's needs and what you bring to the table. A hobbies and interests section is valid but you don't need to include them or let it dominate your CV.
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## Searching for jobs

A successful job search includes the following steps:

- Establishing your career goals
- Building your personal brand
- Marketing yourself
- Searching for jobs

### Establishing your career goals

A key question to consider as you embark on a new job search is, "What do I truly enjoy doing?" This is your opportunity to reflect on the job role or roles you have had so far in your career and figure out which aspects you have really enjoyed and which parts you have not.

There are 2 benefits to doing this reflection work:

#### Creates a wider net for your search

No organisation is exactly the same - job titles and scope of job will be variable in the external marketplace. It is important to keep in mind that every organisation is different when it comes to job titles and/or how job roles are scoped. Therefore, rather than focusing on searching just for the title you have most recently had, you can search based on skill sets that you have or types of responsibilities you would like to have. This could help you find a job that you may never have considered solely based on title, but that is a perfect match for not only your skill set, but what you enjoy doing- a real win-win!

#### Creates an opportunity to make a change in your career path

As the marketplace continues to evolve and grow, so do the types of jobs being created. Although you may have been in a certain department or job type for a number of years, keep in mind that your skill sets may be transferable to new and/ or different types of jobs. For example, if you have been in Sales for most of your career, you may have really enjoyed building relationships and networking and selling the value proposition of the products and services of your organisation. These skills could easily be transferred into a role where you are associated with a Sales department, but not necessarily doing Sales yourself; perhaps a sales training position or a recruiter for sales positions.

### Building your personal brand

Personal branding is about identifying and then communicating what makes you **unique, relevant and differentiated** for your target audience, so that you can reach your career goals. If you understand your strengths, skills, passions, and values, you can use this information to separate yourself from your competitors and really stand out.

Personal branding is very powerful because it sends a **clear, consistent message** about **who you are and what you have to offer**. A strong, authentic personal brand helps you become known for what you're good at, sets you apart from everyone else, and can position you as a niche expert.

Today, emphasis is placed on personal branding, especially in the online world. Employers are now increasingly using social media tools in order to vet applicants before offering them interviews.

Think about this. How do you respond when someone asks "What do you do?" ...Do you say "I'm a talent acquisition manager, acquiring talent and I keep my eye on internal talent"? What on earth does that mean to the outside world?

Unless you're an animal trainer, Zumba instructor or grand prix racing driver, your job title might be the least exciting thing about you.

Instead you could describe your job as "I work in HR. It is my responsibility to recruit the best possible people that are out there".

That is easy when you're explaining this face to face, on Skype or over the phone, but how do you do this on your CV or more importantly these days, on a social media site where someone reads about your personal branding. More and more companies will check you out on social media channels. Be aware of this, and ensure that you have appropriate privacy settings on your accounts that you don't want in the public domain.

### **You need to highlight your 'Unique' Selling Points (USPs)**

**USPs** are qualities and experiences that you possess which others applying for the same role don't have. For example; a Warehouse Operative who is applying for a role can say they've worked for a global distribution company which involved them interacting with a number of diverse people in terms of cultures, levels within the organisation, and also has a secondary language skill. This will help them stand out from the crowd.

Ask yourself, what qualities/skills do I have that are likely to be in demand with a prospective employer? Then, put an asterisk next to those that most other candidates won't have.

### **How can I best market myself?**

One of the most important things about looking for a job is that it **involves a lot of time, effort and commitment**. If you don't put in the effort then it's highly unlikely that a job will present itself to you.

Successfully obtaining the right job is a direct consequence of the work you put into finding and applying for jobs and it's important that you maintain your motivation and take the initiative.

More and more employers are using their websites and the internet to advertise and search for talented individuals out there.

### **Transferrable skills to a different job**

You may be considering doing a different job from the one you've been doing. The starting point is to identify your transferrable skills and attributes together with the qualities, interests and past activities which relate to the job you're considering. Think about the strengths you have in terms of knowledge, skills and experience as well as

your personal strengths. **Appendix 1: Personal Career Appraisal** worksheet can help you identify your transferrable skills.

### **Where are the best places to search for jobs?**

- Company websites
- Job boards
- Job centre (see page 23 for more details)
- Social media channels
- Recruitment agencies
- Newspapers, professional magazines and journals
- Personal contacts and friends
- Shop windows
- Local radio stations

### **LinkedIn - what is it?**



LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network on the internet. You can use LinkedIn to find the right job, connect and strengthen professional relationships, and learn the skills you need to succeed in your career.

Once you create a LinkedIn profile, it will allow you to share your professional background online, such as your work experience, education, skills, and recommendations. You can also use LinkedIn to join groups, write articles, post photos and videos, and more.

### **LinkedIn**

#### **What are the benefits?**

LinkedIn is a powerful and easy to use professional networking tool. It allows people to give online blogs of who they are, what they do, who they do it for and most importantly allows them to state what kind of business or opportunities they're looking for. It can help you find and be found by businesses and recruiters. LinkedIn has its own job board where employers post their vacancies. Once you've created a profile, LinkedIn suggests jobs that are relevant to you based on your profile.

You can also 'follow' companies on LinkedIn so you'll see new vacancies when they're posted. When you follow a company you become an 'engaged candidate' meaning they're more likely to contact you directly about a job.

You have to be proactive on LinkedIn, using it to approach and follow target companies you'd like to work for, join groups that interest you, search for current and former colleagues and request to 'link in' with them. Invite as many people as you can to connect with you. The bigger your network, the easier it is to find people and be found. Personalising your request to 'link in' with someone will make them more likely to accept your request.

To create your profile, go to <http://www.linkedin.com/home>. Check out the tips on creating a profile over the page:

### 1. Photo

For starters, add a photo. It helps you build credibility with others and be authentic. It doesn't need to be perfect or professionally shot. Just choose something recent that shows the real you. And when you upload it, you can enhance it with our filters.

### 2. Location

Details are good. The more you add to your profile, the more LinkedIn can help you find your next opportunity. When you add your location, you're more likely to be contacted by recruiters and employers about jobs in your area.

### 3. Summary

This is your career snapshot. Think of it as your personal "elevator pitch." Describe what you do and highlight your strengths. Pro tips: Stick to a few short paragraphs. Lose the jargon. And be your authentic self.

### 4. Experience

Starting with your current position, write about projects, accomplishments, and the value you bring to your team and organization. Keep it clear and concise. Bullet points work great here.

### 5. Pictures and videos

Adding media is a great way to engage other people. Posting photos, videos, and more helps you tell your professional story in eye-catching ways.

### 6. Education

Be sure to include where you went to school and what you studied. People who list these details get up to 11x more profile views.

### 7. Endorsements

Add skills you want to be known for—and that your connections can endorse you for. Every new endorsement adds credibility to your profile.

## Job boards

Job boards are more than sites to search for jobs. You can also set up alerts for when new jobs are advertised and add your CV to the site CV database so you're visible to potential employers. If you do add your CV to any public database, remember to remove your postal and email address to limit the amount of personal data you publicly post. You can add your nearest town rather than your full address and recruiters will still be able to phone or email you through the site.

CV Library <https://www.cv-library.co.uk/>

Indeed - [www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com)

Totaljobs - [www.totaljobs.com](http://www.totaljobs.com)

Findajob: <https://www.gov.uk/find-a-job> the government job board that replaced Universal Jobmatch

## Recruitment Agencies

There are many recruitment agencies that can help you find work and give you guidance on your career goals.

Some agencies are a great support but it's important to check that they are a legitimate business. One way of checking this is to see if they are part of a recruitment regulatory body such as The Recruitment & Employment Federation (REF). Look at their website to see what code of conduct they follow and look to see if they have a statement on the Modern Slavery Act. This is particularly important if you're considering temporary work as you may be reliant on them paying you for work.

There is an increasing market for 'fake jobs' so beware if agencies are vague about jobs or ask you for money to help you find work.

Recruitment agencies have to follow government standards which are outlined here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/employment-agency-standards-inspectorate>

### Tips on working with a recruitment agency:

- They should give you advice on:
  - your CV and how you present your experience
  - preparing for interview
  - realistic salary expectations
  - details of jobs you're looking at (especially when you're selected for an interview)
- They should be experts on the employers in your area or field of experience
- Develop a good relationship with them and keep in regular touch (phone them weekly)
- They should treat you with respect: if you feel they aren't representing your interests, find another recruitment agency to work with.
- Register with a number of agencies to broaden your chances of finding a job
- Keep a record of which agencies you've spoken about various jobs. This is handy for following up with agencies and avoids confusion if different agencies are working on the same job or employer
- They should ask your permission before sharing your details with a potential employer
- They should never ask you for money to help you find a job or to carry out any type of background check. If they do, please report them to [https://www.safer-jobs.com/contact/report\\_incident](https://www.safer-jobs.com/contact/report_incident)
- Consider temporary or 'temp to perm' opportunities as this can be a good way to secure longer term work and allow to 'try before you buy'. If undertaking temporary work please check out your rights with Safer Jobs <https://www.safer-jobs.com/rights>

## Interview skills

An interview is a two-way conversation between you and an employer to find out if you have the right skills and attributes to do the job. It is also an opportunity to help you decide if it's the right job and company for you. However there are certain rules and conventions to follow in the interviews. Here's some 'top tips' to consider before attending an interview to ensure every opportunity is maximised.

### Preparation

Preparation for an interview is absolutely key. It can be the difference between your success and failure. Good preparation not only gives you an insight into the organisation, it can also give you confidence.

### Company research

Interviewers will expect you to have a good grasp of what their organisation does, who their customers are, how big it is, and who its main competitors are. Visit the company's website as well as other resources such as Glassdoor and LinkedIn to help you with your information gathering. With these facts under your belt, you'll be able to hold a meaningful conversation about the company and put any details you've learned ahead of the interview into context.

Be sure that you are clear on why you're interested in working for this particular company. Showing you've done some independent research on the company shows that you really want the role.

### Role research

You need to make sure you understand the job description fully and know how it fits into the overall structure of the company. If you have any queries about it then try to raise them before the interview or be prepared to bring them up during an interview.

Be clear on what attracted you to this particular role. Ask yourself what the key skills for the job are and think of examples which enable you to demonstrate those skills.

Most job adverts will list qualities they're looking for - a team worker, a good communicator so it's up to you to think of examples of how you can demonstrate these skills. Be ready to talk about your knowledge, experience, abilities and skills. Have at least three strong points about yourself that you can relate to the company and job on offer.

### Interview research

Make sure you find out what format the interview will take. Often they can be combinations of standard interviews and role-specific tests (such as role plays or psychometric questionnaires).

You should also find out who your interviewer(s) will be and their roles within the organisation. You can look these up on the company website, or try finding them on LinkedIn.



**Remember:** No matter how it turns out, don't look back on the interview wishing you had been more prepared.

## Interview Attire

One of the vital ingredients towards ensuring a positive first impression is created is to 'dress for success'. You will want that first impression to be not just a good one but a great one. This serves two purposes: creating a positive first impression and raising your confidence levels.

For men, a suit is the most typical attire and more often these days, men can just wear a smart (ironed) shirt rather than a full suit. For women, a suit is appropriate, but skirts, smart trousers and dresses are acceptable as well.

Keep in mind that each employer is different and some may be more relaxed and informal. In some fields (manufacturing, IT, design and media for example), it may be more acceptable to dress in more casual clothes for interviews. If in doubt, ask the recruiter or hiring manager who invited you to the interview what the dress code is for their company culture.

In addition to your attire, be aware of the following general tips to creating a great first impression:

- Get your clothes ready the night before, ensuring these are clean and tidy
- Get up in plenty of time to ensure you have enough time to prepare yourself
- Collate all the relevant documents you will need to take with you the night before:
  - CV, job description, job advert and covering letter
  - map of the location, postcode for sat nav, bus/train times, parking
  - names of people you're meeting, covering letter
  - examples of your work, qualification certificates
  - identification to prove you have the right to work in the UK
- Set off early, allowing yourself plenty of time to arrive at the location - preferably 15 minutes early. If you're not sure how to get there, try and make the journey the day before (if possible). Being late because you got lost doesn't send out a great first impression. Also, it won't help your stress levels. If you're going to be late for any reason then make sure you inform the interviewer as early as possible
- Don't slouch in your seat or do anything that may make you look disinterested
- Don't let your nerves get the better of you - use some basic breathing exercises, and remember it's not life or death - there are other jobs out there!
- Be yourself (the best version of course!)

## The Interview Process

The interview process varies for every job. After the initial application process, some employers choose to screen candidates further by inviting them to take a test, have a chat on the phone or even prepare a case study before coming in to have a face-to-face interview. All of these steps are equally important in impressing future employers and landing a good job.

Many employers carry out interviews on the phone or by **video call** (eg. Skype, Zoom, Teams, Google Meet, FaceTime). Here's some things you should consider:

- Ahead of the interview, test your phone or computer is set up for whatever application the video call is using. If you need help from a friend with this allow plenty of time for both of you before the interview
- Find a quiet, private, well-lit place, free from possible interruptions. Check what's in the background behind you isn't anything you don't want the interviewer to see!
- Ensure your internet connection is stable
- Close any unnecessary web browser tabs and applications
- Dress professionally and avoid bright colours or stripes that don't come across well on camera
- Have a pen, notepad, copy of your CV and any other information you might need with you
- When listening, nod and smile to show you are engaged
- Use hand gestures when appropriate
- Place your phone in silent mode
- Have a plan B in case your technology doesn't work eg. Suggest you carry out the interview on the phone (ask for a phone number ahead of the call, just in case you need it)

Here's some information that may help you successfully overcome the hurdles of attending an interview. Some things you may find obvious, but these are often the things we forget.

- Greet your interviewer with a smile and firm handshake (but only if a hand is offered). Give eye contact. Try to make small talk during the walk from the reception area to the interview room.
- Answer questions properly - even if you need a few moments' silence to collect your thoughts. It's better to say you need a minute to think about your answer rather than speak instantly and regret it afterwards. If you don't understand the question, ask them to repeat it or ask for clarification.
- Your interviewer will be thinking about what it would be like to work with you, so the last thing they'll want to hear is you talking about your boss or current colleagues behind their back. Interviewers like to see someone who enjoys a challenge and is enthusiastic.
- It is not what you say, but how you say it. During the interview, don't fold your arms and lean back or look to the floor! Sit upright and try to maintain good eye contact. Use your hands and lean forward when making a point. Many people can't think and control their body language at the same time, which is why you need to prepare.
- Be honest - the interviewer may see through untruths. If you haven't done something, say so, but show some initiative and suggest how you might approach it
- Avoid controversial topics such as religion and politics
- Don't swear, or use slang words
- Don't be arrogant and assume you have the job

## Interview Questions

You can't predict every question that you'll encounter, so approach the interview with a list of important points about yourself that you want the interviewer to know.

For example, if you apply for a job as a Sales Representative, you might want to list the products you've sold before, types of customers, languages spoken, personal experience in that industry and related knowledge - perhaps from your studies. Each question you address will be an opportunity to provide some of this information to the interviewer.

Often, your initial interview will be a review of your CV. You will be asked to talk through your CV and recall the jobs or studies you have undertaken, what you have learnt and why you have made the career decisions you have. Make sure you can comfortably walk through your CV and confidently talk about why you left each position. Remember to keep this positive.

You may also be asked other **general questions** about your suitability for the job and why you've applied for the role, which may include the following types of questions:

- Why do you think you are suitable for the job?
- Why have you applied for the job?
- What qualities can you bring to the role?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses? What development needs do you have?
- What are your career aspirations or where do you want to be in 5 years' time?

Below are some on-line references of the types of questions you may be asked and how to best respond:

<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewquestionsanswers/a/interviewquestions.htm>  
<http://www.totaljobs.com/careers-advice/interviews/interview-questions>

Another common type of interview is a **Competency Based Interview** which may also be referred to as a behavioural interview. This isn't as scary as it may sound! The interviewer is looking for you to provide real life examples of what you have done to demonstrate your competence for a certain aspect of the job you are interviewing for.

When answering competency based interview questions a good tip is to structure your response in the following way using the STAR technique:

**S - Situation:** describe the situation you were in - set the scene

**T - Task:** what tasks did you need to undertake?

**A - Action:** what action did you take and if you were in a group situation what **you** specifically did rather than other members of the team

**R - Result:** what happened in the end, what was the outcome? What did you achieve and learn? How was success measured?

Give a fully rounded answer that demonstrates what you actually did and try not to

generalise. Spend some time preparing your answers. Consider work that you have been involved in that you are particularly proud of where you feel you have made a good contribution. Be familiar with the job description and think about the types of questions that may be relevant to the job. Be prepared but don't worry - the important thing is to be honest and be yourself.

## Assessments

In addition to an interview you may be asked to complete some form of assessment or be invited to an assessment centre. This may involve different activities which provide a more rounded and comprehensive picture of how you deal with situations. They aren't designed to trip you up but to see how you practically approach a task. The exercises should also be designed to give you a realistic impression of what the job entails. You should feel challenged but not 'out of your depth'. Assessments are designed for the employer to ensure they hire the right person for the job and increase their predictability of your job success. The types of exercises you may be involved in are:

**Ability tests** (usually around numerical, accuracy, logic and verbal skills). May be timed and taken on paper or on-line.

**Group exercises** observe how you behave in a group situation and how you discuss and tackle a particular problem.

**Questionnaires** (Personality, Motivation or Interest) look at your preferred style of working with no right or wrong answer!

**In tray exercises** view your approach to a piece of work or given task or tasks.

**Presentations** - you may be given a topic to research in advance or given information on the day of the interview. You will be asked to present your findings back to your interviewers.

**Role play** assesses how you deal with colleagues, customers or other people in situations such as selling and negotiating, dealing with problems or coaching.

Here are some useful websites to learn more about assessments. Some of them contain practice questions:

<http://www.shldirect.com/en/assessment-advice/about-assessments>

[http://www.prospects.ac.uk/interview\\_tips\\_assessment\\_centres.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/interview_tips_assessment_centres.htm)

[http://www.prospects.ac.uk/interview\\_tips\\_psychometric\\_tests.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/interview_tips_psychometric_tests.htm)

Once the interviewer is finished with their questions, it is common for them to turn the tables and ask if you have any questions of them. Be prepared with questions to ask - this demonstrates a strong interest level and helps you assess if it's the right job and company for you. Here are some examples:

- Can you tell me more about the day to day responsibilities of the role?
- What would a typical day look like?
- What are you expecting from me in the first 3 months? What would impress you?
- What is the company's plan for the next 5 years?
- Are there opportunities for training or progression?

- What's the working culture like?
- What do you enjoy about working here?
- Can you tell me more about the team I'll be working with?
- When I can expect to hear back from you?

**Asking about money:** ideally this should be covered in your final interview or as your last question (unless they raise the subject first!) Remember to ask any questions that you may have **from your research into the company.**

### **After the interview**

If you have your interviewer's contact details you can follow up by sending a 'thank-you' e-mail, saying how much you enjoyed meeting them and how interested you are (assuming you're keen on the job!) This is optional but can help your interviewers remember you and stand out from the crowd.

### **Considering an offer**

You are likely to receive a verbal offer first followed by confirmation of the full terms and conditions of the offer in writing. Once you do receive your offer you may wish to consider the following points which you may or may have not covered during your interview:

- Clarify the role and ensure you're comfortable with it
- Know your reporting lines and how you fit into the team
- What are your key relationships?
- Is it the right environment for you and a good place to work?
- How will your performance be measured?
- Is the business in a good state?
- Consider the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats)
- Do the company values match your own?
- Does the role match your career goals and development needs?
- Does the offer fit with your domestic, logistical and financial situation?
- Work out the full implications of the package on offer (financial and benefits)

Seek input from your trusted family and friends and don't be afraid to go back and ask questions!

### **References**

Depending on the company, you may be required to provide contact details of people to provide you with a reference. References are usually from people who know you personally (a personal or character reference), someone you've worked with who can provide an objective appraisal of how you work, or a company reference.

Remember to get permission from your referees before putting their names forward. Marshalls can provide a reference for your new employer by contacting [PeopleServices@marshalls.co.uk](mailto:PeopleServices@marshalls.co.uk)

## Considering retirement

If you're considering retiring, here's some useful tips to think about.

### Check out how much you've got in your pension pot

- You should receive an annual statement from your pension provider showing how much is in your pot with an estimate of what you might get when you start taking the money.
- For colleagues in the Aviva scheme click on link <https://www.avivamymoney.co.uk>. Enter your username and password (telephone 03456 049 915 if you have forgotten your password). Further information on the Marshalls pension scheme is over the page in the FAQs.
- You may want to look into workplace pensions you have with other providers from previous employers or a personal pension (if you have one).

### Check your State Pension forecast

You should get a [State Pension](#) statement from the government. For more information please read: <https://www.gov.uk/check-state-pension>

You will need to have an account or set one up with either **Government Gateway** or **GOV.UK Verify**. Once you have an account, you can use it to access other government services online.

#### For Government Gateway

Registering usually takes about 10 minutes. It works best if you have:

- your National Insurance number
- a recent payslip or P60 or a valid UK passport

[Create a Government Gateway account](#)

#### GOV.UK Verify

Registering with GOV.UK Verify usually takes about 15 minutes. It works best if you have:

- a UK address
- a valid passport or photocard driving licence

[Create a GOV.UK Verify account](#)

### Financial Guidance

**Money and Pensions Services** is free impartial government service that offers support and guidance for people looking to talk about money and pensions. The Pensions Advisory Service, Pension Wise and the Money Advice Service have recently come under the same umbrella with the same aim of providing guidance on money matters.



Pension guidance for over 50s with a personal or workplace pension

**0800 138 3944**



Free and impartial pensions guidance on workplace and personal pensions for everyone

**0800 011 3797**



Money guides, tools and calculators to help improve all your finances

**0800 138 7777**

**Pension Wise** (for people over 50 years' of age with a defined contribution pension)

You can book an appointment – a 45-minute conversation between you and a Pension Wise guidance specialist. You'll get personal guidance on:

- your pension options
- tax
- which options might be suitable for you
- what you can do next

Appointments are over the phone or face to face. At the end you get a summary of the pension options and next steps you need to take. To book an appointment you should be 50 years old or over and have a defined contribution pension.

Pension Wise guidance specialists are impartial – they don't recommend any products or companies and won't tell you how to invest your money.

For more information visit the Pension Wise website or phone **0800 138 3944** to book an appointment. <https://www.pensionwise.gov.uk/>

### **Financial advice**

As your circumstances have changed, you might find it useful to talk to a financial adviser about your situation.

An adviser can make sure you're making the most of your money and that you have the right plans in place to achieve your financial goals. They will normally charge you for their services.

If you don't already have a financial adviser of your own, you can visit <https://www.unbiased.co.uk/> for details of advisers in your area.

### **Important advice from Aviva to watch out for fraud when looking into your money matters:**

"We're constantly watching for the latest tricks fraudsters use. Here's our advice on the signs that someone might be trying to scam you, the best ways to protect yourself against fraud, and what we're doing to stop the scammers in their tracks."

<https://www.aviva.co.uk/help-and-support/protect-yourself-from-fraud/>

## Marshalls Plc Pension – FAQ's on leaving

### **Can I still contribute directly to the Marshalls plan through Aviva Pension?**

No. The Marshalls Savings and Retirement Plan is a Defined Contribution (DC) Workplace Pension Scheme so payments will cease when you leave the company. However, both employer and employee contributions will continue to be made to the plan in the usual way until your employment with the company ends.

### **What will happen to the funds I have already built up in the plan?**

Your fund is held in your name and in your own account within the scheme and can only be used for your benefit. It will remain be invested in either the default lifestyle investment option or the specific fund or funds you chose as an alternative. It will continue to fluctuate in value in line with the performance of these funds.

### **What options do I have?**

1. You can leave your money invested in your DC pension pot as described above (this will be your default option if you don't make another choice) and you will become what is called a deferred member. If you initially choose this option it will not prevent you from exercising options 2 or 3 below in the future.
2. If you are aged 55 or over you can consider taking benefits from your DC pension pot.
3. You can transfer the total value of your DC pension pot (including the value of the employer's contributions) to another registered pension scheme or to a qualifying overseas pension scheme.

Please visit the Aviva website for more information about transferring to another pension scheme. Please note that, like all legitimate pension providers, Aviva will scrutinise all transfer requests carefully. This is to ensure that members do not lose some or all of their pension savings to a pension scam.

Please be aware that contact out of the blue from a Financial Adviser, Scheme or consultant (sometimes called "cold calling") is now illegal.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has provided more information about pension scams through the following links:

[www.fca.org.uk/scamsmart](http://www.fca.org.uk/scamsmart)

[www.fca.org.uk/consumers/protect-yourselfscams](http://www.fca.org.uk/consumers/protect-yourselfscams)

You should also note that in addition to losing their pension fund, those who fall victim to scams may receive demands for significant tax charges and fines imposed by HMRC due to the fact that their pension has been accessed unlawfully.

### **What happens to my Death in Service Cover if I leave the DC Scheme?**

The life cover provided through the separate Death in Service Scheme stops when you leave the Company. However, the full value of your DC pension pot will pass to your nominated



beneficiary or beneficiaries.

Please note that if you have not made a specific nomination it will fall to Aviva in their role as Scheme Trustees to establish who should benefit from the funds.

Generally, if you are under the age of 75 at the date of your death the funds will be passed on free of tax and would normally form part of your estate.

### **What if I am also a deferred member of the Marshalls Plc Defined Benefit (DB) Scheme?**

Benefits ceased to accrue for members in this scheme on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2006 and since that time have been subject to statutory revaluation.

If you do have a deferred entitlement in this scheme and are aged 55 or over you have the option of considering early retirement. However, an early retirement penalty will normally be applied to your benefits.

Deferred members of the DB scheme also have the option of transferring their benefits out of the scheme.

However, DB transfers are a highly complex area and are therefore strictly regulated by the FCA. The regulations state that a deferred member of a DB scheme who has a transfer value of £30,000 or more, is obliged to obtain advice from an Independent Financial Adviser before a transfer can take place.

The warnings regarding pension scams and cold calling mentioned above apply equally to benefits held in DB schemes as well as DC schemes.

## Emotional wellbeing

We provide an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which offers a wide range of support, advice and guidance on redundancy and a wide range of other topics. This service is available for you and immediate family\*. You can access their support before you leave Marshalls and for 3 months afterwards. We appreciate that everyone is an individual and we each have our own set of circumstances that might be worrying us. We encourage you not to face it alone and to seek support as soon as you need it and before it becomes overwhelming.

\*'Immediate family members' are spouse/partner and children aged 16-24 and in full-time education, living in the same household.

**The EAP service is designed so that no-one at Marshalls will be aware that you are using it if you'd prefer not to share this information.**

**However, if you would like to talk about how you're feeling with someone at Marshalls, then your manager, our Mental First Aiders, a member of the HR team, or a member of the Health & Safety team could be good options.**

The EAP can give advice on:

- Work Life
- Home Life
- Mind Body
- Legal
- Money – debt advice
- Counselling/therapy

## How to contact the EAP

You can contact Health Assured by calling their **24-hour confidential helpline on 0800 028 0199**, via the [Health Assured website](#) or using the Wisdom app. **Our organisation code is MHA267169.**

## Financial management

As well as support from the EAP there are other sources that we recommend you look at. They can help with practical tools and advice on how to manage your budget or debt:

<https://stepchanging.org.uk/>

<https://www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/>

## Government support

**Direct Gov** is a great website to check out if you want further advice on what government support is available:

### [How to contact Jobcentre Plus](#)

Jobcentre Plus provides a wide range of information and services, like benefits, loans and grants and help with finding a job. They also provide practical support helping with CV writing and preparing for an interview.

### [Benefits adviser](#)

Get benefit advice, for you/your family or for someone else. Simply answer questions anonymously online about your savings, income and outgoings.

### [Apply for Jobseeker's Allowance online](#)

If you need to apply for Jobseeker's Allowance, you can now do it online at a time that suits you.

## Support in Scotland

There is some additional support for people living in Scotland through the Skills Development Scotland PACE.

**Skills Development Scotland** offers a full range of career management, employability and information services to enable you to make well-informed and realistic decisions about your next steps. All services are free, impartial and tailored to suit the needs of individuals. More details are below:

### **Website:**

[myworldofwork.co.uk](http://myworldofwork.co.uk) – The help you need for the career you want plus a **handy CV building tool**

[sds.co.uk](http://sds.co.uk) – Making skills work for Scotland

[https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/45651/positive-steps\\_interactive.pdf](https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/45651/positive-steps_interactive.pdf) -

A useful guide to get you started

### **Video:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?edufilter=NULL&feature=youtu.be&v=1y3iU-54L7E>

The local contacts for services in **Falkirk** are:

### **Helen Whitham**

07826537709

OR

### **Carolyn Baird**

[Carolyn.baird@sds.co.uk](mailto:Carolyn.baird@sds.co.uk)

07881512160

If you live elsewhere in Scotland you can use the link below to contact the services local to you or phone the **Helpline: 0800 917 8000**

<https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/publications->

## Appendix 1 Personal Career Appraisal

### Technical and business strengths

List what you regard as being your most important **technical** and **business strengths** – the particular **knowledge, experience** and **skills** you've acquired that you feel will be an asset to the job you want to do:

Technical and business strengths	Are these transferable to other jobs?
1.	Yes / No
2.	Yes / No
3.	Yes / No
4.	Yes / No
5.	Yes / No
6.	Yes / No
7.	Yes / No
8.	Yes / No
9.	Yes / No
10.	Yes / No

### Personal Strengths

Tick or highlight 10 statements which you feel reflect your personal strengths and attributes at work:

I am able to accept a challenge I am a good communicator I am able to make decisions easily I am good at managing other people I am well organised I am good at meeting deadlines I am good at seeing the root of a problem and resolving it I am able to use my initiative I am good at delegating responsibility to others I am able to understand the needs of others I am not easily put off obstacles I get on well with people I like to be part of a team I enjoy working under pressure I am good at persuading other I can handle several different tasks simultaneously	I am tolerant I enjoy teaching others I like making presentations I set myself high standards I have a keen eye for detail I like finding new ways to do things I establish relationships easily I am able to work hard and consistently I have a good sense of humour I am determined to be successful I am ambitious I have lots of common sense I am a good judge of people I am adaptable to change I am able to implement new ideas easily I am good at presenting complex information simply I enjoy participating in the social side of working life
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I am good at prioritising my work I enjoy providing a good service to others	I find it easy to praise others
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**Think of some examples of how you've demonstrated your strengths. They will be useful for your CV and interviews.**

**What would you regard as being your weaknesses/things you aren't so good at?**

**What have you done to address your weaknesses or what could you do?**

**Can you reproduce below any comments made about you in your most recent performance appraisals at work?**

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**Finally, in this section, identify 5 important personal achievements or high points in your life:**

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

**The work you have done so far will form an important basis from which you should be able to do the following:**

- Begin to plan your next steps
- Clarify your background, experience and objectives
- Start to understand better the sort of person you are
- Maintain your confidence in your ability
- Construct a good CV
- Help you describe yourself well to someone else

*You may wish to share your Personal Career Appraisal with someone who knows you well at work and see if they agree with you and have any feedback.*