

JOB HUNTER'S

SURVIVAL KIT!

Your complete
guide to applying
for a job!



Leicestershire
County Council



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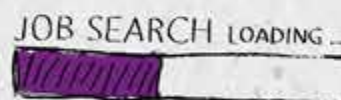
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AND SO IT BEGINS....

Welcome to the 'JOB HUNTER'S SURVIVAL KIT', and to the world of work! Finding a new job is an exciting task, but here at Get Set, we understand that trying to find a job can also be confusing, and sometimes, stressful...

Where do you start to look?

What should you put on your CV?

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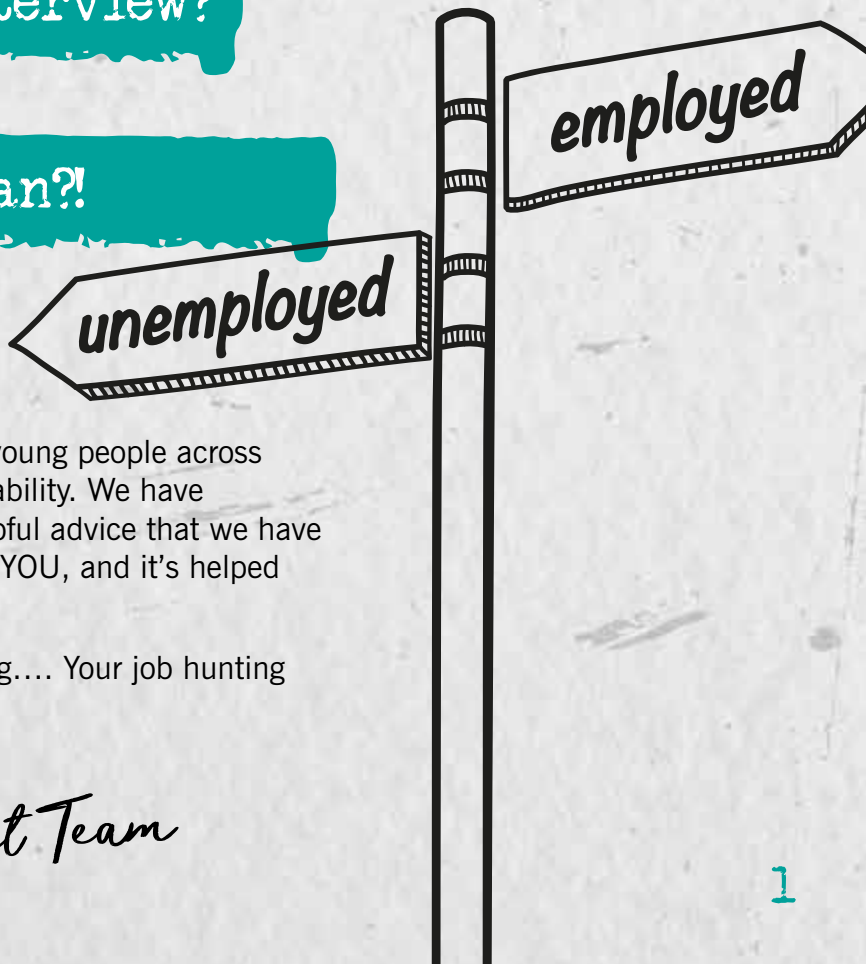
Don't fear! This kit will be your 'go-to' whilst you're on the hunt.

We have spent four years helping over 1000 young people across Leicestershire to move closer towards employability. We have compiled all of the guidance, top tips and helpful advice that we have successfully used with young people, just like YOU, and it's helped hundreds secure their dream job!

Put your feet up, make a brew, and get reading.... Your job hunting journey begins here.

Best of luck on your mission,

The Get Set Team



"WHAT YOU TALKIN' ABOUT?!"

When job seeking, you may hear lots of phrases and terms used that are unfamiliar. Here, we've provided some definitions of commonly used words that you'll come across on your job-hunting journey and in our pack. Take a minute to get your head around these before you dive in!

resume

CV: CV stands for 'Curriculum Vitae' translating to 'course of one's life'! A document which summaries your skills, education and experience and is sent to potential employers when applying for jobs

CV

Covering letter: A supporting letter which is sent alongside your CV, which outlines any skills and experience you have that are relevant to the job/ employer.

SHORTLISTING

Application form: Another method to apply for a job. These are becoming more commonly used and whilst forms will vary between organisations, most will ask for the following information: contact details, education / training, work history (paid or voluntary), references and a personal / supporting statement.

Job Description: A document often made available in job adverts, which outlines what tasks you would be expected to do within that role.

Person Specification: Often accompanies the Job Description, a document which will highlight knowledge, skills and experience that an employer is looking for candidates to evidence in their application.

Shortlisting: How employers choose which candidates should be interviewed for the role. They will review your CV/ application form and assess it against the 'person specification'. If you have demonstrated that you have met all of the knowledge, skills and experience that the employer is looking for, you are likely to get invited to interview. That's why it is so important to tailor your CV/ application to each individual role you apply for!

SKILLS

CAREER

Reference: When you apply for a new job, companies will ask you to provide two or more references. This should be someone who can comment on your work experience, work ethic, skills and character. If you have a job or have completed work experience or volunteering, it will be someone from that organisation / project, or if you are still in education, it could be a teacher/tutor. Make sure you let them know beforehand that you want to include them as references and ensure that you have their up-to-date contact details.

Psychometric tests: Tests which normally fall into two categories. **Personality tests** assess your motivations, interests and values and are designed to measure how you would respond in different situations and how you would fit within the organisation. **Aptitude tests** assess whether you have the right skills and level of thinking for the role. These tests are most commonly used by organisations when recruiting for graduate jobs and are often used at the initial screening stage or during the assessment centre.

Interview: Usually face-to-face, or can sometimes be conducted over the phone or Skype! A recruiting manager from the company will ask all shortlisted candidates questions to test and assess who is the best fit for the job.

Assessment centres: Sometimes in place of an interview, employers hold assessment centres. Often involves attending a half or full day with other candidates where your skills and suitability for the role will be assessed through a number of different tasks and activities (e.g. group task, presentations, psychometric tests, in-tray exercises etc.)

Skills: A skill relates to an ability to do something well. Skills can be learnt through practice. Employers will often want to know what skills you have that will enable you to perform well in a job.

Qualities: These are internal attributes, strengths and characteristics individuals have. Employers want to understand what personal qualities you have.

Experience: The opportunity to have tried certain tasks and activities, to hone your understanding of them.

Knowledge: Your understanding of a particular subject or topic.

STAR technique: STAR stands for 'Situation, Task, Action, Result' and is a method which helps you to structure examples of how you meet certain skills or experience employers may be looking for. The STAR technique is particularly useful for preparing work-based examples for interviews.

Competency based questions: Interview questions which are designed to assess your skills, knowledge and experience and will require you to provide real-life examples. Use the STAR technique to help you structure your answer

Contract: More commonly now known as a 'Written Statement' this is a document or email from your new employer which sets out the terms of your employment including: working hours, pay, probation period amongst many other important bits of information.

Permanent: A job is ongoing and does not have an end date. You can still however be dismissed or made redundant.

Temporary: A job where an employee is only expected to work within that job for a specific period of time, based on the needs of the employer. Sometimes called 'temps' or 'seasonal workers', and often jobs are secured through recruitment agencies.

Zero hour contract / casual contract: An employer does not provide you with set hours and only offers you work when they need you. Eg. this means that one week you may have 0 hours and the next you may have 25. You do not have to accept the work / hours when offered it.

Fixed-term: The job will come to an end on a specific date and is often for jobs that require the completion of a specific project or task.

Full-time: You will generally work between 35-40 hours per week.

Part-time: Anything where you're working fewer hours than full-time.

Pro-rata: Often seen in job adverts for part-time posts (e.g. £20,000 pro rata). This means that you will receive a proportion of the stated salary dependent on your hours.

Probation period: A period of time, often included in your contract, that allows the employer to terminate the contract of a new employee who isn't doing well in their job or is otherwise deemed as unsuitable for the position. This can vary in length depending on the nature of the job, but is typically 1-3 months.

DBS check: If you are applying for jobs that work with children or vulnerable adults your employer will likely ask for a DBS check. This stands for Disclosure and Barring Service and is used to check your previous criminal offending history.

Line Manager: The person who will directly manage you who you will report to about things such as work, annual leave etc.

Redundancy: A form of dismissal when the company you work for either needs to reduce the number of staff they employ or are closing down, meaning the job no longer exists. If you are made redundant you may be entitled to certain rights. For more information visit www.gov.uk/redundant-your-rights

Resignation: If you have decided to leave your job, you may need to notify your employer in writing of your decision. Your resignation letter should include your name, job role, proposed end date (this will need to be in line with your notice period) and we always recommend including a sentence thanking them for the opportunity.

Notice period: You will not be able to leave your job the next day and instead you will need to work your 'notice period'. This will vary between companies but they can be anything from 1-12 weeks and should be stated in your contract. If you are unsure speak to your manager.

Job promotion: When you are given a higher position with more responsibility in your company. It often comes with a pay-rise too.

Apprenticeship: Combines work and study. You will be employed by an organisation/ company in a real job role where you will be given real tasks and work whilst you also study for a formal qualification (usually an NVQ). There are different levels of apprenticeships and different lengths (it can take between 1-5 years to complete one). You are paid a wage (though this will vary between organisations) and you are entitled to annual leave. Historically aimed at school leavers, a lot of apprenticeships are now open to graduates (as long as the qualification is not the same as your degree) and adults looking to change career paths.

Graduate jobs: Specifically require you to hold a degree and in some cases, will offer additional training, qualification and accreditation.

Internship: A period of work experience, offered by an organisation, usually lasting for a fixed, limited period of time. They are typically undertaken by students and graduates looking to gain relevant skills and experience in a particular field. They can be both paid and unpaid and vary in length of time.

Traineeship: An education and training programme with work experience that aims to help young people to become 'work ready'. Traineeships are always nearly only open to people aged 16 to 24 and provide essential work preparation training, English and Maths qualifications and work experience needed to secure an apprenticeship or employment. They usually last between 8 and 16 weeks.

Work experience: A period of time spent with an organisation to gain 'hands-on' and 'real life' experience of working in a specific field or sector. This is typically unpaid and can vary in length of time.

Volunteering: When you gift your time, energy and skills for free to a cause or interest of yours. This could be a few hours a week to a few hours a year. Volunteering is a great way to enhance your skillset, gain new experience, test drive a career and gain a reference.

CHALLENGE 1

BAG THAT EXPERIENCE!

When you're applying for work, employers need to know that you have the skills and experience to successfully do the role. We know... You're probably thinking 'but how can I get experience if I can't get a job?'

The great thing is, you don't actually need a job to begin with - there are lots of different ways you can gain experience and enhance your skills... Volunteering and 'work experience' are just two ways to do this.

There are loads of places looking for volunteers, or an extra helping hand. A lot of companies and organisations understand that young people need experience to be able to go forth and realistically get a job. Getting experience is vital to the whole job searching process. It will impress employers and show them that you are motivated and willing to learn. Importantly, it will give you something worthwhile to put on your CV, in your applications and speak about at interview.

GAINING EXPERIENCE

This is vital to the whole job searching process. It will impress employers and show them that you are motivated and willing to learn.



You might think that volunteering is just 'working for free' and isn't worth your time, but think again! The benefits can be huge – meeting new people, learning from others, getting the experience to take your next steps and maybe even bagging a decent reference if you turn up on time and work hard! There are lots of opportunities to volunteer, from catering, to fundraising, to office work; you can pretty much find an opportunity to suit any interest.

Once you have this experience under your belt, you then have relevant stuff to put on your CV, in your applications and importantly, to talk about at interview. It really is a great way to get your foot on the ladder.

TOP TIP!

Whilst volunteering or on work experience, make sure you keep a regular record of what tasks you are completing whilst there, and think about what 'skills' you are actively using to complete each task. We've included a handy little 'Skills and Activity' recording template in our 'Reserves' section lettered C that you can use.

Check out page L in our 'Reserves' section for details of where to look for volunteering opportunities in your area!



CHALLENGE 2

FIND THAT JOB!

So, you're ready to look for a job, but where to start? The perfect role could be waiting for you, so follow these top tips to make the most out of job searching

BEFORE YOU APPLY!

Make sure you have an up-to-date CV, that's tailored to the roles you are looking for. Having an electronic version with a covering letter will make your life easier so you can quickly send it through for any online applications. If the advert says a covering letter is optional, attach one anyway as it will show that you are making an effort and will help your CV to stand out.

Websites

There's an endless list of websites out there which regularly advertise the most up-to-date job opportunities available. We've included a list of some of the more popular ones in our 'Reserves' section, so check these out as this is a great place to start.

Job search websites pull in adverts from the internet and bring them together to one place to make your life easier! Examples include Monster, Indeed and Total Jobs. Here's some tips on how to navigate your way around one of these sites;

- **Use the advanced search:** This is a great way to narrow down the many job listings on a job search engine. You can typically search by keyword or phrase, company, industry, or location. You can also search by salary. This is a helpful way to make sure you only look for jobs that are a good fit.
- **Watch out for multiple listings:** One drawback to job search engines is that, because there are so many listings from multiple places, repeated listings are common. Be careful to avoid repeat listings, as well as expired job listings.

JOB SEARCH LOADING



- **Create an account:** Consider registering for an account. Most job search websites allow you to register and upload a CV and covering letter so employers can come to you. This is where if you're looking for a variety of roles, it could be a disadvantage as your CV may be too generic. You can instead, upload a couple of different CV's tailored to specific sectors/industries, and make applications directly. You can also typically bookmark jobs or request emails with the latest job listings.
- **Let the jobs come to you:** Use job alerts to register and receive job listings by email.
- **Go direct:** Some companies will only advertise on their own sites so check the sites of any companies you want to work for directly too.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is like 'Facebook' but for finding work! A lot of employers use LinkedIn to advertise roles and head-hunt prospective employees. If you choose to job search this way, bear in mind, you need to approach it in the same way you would any other application process – make sure you put your best self forward, ensure the information you provide is all accurate, up-to-date and without mistakes, and that your profile picture is a professionally appropriate one! So no holidays snaps of you in your bikini!

Recruitment agencies

There are tonnes of agencies out there which exist to help people find work. Agencies receive job vacancies from specific employers and earn a commission for each job they fill with a suitable candidate. It's worth registering with a few. The process involves an interview with the agency, forwarding your CV and keeping in regular contact with them to find out about potential vacancies. Some

more nationally recognised ones are Reed, Office Angels, and Hays to name a few.

In-person

Take job searching into your own hand and get out there! Some jobs, retail ones in particular, advertise for vacancies in their shop windows. Print out your CV and covering letter on good quality paper, pop them in envelopes, and enquire about jobs you're interested in in-person. It may be that they can take your CV from you there and then and get back to you. You could also try targeting companies that you wish to work for who aren't advertising, but bear in mind that there may not be any vacancies available so be prepared to not receive a response.

Newspapers

Why not put your feet up, and enjoy a cuppa whilst looking through your local paper for vacancies. It might seem like an old-fashioned way of finding work, but you'd be surprised how many employers still use newspapers to recruit. The job adverts will instruct you on what to do. There may be an email address that you need to send your CV to or a link to a website where you can apply.

REMEMBER!

Keep positive. It is a time consuming process and we all get a few knock-backs when looking for work. Don't take it personally if you are rejected or don't even get a response. Employers receive hundreds of applications, especially online, and they're not always able to respond to all applications.





CHALLENGE 3

NAIL THAT CV!

A CV is your first opportunity to impress a potential employer and a good CV will increase your chance of getting invited to a face to face interview.

So what makes a good CV? To make sure your CV has it all, it should include everything below:

- **Contact details** – Make sure any telephone number or email address you provide is accurate
- **Personal profile** – This is the bit at the top of the page which will help you to stand out from the crowd. It summarises who you are and what type of job you are looking for, so it should always be tailored to the job you're applying for
- **Achievements** – These can either be personal or professional
- **Key skills** – These are particular skills you are good at. You will find a list of examples in your pack in the 'Reserves' section on page A. We've also thrown in some 'key qualities and attributes' on page B for good measure!

- **Education, qualifications and training** - Put your most recent first
- **Work experience** - Always include any voluntary activities
- **Hobbies and interests** – You can also include extracurricular activities or projects you have been involved in during your education
- **References** – Always tell your referees that you are putting them down so they can be prepared for any requests for a reference



WHAT NOT TO INCLUDE!

There are some details that should not be included on your CV. These include; date of birth, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, religion and your national insurance number

This information is not necessary and in some cases, can lead to employers discriminating against you.

Presentation is key!

It is important that your CV is easy to read, uncluttered and clearly presented:

- Be concise, don't waffle! Your CV should be between 1-2 pages long
- Use a clear font such as Arial, Times New Roman or Verdana at size 11 or 12
- Use black ink
- Use bullet points
- If you are sending a hardcopy of your CV to employers, make sure that you have printed it on good quality white paper. It is also good practice to include a covering letter with any CV you send to an employer (see our top tips on pages 12 -13)



Be Professional!

- Do not use slang language
- Ensure that you have used a professional email address
- Do not lie on your CV. It's not worth the risk!
- Ensure that you have no spelling or grammatical errors. Read it, re-read it and get someone to proof read it

REMEMBER!

Tailor your CV to the job you are applying for using key words from the job advert, job description or person spec – tailoring your CV is a pain, but it's a must!

Keep it up-to-date. Your most recent experience/achievements should be first, sometimes referred to as reverse chronological order.

We have included some examples of CV's for you in the 'Reserves' section of this pack lettered F and G.

CHALLENGE 4

BANG OUT THAT COVERING LETTER!



We understand that writing a covering letter can fill people with dread! We also understand that a good covering letter can make all the difference between being asked to interview, or your CV being kept at the bottom of the pile, so we would always advise you to include one. A good covering letter, coupled with your CV, is a fantastic way to sell yourself to a potential employer.

Here are some of our top tips on how to write a good covering letter:

- **Type up your covering letter.** This will ensure your letter is easy and clear to read.
- **Keep it to one page.** Your covering letter should be succinct and concise.
- **Be Relevant.** Always tailor your covering letter to the role you are applying for.
- **Use clear, business-like language.** Avoid slang at all costs! It's important that your letter reflects your personality, but always make professionalism the priority.
- **Be enthusiastic about the role and make sure this shows in your opening line.** Employers receive several CV's and generic covering letters every week. Make yours stand out and make it clear to the employer that you're excited by their opportunity.
- **Gain knowledge of the company/service and show it off.** Do some research on the role and the company and open your letter with why you want to work for them within this role. You should always try and find out about the company's values or ethos, and reflect this in your letter.
- **Don't just repeat what is in your CV.** Use words that complement the skills you have listed on your CV, rather than just repeating sentences and words.



● **Use real-life examples.** Here's the tricky bit... Pick out the 3-5 key skills or qualities that the employer is seeking from the advert or job description and briefly and succinctly provide examples of how you meet these, for example if they are asking for someone with 'Excellent customer service skills' you could evidence how you meet this by saying; 'As you will see from my CV, I have over three years of retail based customer service experience where it was essential I was able to use my communication, team work and interpersonal skills to generate custom and sales'.

● **Be neat.** Make sure your covering letter is laid out well in neat paragraphs. Your letter format should be consistent throughout so make sure you use the same font size and type on your covering letter as you used on your CV.

● **Are you contactable?** Ensure you include your contact details and that these are up-to-date and accurate. If providing an email address, make sure it's a professional one, and if providing a phone number, always check you've written it down accurately. If this info is already on your CV, no need to repeat!

● **Include a signature.** This will personalise the letter and shows the employer you have taken care and consideration in preparing the document.

● **Proof read.** Check for any spelling mistakes or grammatical errors. Take a break from the letter, then come back and check over it again. Some time away from the computer screen will help you to see the letter with a fresh pair of eyes. Ask someone else to proof read it also.

● **Practice makes perfect.** Lastly, don't let the prospect of writing a covering letter daunt you. Once you've mastered one, you will find writing covering letters easier and easier.

We thought it would be helpful for you to see what a covering letter might look like when completed so we have included an example in the 'Reserves' section of this pack, lettered H

REMEMBER!

There are professionals out there who are on hand to support you with drafting your covering letter, so if in doubt, or if you need support with this, just get in touch with them!



CHALLENGE 5

FACE THAT APPLICATION FORM!

Nowadays it is becoming more common for employers to ask jobseekers to complete an application form in place of forwarding a CV with covering letter.

Applications forms will vary between companies, however most will ask for the following information: Contact details, education/training, work history (paid or voluntary), references and a personal / supporting statement.

If you have a CV (which we hope you should have) you will already have most of this information to hand!

The '**personal/supporting statement**' section is your opportunity to really sell yourself and demonstrate that you have the relevant skills, experience and achievements to make you a successful candidate for the job.

Make sure that you relate it back to the Person Specification of the job you are applying for and refer to the Job Description. See pages D and E in the 'Reserves' section where we've provided examples of these documents)

How to structure your personal statement:

- Include headings taken from the person spec- bold and underline it
- Demonstrate under each heading how you meet the criteria by giving examples from your own experience either within education, volunteering or in a working environment.
- Use bullet points or write in a paragraph
- In your examples, you want to explain what you've done, where, with who and what the outcome was.

We have provided you with an example personal/supporting statement related to the example person specification. Check it out under '**Reserves**' lettered I.



STRATEGY

REMEMBER!

- Don't wait for the deadline to approach – get your application in as soon as possible, as some employers will close vacancies once they've received enough applicants
- Do not rush! Read the instructions carefully
- Make sure all of your education and work experience history is included in reverse chronological order starting with your most recent first
- Make sure all of your contact and personal details are accurate and correct – you don't want them phoning someone in Australia by mistake! Imagine the phone bill!
- If you're stuck for references – don't be! If you have completed a work experience placement with Get Set or another organisation, you can ask one of the team or your mentor to act as a referee for you
- If you are being asked to disclose any offending history, be honest about this. If you've been in trouble before, this doesn't automatically exclude you from applying, and many employers will want to discuss details further with you before making a decision. Some job roles will require a DBS check (Disclosure and Barring Service check – which is basically a criminal background check which brings up your offending history)
- Disclosing a disability will help the employer to consider any reasonable adjustments that may need to be made in interview or if you were offered work, which may make all the difference for you
- Keep an electronic copy for your records. This will come in use when preparing for interview and when applying for other jobs
- Check for spelling and grammar
- Have someone proof read your application

HELP & ADVICE

You can always ask a friend, a family member or professional to check your application before you submit it. Remember adults have had to do loads of applications!



CHALLENGE 6

SMASH THAT INTERVIEW!

Woo-hoo! Well done... You've been invited to the interview stage!

There are several different types of interview here's a few:

- **Panel** - There may be two or more people interviewing you
- **One-to-one** - You will be interviewed by one person
- **Group** - You will be interviewed / tested alongside other candidates
- **Telephone/skype** - You will be interviewed over phone or Skype in the comfort of your own home
- **Assessment centres** - You may undertake a range of different exercises alongside other candidates, including tests, roleplays and presentations

A panel interview is the most common and this will involve you being interviewed face to face with two or more people from the organisation/company.

REMEMBER!

Your interview may be made up of a two or even three stage process. Most commonly this involves an interview and a test or presentation.



FOLLOW THESE TOP 10 TIPS FOR SUCCESS!

1. Do your research

- Research the company. Find out their ethos/ company values, what services they provide, their customers, products etc.
- Understand the company and how your role fits in
- Prepare your answers and showcase your knowledge of the organisation which is guaranteed to impress the panel
- If you can't find all of the information you would like online, phone the company and ask any questions you may have. This can also help to build rapport with the interviewers before you meet them
- Where appropriate, take the time to visit the place before you go for your interview to get a better idea of where you will need to go on the day, but also to get a feel for the 'culture' of the place

2. Prepare and practise

- Read and re-read the job description, person specification and your CV/application
- Research common interview questions and prepare your answers. Remember interviewers are always looking for real life examples where you have demonstrated that you have successfully used your skills in a work place environment. You can find a list of common interview questions in the 'Reserves' section lettered K
- If you can, ask someone to set up a mock interview for you
- Once you've done your preparation, don't forget to relax and look after yourself! Rest will help you to do your best on the day

3. Dress to impress

- Choose your outfit in advance– make sure it is smart, clean, ironed and appropriate. Rocking up in sunglasses and a Hawaiian print shirt will not give a good first impression!
- Don't wear anything too distracting (e.g. something revealing or brightly coloured)
- Don't forget good personal hygiene. Make sure you have showered and brushed your teeth. If you are a smoker, be aware that if you have a cigarette right before the interview, the panel will most likely smell it on you

4. Be punctual

- Plan your route in advance – Maybe even do a test-drive or practise trip on the buses
- Give yourself extra time to get there – If driving, make sure you know where the nearest car park is and that you have change for car parking
- Make sure you arrive 10 minutes before the interview – arriving too early is unadvised
- Now unfortunately we can't control the traffic, so if you are running late ensure that you phone the company to explain and apologise. Don't forget to take their phone number with you and to make sure your phone is fully charged!



5. First impressions count

- When you accept your invite to interview (either via phone or email) make sure you are professional and obtain all the necessary information
- Be polite (to all employees you meet)
- Smile
- Offer a firm handshake (not too floppy, not too hard!)

6. It's not always what you say, but how you say it!

- Make sure that you have positive body language. Sit upright, maintain good eye contact and use your hands to express yourself
- We know it's nerve wracking, but avoid crossing your arms, slouching, biting your nails, hiding behind your hair, or fiddling with a visitor's badge

7. Be professional

- Do not swear
- Do not talk about personal problems
- Do not lie
- Never bad mouth your previous employer/colleagues
- Make sure your phone is turned off or on silent!

8. Sell yourself!

- Answer questions clearly and concisely
- Make sure you understand the question before you answer it. If you are unsure, ask for them to repeat it. If you're still unsure, ask for them to rephrase it
- Think before you speak, we advise you to take a pause to think about your answer
- Provide work related examples to highlight your skills, abilities and qualities. Use the STAR technique. You will find out more about the STAR technique under 'Reserves' lettered J.
- Always paint yourself in a positive light, and try to balance this with being humble and sincere
- Use 'I' not 'we' in your examples!
- Use lots of positive words to describe yourself and your experiences

9. Ask questions!

- At the end of the interview it is likely you will be asked 'Do you have any questions for us'. This is an excellent opportunity to show that you are enthusiastic and motivated for the job. Ensure that you ask at least one or two questions
- Questions you could ask include:
 - Can you describe a typical day for someone in this position?
 - What will my main priorities be in the first three months?
 - Will there be any training opportunities available?

As tempting as it is, do not ask about salary at this stage!

10. Get Feedback

- Whether you are successful or unsuccessful at interview stage, always ask for feedback. This is **really** important as it will allow you to better prepare for your next interview, and learn what you could do better or differently next time, and to know where you did well. This could make all the difference in you acing your next interview!



CHALLENGE 7



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

As an employee you have a number of statutory (legal) rights that have been passed by Parliament. It is important that you know what these are. Your employer will have a legal obligation to follow these, so be in the know!

You have the right to:

● Not face discrimination

Throughout your job searching journey- from the application, to interview stage to being in employment- employers are not allowed to treat you unfairly and discriminate against you due to the following reasons:

- Age
- Disability
- Sex
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage & Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity

● Reasonable adjustments

It is your choice to disclose any disability (physical, learning or mental health) before your interview. It is worth considering that if you do so, the employer can make reasonable adjustments for you during the interview process that could make all the difference in your performance.

Once you have secured employment it remains the responsibility of the employer to take positive steps to remove any barriers you may face due to your disability, in order to ensure that you can complete your job. This could include:

- Providing extra equipment or aids (e.g. Dragon software for a person with dyslexia)
- Making physical changes to the workplace (e.g. installing a ramp for wheelchair access)
- Changes to workplace practice and procedures (e.g. Flexible work hours)

Be on the lookout for Disability Confident employers and Mindful employers, like Leicestershire County Council



If an organisation is using these logos it means they have made a commitment to:

- Encouraging applicants with disabilities to apply, and to shortlisting for interview all applicants who have disclosed a disability on their application if they meet the person specification
- Make every effort to ensure that people who are disabled/who have become disabled can stay in employment by providing reasonable adjustments and training to staff around disability awareness

● Be paid at least the minimum wage

As per law everyone is entitled to earn the minimum wage.

As the rates change annually, please refer to www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates

● Paid holiday

As an employee you are entitled to paid annual leave. The number of days you are entitled to will depend on the length of your employment, how many hours a week you work and your employer's policy.

If you work full time for a full year you will be entitled to a minimum 28 days, which includes bank holidays.

Remember a good rule of thumb is to give your employer twice as much notice as the amount of leave you want when booking, and understand that they have the right to reject your request.

● Paid time off for the following reasons:

- Trade union duties
- Antenatal care
- Maternity /paternity leave
- Adoption leave

● Rest breaks:

You can find out what you are legally entitled to at www.gov.uk/rest-breaks-work/overview

You may be lucky and receive longer breaks- this all depends on your employer and will be agreed in your contract.

● Not work more than 48 hours a week.

Legally, you cannot work more than 48 hours a week averaged over a 17 week period. However if you are 18 or over you can choose to work more hours by 'opting out' and signing a written agreement with your employer. This is your decision. You should not feel pressured by your employer to agree to this and they cannot terminate your employment or treat you unfairly if you decide not to opt out.

● Sick pay

This will vary per company and details should be included in your contract. You are however entitled to statutory sick pay (SSP). For more information and for up-to-date rate please visit www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay

REMEMBER

If you ever find yourself having a problem at work or want impartial advice, you can contact the Citizens Advice Bureau, ACAS or your trade union.

Important note:

This information is accurate as of May 2018. Check [online](#) for updates and changes.



CHALLENGE 8

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF...

The journey to your dream job can be a tough one. Along the way, you may experience set-backs and disappointments and although they can leave you feeling less than your best, they are all a part of the learning experience guiding you towards securing work. Although it's necessary, it doesn't change the fact that sometimes, the rejection can lead you to feeling down and seriously stressed-out. Here's our top 5 tips for taking care of yourself:

1. Sleep

It's recommended that you get 8-9 hours sleep each night. Too little and your tiredness will soon catch up with you, too much and you'll risk feeling groggy the day after! To get better sleep, try out the following;

- **Reset your body clock** - Try to go to bed at the same time each evening. Your 'internal body clock' works best if there is a regular routine to follow
- **Relax** - Include a relaxing routine before bed – try having a warm bath, reading a book or drinking warm milk
- **Steer clear of caffeine** - Avoid caffeine and cigarettes at least 4 hours before bed as these are stimulants which make you feel alert. Caffeine (which is found in tea, coffee, cola, energy drinks) works by blocking chemical signals in your brain, stopping you from feeling sleepy

- **Put that phone away!** - Avoid high energy, stimulating activities at least an hour before bed – this includes exercise, playing computer games, watching TV or having important discussions. Also, try and avoid using your mobile, laptop or tablet when getting ready to go to sleep. The blue light from these devices mimics the effect of the sun and tricks your body into thinking it should still be awake. It affects the levels of the sleep inducing hormone it produces, called melatonin which can make getting to sleep very difficult – all very scientific stuff!
- **Get comfy** - Make your bed as comfortable as possible – you may want to check over your mattress to see if it needs to be replaced, change your bedsheets so that they're fresh and clean and make sure your bedding is inviting! Try and make sure you're not too cold or not too hot as well!

Sleep has proven advantages for memory and performance – both vital for acing any job interviews you may get!

2. Diet

What you eat has a huge impact on how you feel. Food is our energy source, and so you have to make sure you're fuelling your body with all of the right stuff and enough of it. Here's some tips to help you to eat better;

- Try and not skip breakfast.
- Eat at least 5 portions of fruit and veg a day
- Stay hydrated. Make sure you drink 6-8 glasses of water or fluids a day. As mentioned before, drink less caffeine (yep, that includes all of that cola and energy drinks!) and try and drink more water or low fat milk.
- Try and reduce the amount of take-away's and junk food you eat. Limit these to a treat once in a while.

3. Exercise

Regular exercise helps you to sleep more soundly, as well as improving your general health. Do a little physical activity every day and aim for around 60minutes. This could be a game of football, hitting the gym or just going for a walk or run (which costs you nothing at all!)

4. Talk

All of us hate feeling like we're not good enough. When you're getting knocked back from the job you really want or the job you really tried hard for, that in turn, can really knock your confidence. Try and remember all of the things you do well, and keep perspective. You don't know how many other people you were up against or who they were and what experience they had. Sometimes, if you are certain you tried your absolute best and delivered a fantastic effort, then maybe even take

some comfort in knowing it was probably the wrong job or employer for you.

Really importantly, when the job-hunt is starting to grind you down, don't keep your feelings bottled up to yourself. Make sure you talk to friends, family or any support worker you may have if you're feeling low. There are several counselling services available, and your GP can also refer you for talking therapy.

5. Use support

There are services out there that receive funding from the government just to help you to get the experience and skills you need to secure work. Share the burden of finding work with the people who are paid to help you! These services exist solely to help you, so use them! You'll find that having that specialist support helps to make the journey into employment a less lonely one. Having the help of those expertise and skills could make all the difference.



CHALLENGE 9

**YOU
SUPERSTAR!**

You were successful at interview and have been offered a job (yaaaay). So, what's next?



GET CLUED UP!

Here's what to expect when you're beginning a new job!

This varies from employer to employer however these are some of the things you might experience, you need to consider and you should put into place!

Before you start:

- Agree on a start date with your new employer
- If the role is part-time discuss what hours and days you are expected to attend
- If you already have a job make sure you hand in your letter of resignation to your current employers, and consider any notice period
- Make sure you have the following documents to hand as your new employer will likely need them for their pre-employment checks:
 - Proof of ID (e.g. passport, driving license)
 - Proof of address (e.g. A utility bill)
- Right to work documentation. This is usually your passport or birth certificate
- Your national insurance number
- P45 form (If you don't have this then don't worry. You can fill out the HMRC new starter checklist instead)
- Any relevant qualifications / training certificates
- Ensure you have plans in place for travelling to and from work and that you know where to park
- Put in place any childcare arrangements (if needed)
- Make sure you have work-appropriate clothes (Yep, time to shop!)



On your first day:

- Be on time
- Be professional (that means turn your personal mobile on silent)
- Make the time to have a chat with your manager about any reasonable adjustments you may need in order for you to do your job effectively. You can find out more about reasonable adjustments on page 19
- Look professional but dress to impress (after all you may have to get your photo taken for your ID badge and you don't want to be regretting that!)
- Come prepared. Make sure you bring a notebook, pen and lunch or money to buy lunch
- You should be given an induction. We know it's nerve wracking but use the opportunity to introduce yourself to your new colleagues
- Don't be afraid to make notes, as you will likely have a lot of information thrown your way



Within the first two months:

- Ensure you have received your 'written statement' which must contain information such as your pay, holiday entitlements, working hours, probation period etc. Not all employers need to provide a contract, but a 'written statement' should always be in place.
- Try and book in a 'supervision' or 'one-to-one' meeting with your manager so that you can have the opportunity to have a good catch up and discuss how you're getting on, or if you are encountering any issues in being able to do your job. It's always best to tackle any issues sooner, rather than later.
- You will receive your first wage and payslip (YAY!!). Often companies pay staff weekly, fortnightly or monthly.



Understanding your first payslip!

So you have just received your first payslip and you see you have deductions for **Tax, National Insurance, student loan and pensions**. What does this mean?

Income tax

Once you secure employment you will begin paying income tax. This is compulsory and is a contribution towards government spending. The taxable year is from the 6th April to the 5th of April.

So how much do I pay?

Well, this depends on how much you earn!

A portion of your income is free from taxation. This is known as the 'personal allowance'. Up-to-date details can be found at www.gov.uk/income-tax-rates

In some instances when you start a new job you may be given an emergency tax code. This will be temporary and may mean that you end up paying too much tax. If you think this is the case raise the issue with your employer.

Don't panic though- if you do end up paying too much tax you will get this reimbursed usually at the end of the tax year. Yay, more money!

National Insurance

When you turn 16 you will be sent your national insurance number. You will be asked for this number when you start a new job or begin claiming any benefits so make sure you keep it safe!

You only begin paying national insurance when you are aged 16 or over and earning above a certain amount a week. Like with tax, this will automatically come out of your wages. For more information visit www.gov.uk/national-insurance/overview

Pensions

What is a pension? Luckily we are not expected to work forever. When you do retire you will no longer be receiving any wages. A pension is a pot of money which you have saved during your working years which is then used during your retirement years for living costs.

Part of your tax and national insurance already goes towards your state pension; however employers are also now legally obliged to offer staff (if eligible) a work place pension scheme. For more information visit www.gov.uk/workplace-pensions/joining-a-workplace-pension

When you start a new job you will automatically be enrolled onto this scheme and each month both yourself and your employer contribute towards your pension's pot. The amount will differ dependent on your wages and company policy. You can opt out of this scheme by writing to your employer.

Student loan

This only applies to those who completed a higher education course and took out a student loan for tuition and / or maintenance.

You start repaying once you earn over a certain amount. The size of your monthly repayments will depend on how much you earn, not what you owe.

You'll be charged interest on the loan from the day you take it out. The terms and conditions can change.

For more details, visit to www.gov.uk/student-finance

Your pay slip will show the amount of tax, national insurance, pension and student loan contributed.

Now don't go out and spend all your money at once!



RESERVES!

A stockpile of
helpful resources

KEY EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

If you're stuck for inspiration, here's a few words that capture key employability skills you can use on your CV, applications and in interviews

Negotiation	Decision-making	Building rapport	Tact and diplomacy
Critical thinking	Analysis	Problem solving	Written communication
Verbal communication	Listening	Leadership	Presentation
Delegation	Strategic thinking	Numeracy	Literacy
ICT	Team work	Organisation	Time management
Prioritisation	Research	Self-motivation	Initiative
Independence	Creativity	Flexibility	Building relationships
Interpersonal	Commercial awareness	Planning	Investigation
Drive	Stress tolerance	Adaptability	Assertiveness
Language	Influence	Innovation	Networking
Enterprise	Management	Learning	Reasoning
Intellect	Self-aware	Confidence	Vision
Inspire	Perseverance	Determination	Methodical working

Employers love to hear that you don't just 'talk the talk' but can also 'walk the walk'! Here's some action words you could also use to demonstrate the things that you have done:

Led	Achieved	Completed	Coordinated
Developed	Promoted	Identified	Delegated
Resolved	Reported	Organised	Planned
Attained	Generated	Established	Presented
Expanded	Increased	Improved	Designed
Exceeded	Strengthened	Collaborated	Created
Transformed	Executed	Conveyed	Explored
Succeeded	Pioneered	Surpassed	Supported

KEY ATTRIBUTES AND QUALITIES

You're fabulous...make sure employers know this! Here's some positive words that you can use to describe yourself in CVs, applications and interviews:

Organised	Efficient	Reliable	Imaginative
Approachable	Calm	Patient	Thoughtful
Professional	Empathetic	Humble	Logical
Conscientious	Well-mannered	Social	Consistent
Ambitious	Driven	Honest	Practical
Motivated	Optimistic	Happy	Knowledgeable
Supportive	Problem-solver	Enthusiastic	Sensible
Level-headed	Team-worker	Motivated	Focused
Trustworthy	Analytical	Caring	Considerate
Kind	Composed	Compassionate	Eager
Helpful	Responsible	Understanding	Decisive
Passionate	Committed	Open-minded	Bright
Cheerful	Proficient	Warm	Precise
Approachable	Loyal	Opinionated	Reasonable
Friendly	Sophisticated	Clever	Polite
Creative	Proactive	Likeable	Independent
Resilient	Hard-working	Smart	Skilful
Self - aware	Passionate	Adventurous	Modest
Easy - going	Confident	Relaxed	Persistent
Adaptable	Ambitious	Strong-minded	Graceful
Driven	Courageous	Accurate	Assertive
Positive	Thorough	Determined	Flexible

SKILLS AND ACTIVITIES RECORDING TEMPLATE

You'll find that a lot of employers are looking for the same set of 'core skills' in their employees. Below is a list of the most common skills that you should aim to gain whilst completing any work experience or volunteering. This template can be used to record different activities and tasks you complete whilst there, and very importantly, what skills you use to do this.

Key employability skills	Example of activity where you have used this skill
Eg. Communication skills	Eg. I took a telephone message from my colleague and then typed it into an email and sent it to my manager
Verbal communication skills	
Written communication skills	



Customer service	
Prioritisation	
Team-work	
Organisational skills	
Initiative	
Independence	
Flexibility	
Problem-solving	
Numeracy	
Literacy	
IT skills	

EXAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION



Department:	Communities and Wellbeing
Job Title:	Administration Assistant
Grade:	6
Post Number:	CW001
Service/Section:	Heritage Team
Base/Location:	County Hall
Responsible To:	Get Set Project Coordinator
Responsible For:	N/A
Key Relationships/ Liaison with:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All County Council departments - Internal partners including Supporting Leicestershire Families, Apprenticeship team, Adult Learning, Youth Service and Inclusion Support Service - External Partners including Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL), Prospects, Connexions

Job Purpose

To support the delivery of and to provide administration to the Get Set project, providing young people aged 16 - 25 bespoke work experience and employability training opportunities.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

1. Dealing with enquiries via telephone and email
2. Promoting the Get Set project through attendance of job fairs and advertisement of opportunities through the Get Set and VAL websites.
3. Developing and maintaining databases and collating and analysing statistical information when needed for reports.
4. Supporting the team with finances, including raising and processing invoices through Oracle, managing the petty cash and processing mileage claims
5. Maintaining an efficient electronic and hard copy filing system
6. Supporting events. Receiving guests and ensuring catering arrangements, room booking and visitors parking have been organised
7. Ordering equipment and stationary
8. Sorting and distributing the post and completing mail outs
9. Liaising with young people, mentors and partners

JOB DESCRIPTION

Special Factors

- The nature of the work may involve the jobholder carrying out work outside of normal working hours.
- The jobholder may be required to attend, from time to time, training courses, conferences, seminars or other meetings as required by his/ her own training needs and the needs of the service.

This job description sets out the duties and responsibilities of the job at the time when it was drawn up. Such duties and responsibilities may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the duties or the level of responsibility entailed. Such variations are a common occurrence and cannot in themselves justify a reconsideration of the grading of the job.

Leicestershire County Council is seeking to promote the employment of disabled people and will make any adjustments considered reasonable to the above duties under the terms of the Equality Act 2010 to accommodate a suitable disabled candidate.

Date Prepared/Revised: 18th April 2016

EXAMPLE PERSON SPECIFICATION

Department:	Communities and Wellbeing
Job Title:	Administration Assistant
Grade:	6
Post Number:	CW001
Service/Section:	Heritage Team

	Essential	Desirable	How assessed
Qualifications			
NVQ level 3 in Business Support		✓	App / Int
Or Demonstrable experience identified within the section below.	✓		App / Int
Experience			All: App / Int
Previous administrative experience	✓		
Evidence of maintaining manual and electronic filing systems.	✓		
Experience of working with diverse partners using multiple forms of communication		✓	
Knowledge			App / Int
Key local and national projects/organisations which provide work experience/IAG		✓	

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Department: Communities and Wellbeing			
<u>Skills and Competencies</u>	All		All: App/Int
<p>Word processing and ICT skills- able to use Microsoft office packages and databases</p> <p>Good verbal and written communication skills</p> <p>Ability to produce accurate, high quality work</p> <p>Able to work successfully both within a team and independently with minimum supervision</p> <p>Able to analyse large quantities of statistical data and information</p> <p>Good organisation skills with the ability to prioritise work and meet deadlines</p> <p>Demonstrates a flexible approach to meet changing demands.</p>			Test
<u>Other Requirements</u>			App / Int
An understanding of, and commitment to Equal Opportunities, and the ability to apply this to all situations.	✓		
Must be able to perform all duties and tasks with reasonable adjustment, where appropriate, in accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010	✓		Med

Key:**App = Application Form****Test = Test****Int = Interview****Pre = Presentation****Med = Medical Questionnaire****Dc = Documentary Evidence (E.g., Certificates)****Date Prepared/Revised: 18th April 2016**

Jemima Potter

18 The Pond, Hinckley, LE80 98Y

01456 743892

00416432412

Jemima.potter@hotmail.co.uk

Personal profile

A motivated and hard-working individual seeking to gain an entry level position where I can apply my existing skills and experience of administration within a Business Support environment. I have experience from within both public and private sector settings in administrative procedures, including filing systems, databases and financial processes and I also possess excellent communication and ICT skills.

Key Skills

- Excellent and proven customer service skills with the ability to communicate effectively with both customers and colleagues
- Computer literate with experience of databases and Microsoft packages including Word, Excel, Outlook and PowerPoint
- Effective team player with the ability to build good working relationships
- Highly organised and able to plan and prioritise my work load

Work Experience

October 2015 - Present

Administration Officer, Leicestershire County Council, Glenfield

Currently completing a work experience placement at Leicestershire County Council through the Get Set project. I provide administration and project support to the Communities and Wellbeing Volunteering team, supporting volunteers within Heritage, Libraries and Adult Learning. Key duties include:

- Maintaining and updating the volunteering database
- Responding to enquiries via email and telephone
- Updating social media channels
- Organising mail outs for over 600 volunteers
- Promoting volunteering opportunities via the Leicestershire County Council and Do-It websites
- Analysing statistical data for Senior Management Reports
- Processing invoices on the system Oracle
- Maintaining an efficient filing system

July 2013- October 2015

Sales Assistant, Shoe World, Oadby, Leicester

As a Sales Assistant my main responsibilities include:

- Providing excellent customer service
- Till work
- Merchandising and handling stock deliveries
- Upselling of products
- Cashing up the till and daily banking

Qualifications and Training

September 2013- July 2015

Liberty College, Leicester

A Level: English (B) Textiles (B) Geography (C)

AS Level: Maths (C)

September 2011- July 2013

Marmite Secondary School, Hinckley

11 GCSES grades A-C, including: English Language (A) Maths (B) Double Science (BB)

Achievements

- Acted as 'Head Prefect' at school during years 10 & 11
- Completed Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award in 2015
- Won 'Pride of Hinckley' Award for 'Young Volunteer of the Year' for contribution towards GetSet Youth Panel

Interests and Hobbies

Youth Ambassador for Leicestershire County Council's Get Set project, lending a 'young persons voice' to its direction and development. I have had the opportunity to support the development of a new film aimed to empower young people to take responsibility of their own job search process and have also participated in residential trips and confidence building workshops. I am also a member of the local netball team, regularly participating in tournaments and am currently training towards my Level 2 Coaching Award.

References available upon request

ANDREW SMITH

1 Jubilee Road, Glenfield, Leicester, LE3 8RZ

0116 1234 567

07123 456 789

andrewsmith@gmail.com

PERSONAL PROFILE

A well-presented, hardworking, reliable and approachable individual who always strives to deliver excellent outcomes. Keen to gain employment within a Business Administration role, I am dedicated to producing work of a high standard and working to meet targets and outcomes. I have a keen eye for detail and can work accurately under pressure. I am a strong communicator with excellent organisation skills and am easily able to form effective relationships with colleagues and customers alike.

KEY SKILLS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Communication Skills

- Generated sales totalling £13,749.00 over a 6 month period for EE, exceeding the target set by my employer, making me employee of the year. I utilised my verbal and written communication and listening skills to ensure all of my customers were dealt with efficiently, were fully informed of new products and services and any leads were tactfully pursued to ensure a sale.

ICT skills

- Completed a degree in Computing, achieving a second class honours. I implemented my learning to create and set up a new database and filing system electronically for all customers at Logistics Ltd, making cost savings of £1500.00 due to eliminating the need for outsourcing this task. The system was tailored to ensure all employees would experience ease of use, whilst being responsive to service needs.

Analysis/Research

- Supported my manager at Logistics Ltd to undertake a thorough analysis of the local market and area, identifying all competitors and products. This information was used in a report to secure further business funding for the company and to develop a sales and marketing strategy going forward.

CAREER SUMMARY

September 2015 – Present

Team Member

EE Limited, Leicester

My role involves supporting the Sales team to generate sales and income. My tasks include;

- Talking to customers face to face and dealing with their needs
- Taking cash and card payments for purchase of goods
- Setting up new customers with contracts and taking bank details
- Dealing with queries over the phone from customers and internal employees
- Maintaining databases so that they are always up to date with customers details
- Maintaining electronic and manual filing systems

May 2015 – September 2015

Data Entry Assistant

Logistics Ltd, Glenfield, Leicestershire

My role involved supporting the wider administrative team in providing ICT services to local schools. My tasks included;

- Completing accurate and efficient data entry tasks on to the central database
- Updating contact details of customers onto Excel spreadsheets
- Liaising with internal departments and providing information when needed
- Ensuring data protection was adhered to

January 2012 – April 2012

Volunteer Waiter

Cuppa's of Glenfield, Glenfield, Leicestershire

My role involved supporting the staff team to provide the best service possible so that customers enjoyed the experience and wanted to come back. My tasks included;

- Greeting customer to the cafe
- Taking orders from customers
- Working with the chef and cook team to ensure orders are prepared as requested
- Washing up
- Answering the phone to customers and potential customers and dealing with their enquires
- Taking payment by card and cash

TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

August 2015 – October 2015

Global Edulink
Diploma in Office Administration and Reception - Pass

October 2012 – June 2015

University of Leicester
BSc (Hons) in Computing and IT - 2:1

September 2012

Glenfield Leisure Services
Coaching Level 2 - Pass

September 2010 – June 2012

Loughborough College
BTEC Level 3 in IT - Distinction x3

September 2008 – June 2010

Longslade Community College
8 GCSE's including Maths and English - A*- C

AWARDS AND MEMBERSHIPS

- Get Set Youth Panel – August 2013 - Current
- National Citizenship Service - June 2011
- Duke of Edinburgh Gold award – May 2011

INTERESTS

I enjoying playing both football and cricket, and have been an active member of local teams for over six years. Alongside this, I have been a Cricket Coach for children aged 8-11yrs in my local village for four years. I am a Young Ambassador for the Get Set Youth Panel; a high profile project supporting young people into employment. As part of this panel, I enjoy supporting their promotional campaign through creating posters and other forms of media.

REFERENCES

Available upon request

COVERING LETTER

Jemima Potter
18 The Pond
Hinckley
Leicestershire
LE10 3PY

Mr J Bloggs
Administration Manager
Heritage Team
Benford Museum
Iksthorpe
LE42 8RA

22nd May 2017

Dear Mr Bloggs,

Ref: Application for post number CW001

I write to apply for the role of Administration Assistant which was advertised on the Leicestershire County Council Website.

I am extremely interested in this role, as I recently completed a voluntary work placement within the service, and really enjoyed working with the staff and volunteers in the Heritage team. I feel that I made a valuable contribution to the department.

I enclose my CV which I trust you will find of interest, and I highlight the following:

- I provided administrative and project support within the Communities and Wellbeing team
- I have experience of using websites (such as LCC and Do-It) to promote volunteering opportunities, together with attendance at events such as job fairs
- I am able to produce accurate work of a consistently high quality as I have a high attention to detail. For example, producing mail shots to over 600 volunteers
- I am extremely organised, and use Outlook to work ahead of deadlines, to ensure I do not miss any
- I am flexible and am able to undertake a range of duties, and assist colleagues as needed.

I hope to have the opportunity to discuss these details at an interview. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

Jemima Potter

EXAMPLE SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Previous administrative experience

I have over two years' experience of working within an office environment, and within an administration role. As the Business Support Assistant for the Leisure Services team at Charnwood Borough Council, I would provide administrative support to a team of twelve workers and our line manager. My role involved undertaking several administrative duties including;

- Dealing with phone, email and letter queries from customers using the Leisure Centre and members of the public
- Sending out emails and letters to internal and external customers and partners
- Filing documents both electronically and manually
- Taking minutes of team meetings and typing these up for circulation
- Maintaining and updating the centre's database with details of new customers and change of details for existing records
- Typing up various documents and reports
- Creating presentations on Powerpoint
- Scanning, copying and printing of office documents and promotional materials
- Ordering and purchasing stock and stationery
- Using finance systems to raise purchase orders and invoices
- Booking and servicing meetings

Having previously volunteered with Victim Support for over two years, I also provided administrative support to the paid staff there, including taking phone queries and messages, filing, collating data, updating databases and typing up reports.

Evidence of maintaining manual and electronic filing systems

As a Business Support Assistant for a busy and well used service in Charnwood, it was essential that I was able to work accurately and efficiently with large amounts of data relating to leisure centre customers and users. I was responsible for maintaining our filing systems both manually and electronically which involved filing away hard copies of registrations forms, identifications documents and information on bank details in alphabetical order, and scanning these hard copies onto our systems for filing away in electronic folders. I regularly had to deal with personal details and sensitive information relating to customers so it was imperative that I worked within Data Protection and Information Security protocols to ensure all databases were maintained in line with these.

As part of my role, I supported my manager with setting up a new system for under 16's where we also had to ensure that our database reflected details for parents and gathered consent for younger users of the gym. I was able to take a methodical and timely approach to ensuring the databases were updated regularly so that the most up-to-date information was available for the team at all times.

Experience of working with diverse partners using multiple forms of communication

Working for Charnwood Leisure Services and volunteering with Victim Support has brought me into contact with diverse partner organisations. These organisations have included schools, colleges, universities, local youth groups, Police, Social Services, other Leisure Centres from around the County, Charnwood Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council. My work has involved communicating and meeting directly with representatives from these organisations to ensure project objectives are met.

In working with these partners, I have had to implement various methods of communication to meet the needs of both our and the partners organisations services. I have used emails to send and receive important documentation, to set up meetings and share updates. I have also supported my colleague with managing Charnwood Leisure Services social networking sites (Facebook and Twitter). This has involved linking in with partner organisations, sharing good work practice and case studies and ensuring this communication method is brief and targeted. I have frequently dealt with partners over the phone and by letter which have over time, helped me to hone the excellent written and verbal communication skills I have today. I have been responsible for creating promotional materials to publicise our work and activities including designing newsletters, posters, leaflets to communicate our services to the public and partner organisations.

Whilst with Charnwood Leisure Services, I would support the annual Summer Fair in Loughborough by preparing for and holding a stall to promote our services to the local community. During these events I would actively seek out and engage with community members to inform them of our products and services, and take expressions of interest for potential memberships.

Knowledge of key local and national projects/organisations which provide work experience/IAG

Having lived and worked in Leicestershire for over four years, I have built up a good knowledge of local services and agencies. I have utilised or worked alongside some of these myself in both my personal life and working life. I am aware of the various project activities that the Department for Work and Pensions, Job Centre Plus, Princes Trust, Talentmatch and Prospects provide to customers around employment, education and training. I have a good understanding around volunteering, work experience, traineeships and apprenticeships and the various career progression routes available to individuals. I also have had experience of working with organisations such as Remploy and Apex in supporting more vulnerable groups into employment-related opportunities. At Victim Support, I also supported a small group of service users with updating their CV's and job searching so I have some insight into skills and knowledge that are required by services providing this support.

Word processing and ICT skills/Able to use Microsoft Office packages and databases

Throughout all of my education and work, it has been an essential requirement that I have been able to confidently and effectively use Microsoft packages. I am adept at using Word and have used this extensively for typing up essays and assignments, reports, letters and various other work related documents. I have utilised Excel for creating and maintaining spreadsheets of financial spend and for filtering large amounts of data. I have used Access for creating and maintaining databases. I have used PowerPoint for creating presentations which I have gone on to deliver myself at university, and for colleagues to deliver at conferences and training days. I have also used both Publisher and Adobe Photoshop for creating posters, leaflets, newsletters and other promotional materials to publicise our work. During my employment, I was also trained on different aspects of providing ICT support to my team including training on website maintenance and using new software designed to track customers journeys in accessing our services. I also learnt how to use the council's finance system to procure and purchase goods, raise purchase orders and invoices. I have been able to learn these new systems quickly and implement my learning into my work.

Good verbal and written communication skills

I am confident that I have a good standard of verbal and written communication skills. Throughout my education, I have excelled at coursework requiring good levels of English and have achieved good grades for written and verbal work. I have been able to hone and develop these skills through my volunteering and work experience. As a volunteer with Victim Support, I undertook basic counselling skills training which helped me to become very self-aware and use my communication skills effectively to support victims of crime both face-to-face and over the phone. It was essential that I was able to build a rapport with our clients over the phone at first, then to ensure I was able to sustain relationships going forward, and my verbal communication was integral to this. As I was frequently dealing with matters of a highly sensitive and legal nature, it was important that I was able to communicate any messages or information clearly and accurately to our clients and to our team. This also included writing up case records of all contacts relating to a client onto a central data management system. As part of this role, I also drafted reports for multi-agency meetings attended by the local council, Police and voluntary sector partners. I would often have to then relay the information from the report in person to all in attendance verbally.

Ability to produce accurate, high quality work / Able to analyse large quantities of statistical data and information

Whilst volunteering with Victim Support, I supported the administration team with collating information on all service users to be included in the annual report for the organisation across Leicester and Leicestershire. As part of this process, I would gather data on addresses/locations, nature of the crimes they have been victims of, age, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, disability and the type of support they accessed through us (face-to-face, phone, email). Using this information, I would then collate into required streams and filter this to produce accurate statistics on each area. I understand the importance of working accurately and carefully through this information, to ensure a true reflection of the work undertaken is produced. The information I would compile was used by senior management to be included in the annual reports, which were then presented to funders.

During my time with Charnwood Leisure Services, I would often produce quarterly newsletters which needed to outline to partners our most up-to-date stats on customers and finances. I would also have to provide a narrative report, so I am adept at producing work which is of a consistently high quality.

Able to work successfully both within a team and independently with minimum supervision

I firmly believe that I have been successful within all of the teams I have supported due to my strong ability to build relationships. I am a helpful, supportive and adaptable person that gets along easily with others. At Charnwood Leisure Services, I worked as part of a busy team of 16 staff, including Sports Workers, Managers, Reception staff and Administrators. I was always able to contribute well to the team, sharing new ideas during team meetings and team building days, and supporting my colleagues during the regular working weeks. As a team member, I am always clear on my role and responsibilities and how I fit in the team, and am aware of the impact my role/work has on the wider service.

Whilst at Victim Support, I was required to often work on my own due to the team structure. Many workers would often be out on visits, or on call. During my time here, I would ensure I checked in with my supervisor to set targets and priorities, ensuring I was clear on expected outcomes, and I would then spend significant amounts of time working on my own to deliver high quality work and reports. I am able to work on my own initiative without the need for frequent supervision.

Good organisation skills with the ability to prioritise work and meet deadlines

I possess strong organisation skills which I have utilised throughout my education and work history to ensure success. An example of this is when I completed my university degree, and worked part-time as an Administrator at the University alongside this. Having completed numerous assignments and pieces of coursework, all with competing deadlines, I was able to manage my time and workload effectively to plan ahead and organise tasks. It was essential that in order to successfully complete my degree to the best of my potential and sustain my job, I was able to work by prioritising tasks in order of deadline and importance and then working flexibly on other pieces of work to ensure all were completed.

I use various tools to stay organised including the Outlook calendar, a diary, to-do-lists, action and work plans. I always communicate and liaise with my team mates and manager to ensure I am aware of priorities and deadlines so that I can plan my work accordingly.

Demonstrates a flexible approach to meet changing demands

I am able to work on multiple work streams and projects whilst being able to adapt to situations based on need. I strongly believe I have a flexible approach to my work, and that this has been an important factor in my success thus far. During my time with Charnwood Leisure Services, I would often man the busy front desk whilst also completing administration duties and projects. During a typical day, we would experience high volumes of visitors and queries, face-to-face, by phone and by email. It was imperative that in order to deliver an excellent standard of customer care, I was able to work flexibly to deal with matters as and when they would arise and manage my own administration workload around this.

I am a flexible employee that is happy and willing to support my colleagues and manager as needed to ensure that the needs of the service are paramount and that targets are met and outcomes delivered.

An understanding of, and commitment to Equal Opportunities, and the ability to apply this to all situations

I am aware that Leicestershire County Council has an Equal Opportunities Policy in place, and outlines the duty of anyone employed by the Council. I would adhere to this policy at all times. Within all of my previous work experience, I have strived to contribute towards an accessible service to all and have a good understanding of discrimination and the many forms it can take. I would never discriminate against others on the basis of their gender, age, sexuality, ethnicity, religion or disability issue. At Charnwood Leisure Services, I would always ensure that any meetings I booked for customers or partners, took into consideration any adjustments that would need to be made or available. Examples of these include; ensuring all dietary needs are catered for to reflect religious needs, ramps are made available for wheelchair users, large print documents were printed for a colleague who was partially sighted and a hearing loop was enabled for a conference where we had a partner with a hearing impairment.

Must be able to perform all duties and tasks with reasonable adjustment, where appropriate, in accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010

I have a physical disability issue which does not impact on my ability to undertake the duties outlined within the job description. Previous employers have made reasonable adjustments and I feel confident that I will be able to communicate these needs to any prospective future employer so that these adjustments can be implemented within a new work environment.

STAR TECHNIQUE

So you may have noticed that we have mentioned the STAR technique several times throughout this kit, and I am sure you are thinking, what is this?

The STAR technique is a useful method to structure your answers to competency based questions which look to assess your skills and qualities.

- S = Situation** This sets the story - it's the who, what, where and when?
- T = Task** What were your objectives? What did you have to achieve?
- A = Actions** What were the steps / processes you took to achieve the task?
What skills and qualities did you use?
- R = Result** What was the outcome?

By using **STAR**, you are providing the interviewers with a 'story' of a real life example of how you have successfully demonstrated that skill or quality within a work, voluntary or education environment.

Example

Describe a situation when you had to deliver excellent customer service following a complaint?

- [SITUATION]** During my time as a Sales Assistant at Shoe City, a customer complained in store that her online order had been delivered incorrectly, with the left foot being a size smaller than the right.
- [TASK]** She was anxious and upset as she needed the shoes for an event that night and wanted to exchange them for the correct sizing.
- [ACTION]** I apologised for the mistake and checked our stock for whether the correct size was available. Unfortunately it wasn't and due to the time frame, delivery or ordering them into the store was not an option. Using my initiative I instead suggested similar alternatives that I thought may be suitable and bought them onto the shop floor so that the customer could try them on.
- [RESULT]** The customer found an alternative which she said she liked even better than the original pair she had bought and left the store happy.

EXAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS!

<p>Common interview questions. <i>You can use these when preparing and doing mock interviews</i></p>	<p>Please use this space to make notes to help structure your answers. Remember the STAR technique!</p>
<p>Tell us about yourself?</p>	
<p>What do you know about us / What interests you about working for us?</p>	
<p>What are your strengths and weaknesses?</p>	

TIP

The interviewer does not want to know your whole life story! Keep it relevant and focused on education, work experience, skills, achievements and hobbies/interests.

TIP

This is where all your research comes in handy. Demonstrate a genuine interest in the company/job and talk about what enthuses you the most.

TIP

Focus on your strengths and evidence these through providing real-life examples. Prepare for more, but only provide one weakness and explain how you have worked to overcome this.

TIP

What makes you stand out? Discuss your relevant skills, experience knowledge and passion for the role.

We are seeing a number of candidates for this position. Tell us why we should hire you?

TIP

Make sure you know the personal specification really well and relate your answer to the key skills and experience they have outlined on there.

What skills and experience do you have that are relevant to this role?

TIP

Mention why you want to work for the organisation/company and what interests you in the role BUT also stress what skills and experience you can bring.

Why do you want this job?

TIP

This could be in the workplace, education, volunteering or personal life. Explain what the achievement was, what skills and personal attributes you used to ensure you were successful.

TIP

Be honest but balance this with not sounding too negative – never bad mouth others or blame. Explain how you dealt with failure, learnt from it and used it to move forward.

TIP

Outline your positive attributes and qualities, and provide reasons for why you think your manager would label you these things. Where possible, use genuine feedback you have received from any managers.

TIP

Always ask at least one question. As a basic, always ask when you can expect to hear back from them, or refer to our 'Interview top tips' section for more examples!

What has been your greatest achievement?

What has been your biggest failure?

How would your manager describe you?

Do you have any questions for us?



Always give examples! Use the STAR technique (you can find this in the 'Reserves' section on page lettered J)

Competency Based Questions – these are questions based on the knowledge, skills and experience outlined in the Job Description / Person Spec

A significant amount of your time within the office will be spent providing admin support to the team. What experience do you have of administration?

This role will require you to work with community groups. What experience do you have in this and how did you engage them?

This role will involve providing customer service. What qualities do you think are important when working with members of the public?

TIP

Describe the size of the team and explain your role within it. Always use "I" rather than "we" so that employers know what you did within that team

Can you give me an example of when you have successfully worked as part of a team?

TIP

Although this question does not ask for an example- still give one! so that you can evidence how you would behave within a team

What do you think makes a good team member?

TIP

Consider how you organise yourself on a day to day basis to ensure you do not miss any deadlines

Tell us about a situation where you have had to deal with more than one task at the same time?

TIP

Give examples of all aspects of Microsoft Office and any other ICT software/hardware you have used. Be confident in your abilities but do not exaggerate

What ICT skills do you have?

TIP

Be respectful of previous employers or organisations so that you show loyalty and respect

Can you give me an example of a particularly difficult client you have had to deal with and how you used your skills to successfully overcome the problem they had?

TIP

A lot of employers will ask a similar question to test how you treat people from different backgrounds to yourself

What is your understanding of Equal Opportunities?

Some employers may ask you some 'off the wall' questions, particularly graduate schemes or private companies. Prepare for the possibility of being asked some strange things such as

- If you were an animal, what animal would you be?
- If you were a Microsoft program, which one would you be?
- How many different ways can you get water from a lake at the foot of a mountain, up to the top of the mountain?

The aim of these types of questions is to test your 'creativity' and 'outside the box' thinking!

WHERE TO LOOK FOR SUPPORT

Below is a list of just some of the agencies, services and websites out there which can help you help you find opportunities, apprenticeships or employment.

Careers information, advice and guidance

Prospects: www.prospects.co.uk

Supports young people that are not in education, employment or training (NEET) aged 16—19 (and up to 25 for young people with a learning disability or difficulty) on behalf of Leicestershire County Council.



This information is accurate as of May 2018. Please remember that services and websites may change. If in doubt do a google search and remember some companies only advertise job vacancies on their own website!

Connexions: www.leicester.gov.uk/connexions

Offer careers information, advice and support to young people who are:

- Aged 16-19 (or up to 25 for people with learning difficulties or disabilities)
- Living in Leicester city
- Not in full time work, training or education or who aren't happy with the training / job / course they are on

National Careers Service:

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/#>

Provides information, advice and guidance to help you make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities.

Jobcentre Plus: www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus

A government funded employment agency that provides guidance, support and training to those of all ages who are unemployed and seeking employment. They also help people access benefits.

Leicester Apprenticeship hub

www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/jobs-and-careers/leicester-to-work/leicester-apprenticeship-hub/

Your one-stop shop for everything you need to know about Apprenticeships!

Aspiro: www.aspiro.org.uk/

Tel: 0800 098 8708

Provides support for adults who are disadvantaged in accessing work or learning opportunities.

Remploy: www.remploy.co.uk/

Tel: 0300 456 8110

A leading provider of specialist employment and skills support for disabled people and those with health conditions. Helps individuals to find work and provides support in work too.

Volunteering, Work Experience and Training Providers

Leicestershire County Council Volunteering:

[www.leicestershire.gov.uk/jobs-and-volunteering/
volunteering](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/jobs-and-volunteering/volunteering)

Diverse volunteering opportunities available across Heritage, Libraries, Youth Offending, Environment and more!

Voluntary Action Leicestershire:

www.valonline.org.uk

Tel: 0116 257 5050

Provides support and guidance to help people into volunteering roles.

Visit www.volunteerleicestershire.org.uk/

to find a variety of different volunteering opportunities available throughout Leicestershire.

Yes Project: www.yesproject.org/

Tel: 0116 257 4973

Supports 15-24 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) to take steps towards finding work.

Princes Trust: www.princes-trust.org.uk

Tel: 0116 255 0400

Supports 11 to 30 year-olds to empower them to get into jobs, education, and training. The trust delivers programmes such as 'Team Programme', 'Get into', 'Get Started' and 'Explore Enterprise'.

Talentmatch

Tel: 0800 842 842

Helps young people aged 18-24 who have been out of work for 12 months or more by bringing together a range of local organisations and education providers.

TwentyTwenty: www.twentytwenty.org.uk

Tel: 0300 111 2020

Provides education and training opportunities to young people aged 11-24 to succeed in education and achieve long term employment. They run Life skills Centres in Loughborough and Leicester City, providing educational courses, skill building activities, employability training, work experience, supported pathways to apprenticeships / jobs / further education, counselling programmes and mentoring.

Leicestershire Cares - Flying Fish Project:

www.leicestershirecares.co.uk/flying-fish/

Provide work experience placements and advice and guidance around CV building and interview techniques specifically to young people in care or those leaving the care of the local authority.

Leicestershire Care- WIRE project:

www.leicestershirecares.co.uk/community-safety/

Tel: 0116 366 2001

Designed to give ex-offenders a second chance in life. Supports individuals on a two week mentored work placement to help raise their self-esteem and confidence and gives them the belief that they are employable.

Seed Creative Academy:

<https://seedcreativeacademy.co.uk/>

Tel: 0116 344 0331

Engage with creative professionals in an inspiring environment; learn from listening, watching and getting hands-on in creative media production, employability and enterprise skills, and cutting-edge digital marketing

Go Learn: www.leics.gov.uk/golearn

Tel: 0800 988 0308

Provides adult education and activities, including Maths, English, employability skills and confidence building.

Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust: www.leicspart.nhs.uk/_Involvingyou-Volunteering.aspx

Tel: 0116 229 4056

A range of different volunteering roles including administration, reception, community activities and services based within hospitals. You must be aged 16 or over to apply.

Useful websites for your job searching process

<https://jobsearch.direct.gov.uk>

www.reed.co.uk/jobs

www.monster.co.uk

www.linkedin.com/jobs/

www.indeed.co.uk

www.jobsite.co.uk

www.cv-library.co.uk

www.charityjob.co.uk

www.fish4.co.uk/

www.totaljobs.com/

<https://jobs.theguardian.com/>

www.jobs.ac.uk/

www.jobs.nhs.uk/

www.leicestermercury.co.uk/jobs

www.myleicesterjobs.co.uk

<https://jobs.emss.org.uk/>

(Leicestershire County Council)

www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/our-jobs-and-careers/ (Leicester City Council)

www.highcrossleicester.com/jobs

(Highcross Shopping centre)

For apprenticeships:

www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship

www.loucoll.ac.uk/courses/apprenticeships

<https://leicestercollege.ac.uk/apprenticeships/>

www.notgoingtouni.co.uk/all/filter/locations/leicester+leicestershire

www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/our-jobs-and-careers/opportunities-for-young-people/apprenticeships/apprenticeship-vacancies/

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/jobs-and-volunteering/working-for-the-council/apprenticeships/apprenticeships-at-the-council

For Graduate jobs:

www.prospects.ac.uk/graduate-jobs

www.milkround.com

<http://graduatetalentpool.direct.gov.uk>

www.grb.uk.com/graduate-jobs?keywords=leicestershire

www.graduate-jobs.com/





PART OF M.A.G

This kit has been created by the Get Set project, Leicestershire County Council.

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