



Skills Assessment

A Self Assessment Tool for Older Workers

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Introduction

It is easy to forget how much you know and can do when you have been working for many years in a particular sector or job role. Perhaps you have been out of the workforce for some time, with caring or other responsibilities and are not sure about what you know or what you are capable of.

Confidence to match what you have to offer with a fast changing labour market means that you need to identify which highly employable skills you have gained through your day-to-day work and activities without realising it. By skills/competencies we mean being able to do tasks and fulfil roles in a range of contexts.

This is where this kit comes in. It gives you an opportunity to reflect on what skills you have, what skills you would like to use more, and what skills you would like to develop further.

- o **What** do I want to do next in my life?
- o **What** skills have I got to offer?
- o **Who** can I offer these to?
- o **Where** are the opportunities?
- o **What** do I need to show them?
- o **Am I** ready for paid work/voluntary work?
- o **How** do I apply?
- o **How** do I put together a CV?
- o **What** will they ask me at the interview?
- o **How** do I need to prepare?
- o **Where** can I get help and advice?

This pack will:

- ✓ Give you some ideas of what you can do for yourself.
- ✓ Signpost some agencies that could give further help and advice.
- ✓ Give you an idea of the skills and experience required in certain jobs.

How to use the toolkit

You could work through the toolkit in one session, but you'll probably find it more helpful to tackle it a little at a time, as working through one section at a time will trigger ideas that you can add when you return to it.

You might also find it useful to work through the toolkit with a friend, partner or mentor - someone who can reflect back to you your strengths and preferences.

If you are working with older clients to advise them on job hunting...

This toolkit can be of use to you when you are helping a client who might need time to develop ideas and possible actions, which will then set the scene for future interviews.

Section 1.

Knowing Yourself

Section 1.

Knowing Yourself

This section helps you to review the range of skills you have developed in your life so far. Some will be work-related, and some gained from activities outside work.

Identification of your key skills/competencies is important. Potential employers will be keen to establish your key competencies at various stages within the job application process and will use the following identification methods:

- o *Your response to a job advert (letter or application form).*
- o *Your C.V.*
- o *The job interview.*

What experience do I have?

You may know what you have to offer in a new job or role, but it might be worth taking time to reflect on this to make sure you have thought of all the possibilities including whether you would like further help and advice.

Think about the different parts of your life, family, paid employment, qualifications, hobbies, interests, voluntary work and social life.

What were the skills you used that had developed with experience?

For example:

Looking after money and budgets, managing your time, deciding what to do first, dealing with conflicts,

- ✓ *All of these skills are needed in family and social life*

Speaking to people you don't know well, organising a meeting, planning an event

- ✓ *All of these skills might be used in hobbies or interests.*

Section 1 - Your Personal Competency Profile

You should complete this personal profile to identify the skills, knowledge and understanding you have developed.

Think about the experiences you have developed through the jobs you have had or that you have gained from other experiences such as volunteer work or managing a home. *Do not be too critical of yourself but be honest!*

Competency	Description of Competencies	My Skills			
		You should give a judgement as to the degree to which you have the skills described on the left			
		Very easily	Easily	With some difficulty	With difficulty
Communicating	I can talk to all sorts of people				
	I can listen carefully for long periods				
	I can explain complicated ideas simply				
	I can change my views after discussion				
	I can write things so that other people can understand them				
Coping with pressure	I can cope under pressure				
	I can concentrate on one thing for a length of time				
	I can deal with difficult situations				
	I can handle problems				

Working as part of a team	I can bring my strengths and interests to the group				
	I can compromise for the sake of what we are trying to do				
	I can support others in the group				
	I can accept different views				
Being flexible	I can adapt to new situations and changing demands				
	I can deal with more than one thing at a time				
	I can recognise and accept differing interests and needs				
	I can handle new tasks and challenges				
Organising	I can convert objectives into action				
	I can work to a deadline				
	I can collect information and analyse it				
	I can use my time effectively				
Solving problems	I can deal with difficult situations				
	I can develop new ideas				
	I can turn solutions into actions				
	I can take responsibility for getting things done				

Interpersonal skills	I can work with people of other cultures, beliefs, backgrounds, ages and nationalities				
	I can motivate people				
	I can manage others				
	I can offer and accept constructive feedback				
Technical Skills	I am able to apply my technical knowledge directly to the roles I am interested in				
	I am able to use IT/computer packages				
	I can quickly acquire technical knowledge relevant to the role I am undertaking				
Additional personal skills	e.g. IT skills, language skills				

Section 2

Identifying the skills you have developed.

Section 2

Identifying the skills you have developed.

It is useful to match your skills with what employers are looking for, to help you in writing CVs, completing application forms or responding to interview questions.

Identifying your key strengths

This section helps you to review the range of skills you have developed in your life so far. Some will be work related, and some gained from activities outside work. Answer as many questions as possible and then give specific examples of how and when you used these kinds of skills. The list of skills is not exhaustive - you may be prompted to add other skills that spring to mind - there is space for you to do this.

Working through this section will also help you to construct responses to job adverts and interview questions to ensure employers are aware of how you have evidenced/displayed these competencies in your personal and working life.

For each area you will be able to:

- ✓ Establish the depth of your experience in utilising this skill
- ✓ Identify the words used in job specifications and job adverts which indicate that this skill is a requirement of the role
- ✓ Identify the questions which employers may ask you , so that you can give evidence of your experience utilising this skill
- ✓ Construct sentences to show that you have this skill which can be transferred into your CV and job applications
- ✓ Collect examples of situations where you have used this skill (which can be used in job applications and during the job interview)

Section 2(A) Communicating		Very easily	Easily	With some difficulty	With difficulty	Give examples of how you have used this skill <i>(where, when, how & in what way)</i>
1	I can talk to all sorts of people					
2	I can listen carefully for long periods					
3	I can explain complicated ideas simply					
4	I can change my views after discussion					
5	I can write things so that other people can understand them					

Add any further examples of communication skills you have

Section 2(A)

Communication Skills

Words used in job adverts, which indicate a requirement for this competency

Communication skills, presentation skills, listening skills, customer service, people management, negotiation skills, written skills.

Questions employers may ask to evidence your experience of this competency

- o Give me an example of a time you have had to communicate a complex idea or complex instructions to others.
- o Tell me about a time when you have persuaded others to adopt your point of view.
- o Tell me about a time when you have needed to listen to and understand a set of instructions.
- o Describe a situation when you had to write something complex and make it clear.

Record a sentence, which describes your communication skills (this can be used as part of the Personal Profile section on your CV – see later section on constructing your CV)

Record as many examples as you can (making use of the above questions) of situations when you have used this skill. These can be used in your written job application and during the job interview

Section 2(B) Coping with pressure		<u>Very easily</u>	<u>Easily</u>	<u>With some difficulty</u>	<u>With difficulty</u>	Give examples of how you have used this skill (where, when, how, in what way)
1	I can cope under pressure					
2	I can concentrate on one thing for a length of time					
3	I can deal with difficult situations					
4	I can handle problems					
<i>Add any further examples of coping skills you have</i>						

Section 2(B)

Coping With Pressure

Words used in job adverts, which indicate a requirement for this competency

Ever-changing environment, rapidly growing company, broad range of objectives, exciting role, pressurised role, challenging role.

Questions employers may ask to evidence your experience of this competency

- o Tell me about a time when you have changed your priorities to meet others' expectations
- o Describe a time when you altered your behaviour to fit the situation
- o Tell me about a time when you had to change your plans to take into account new information or changing priorities
- o Tell me about a time when you have worked under pressure to meet tight deadlines

Record a sentence, which describes your adaptability skill (this can be used as part of the Personal Profile section on your CV – see later section on constructing your CV)

Record as many examples as you can (making use of the above questions) of situations when you have used this skill. These can be used in your written job application and during the job interview

Section 2(C) Working as part of a team		Very easily	Easily	With some difficulty	With difficulty	Examples of how you have used this skill <i>(where, when, how, in what way)</i>
1	I can bring my strengths and interests to the group					
2	I can compromise for the sake of what we are trying to do					
3	I can support others in the group					
4	I can accept different views					
<i>Add any further examples of team working skills you have</i>						

Section 2(C)

Working as Part of a Team

Words used in job adverts, which indicate a requirement for this competency

Working as part of a team, team skills, friendly environment, team spirit, people orientation.

Questions employers may ask to evidence your experience of this competency

- o Tell me about a time when you worked successfully as a member of a team
- o Describe a situation where you were successful in getting people to work together effectively
- o Describe a situation where you were a member (not a leader) of a team and a conflict arose within the team
- o Describe a time when you have needed to change your approach to take account of someone else's view

Record a sentence, which describes your team skills (this can be used as part of the Personal Profile section on your CV – see later section on constructing your CV)

Record as many examples as you can (making use of the above questions) of situations when you have used this skill. These can be used in your written job application and during the job interview

Section 2(D) Being flexible		Very easily	Easily	With some difficulty	With difficulty	Examples of how you have used this skill (where, when, how, in what way)
1	I can adapt to new situations and changing demands					
2	I can deal with more than one thing at a time					
3	I can recognise and accept differing interests and needs					
4	I can handle new tasks and challenges					
<i>Add any further examples of when you have been flexible</i>						

Section 2(D)

Being Flexible

Words used in job adverts, which indicate a requirement for this competency

Rapidly growing company, wide and varied role, broad range of objectives, being adaptable, willing to work flexibly.

Questions employers may ask to evidence your experience of this competency

- o Tell me about a time when you had to change your point of view or your plans
- o Tell me about a time when you have taken on new challenges
- o Tell me about a time when you 'juggled' different tasks

Record a sentence, which describes your adaptability skill (this can be used as part of the Personal Profile section on your CV – see later section on constructing your CV)

Record as many examples as you can (making use of the above questions) of situations when you have used this skill. These can be used in your written job application and during the job interview

Section 2(E) Organising		Very easily	Easily	With some difficulty	With difficulty	Examples of how you have used this skill (where, when, how, in what way)
1	I can convert objectives into action					
2	I can work to a deadline					
3	I can collect information and analyse it					
4	I can use my time effectively					
<i>Add any further examples you have of your organising skills</i>						

Section 2(E)

Organising

Words used in job adverts, which indicate a requirement for this competency

Organisational skills, planning skills, resource management, time management, management, tight deadlines.

Questions employers may ask to evidence your experience of this competency

- o Tell me about a time when you had to manage large workloads and how you prioritised these
- o Tell me about a time when you were asked to undertake a task which conflicted with existing priorities
- o Tell me about a time when you had to meet a very tight deadline on a particular task

Record a sentence, which describes your planning, and organising skills (this can be used as part of the Personal Profile section on your CV – see later section on constructing your CV)

Record as many examples as you can (making use of the above questions) of situations when you have used this skill. These can be used in your written job application and during the job interview

Section 2(F) Solving Problems		Very easily	Easily	With some difficulty	With difficulty	Examples of how you have used this skill <i>(where, when, how, in what way)</i>
1	I can deal with difficult situations					
2	I can develop new ideas					
3	I can turn solutions into actions					
4	I can take responsibility for getting things done					
<p><i>Add any further examples you have of your problem solving skills within a team</i></p>						

Section 2(F)

Solving Problems

Words used in job adverts, which indicate a requirement for this competency

Problem solving, project management, change management, using your initiative, continuous improvement.

Questions employers may ask to evidence your experience of this competency

- o Tell me about a time when you analysed a problem and identified a solution
- o Tell me about a time when you have identified a better way of doing things
- o Tell me about a time when you set and achieved a goal

Record a sentence, which describes your problem solving skills (this can be used as part of the Personal Profile section on your CV – see later section on constructing your CV)

Record as many examples as you can (making use of the above questions) of situations when you have used this skill. These can be used in your written job application and during the job interview

Section 2(G) Interpersonal Skills		Very easily	Easily	With some difficulty	With difficulty	Examples of how you have used this skill (<i>where, when, how, in what way</i>)
1	I can work with people of other cultures					
2	I can motivate people					
3	I can manage others					
4	I can offer and accept constructive feedback					
<i>Add any further examples you have of your interpersonal skills</i>						

Section 2(G)

Interpersonal Skills

Words used in job adverts, which indicate a requirement for this competency

Client relationships, team skills, customer service, dealing with broad range of clients, role involves dealing with people at all levels.

Questions employers may ask to evidence your experience of this competency

- o Describe a situation in which you have developed effective relationships with a colleague or client.
- o Tell me about a time when you relied on a contact in your network to help you with a work-related task or problem.
- o Give me an example of a time when you deliberately attempted to build a rapport with a colleague or customer.

Record a sentence, which describes your interpersonal skills (this can be used as part of the Personal Profile section on your CV – see later section on constructing your CV)

Record as many examples as you can (making use of the above questions) of situations when you have used this skill. These can be used in your written job application and during the job interview

Section 2(H) Technical Skills		Very easily	<u>Easily</u>	With some difficulty	With difficulty	Examples of how you have used this skill (<i>where, when, how, in what way</i>)
1	I am able to apply my technical knowledge directly to the roles I am interested in					
2	I am able to use IT/computer packages					
3	I can quickly acquire technical knowledge relevant to the role I am undertaking					
<i>Add any further examples you have of your technical skills</i>						

Section 2(H)

Technical Skills

Words used in job adverts, which indicate a requirement for this competency

Technically competent, strong IT skills, professional, qualified, technical role, complex role, ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) qualification, CLAIT qualification.

Questions employers may ask to evidence your experience of this competency

Employers are likely to ask direct questions relating to the technical skills required in the role. These will be designed to test your specialist knowledge in a particular area.

It is also likely that some form of practical test will be given to establish levels of technical knowledge (particularly for IT skills) and you should be advised of this prior to the interview.

Record a sentence, which describes your specific technical skills (this can be used as part of the Personal Profile section on your CV – see later section on constructing your CV).

If IT skills are relevant to the role it is always helpful to include any qualifications or levels of proficiency in software packages (e.g. ECDL/CLAIT qualifications or record BASIC/INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED).

Record as many examples as you can (making use of the above questions) of situations when you have used this skill. These can be used in your written job application and during the job interview.

Section 3

Summary

Section 3 – Summary Your Key Strengths

Now that you have identified the range of skills you have developed in your life use this summary table to take stock. List the skills you have identified as strengths and the corresponding sentences you have recorded to describe these skills.

Competency	Description of skill	How you have used this skill
Communicating		
Coping with pressure		
Working as part of a team		
Being flexible		

Organising		
Solving problems		
Interpersonal Skills		
Technical Skills		

Section 4

Identifying Roles you Can or Wish to do

Section 4

Identifying Roles you Can or Wish to do

What kind of work would best interest me?

People have values about the work they prefer to do. You might never have set these down in a formal way. Use this checklist to work out what is important to you in your next job.

Work Value	Level of Importance		
	Low	Neutral	High
Financial - high earnings			
Being in control of others			
Working alone			
Working as part of a team			
Providing services that help others or work with a social goal			
Work that involves persuading others or changing views			
Working to deliver demanding targets			
Work that presents a variety of tasks			
Work that is consistent and has a clear routine			
Being able to work flexible hours			
Doing work that is recognised and that earns respect			

What do I mean by work?

You'll also need to give some thought to the nature of the commitment you wish to make.

- o Are you only looking for paid work with a contract of employment, on and with predictable earnings?
- o Would becoming self-employed interest you, either working on your own or setting up a business that employs others?
- o Can you fulfil your aims through voluntary work?

With any of the above you need to decide:

- o Whether this will be a full or part time commitment
- o Whether you would prefer to work continuously, or in a series of short-term assignments
- o The sort of hours that would fit in with your life.

Summary

I am looking for a job that is/has

.....

A job/role infield/area

.....

That asks for

.....skills

I want to develop my skills in

.....

Matching your Skills to Jobs

Once you are clearer about the sort of role you are looking for, the skills you have already got, and the skills you will need to develop to get where you want to be, you can begin to match your skills to the jobs that might suit you.

Looking back at the skills you summarised in Section 3, you can start to match your strengths to specific roles.

It is important to bear in mind what you have already identified as the sort of roles you might like to have, so that you do not waste your time on things that would not suit you or the time you have available.

Most advertisements have key phrases in them to give a strong indication of what the employer is looking for within that role.

e.g. **Field Sales Advisors**

'If you know how to build an instant rapport with people,you'll need to be able to think on your feet...'

Administrative Officer

"An opportunity exists for an experienced administrator who can offer excellent organisational and administrative skills"

Project Officer

'You will have experience of working with contractors, partners and funders to ensure the project is delivered successfully, as well as effective communication skills.'

These key words should match your skills as far as possible so that your application will be suitable. There is no point in applying for roles where your skills do not match because it will waste time and you will feel down hearted when you are rejected.

USEFUL TIP:

There are many on-line career development tools available which you may find useful.

The easiest way to access these free tools is to use an Internet search engine typing in 'Career development tools'.

Section 5.

Putting together your Personal Action Plan

Section 5

Putting together your Personal Action Plan

What is a Personal Action Plan?

By working through the first four sections of this Skills Toolkit you will have developed an insight into your key strengths, the competencies in which you have experience and the competencies you may need to develop further through training. You will also have thought about what type of job or role you are looking for.

Now you can use this knowledge to form a personal action plan. Complete the log book below, noting the actions you will take to get to where you want to be. For example you may feel that your IT skills need improving so you set an action to access relevant training.

Note – Section 8, Further Development Resources may be useful in helping you to find out what further help is available to enable you to get to where you want to be.

What else do I need to help me to get where I want to be..??	What actions do I need to take..?? <i>(e.g. undertake a training course, put together a C.V.)</i>	Date to be completed	Completed (✓)
Do I need to improve and/or gain any new skills? (e.g. IT skills)			
Do I need to improve/gain experience in a particular area? (e.g. volunteer to improve organisational skills)			

Do I need to do anything differently?			
What other tasks do I need to undertake? (e.g. put together a CV, seek advice, find information, register with a job agency)			

Section 6

CV Writing

Section 6

CV Writing

Your CV will describe your best assets, whilst minimising your weaknesses. It should be an accurate record of your employment history, and be relevant to the jobs you are applying for.

Care should be taken when compiling your CV as quite often this is the first piece of information a prospective employer has about you and your experiences.

TIPS

- o Keep it short – 2 sides are normally acceptable
- o Look at the job advert and pick out key words and competencies – use these in your Profile and throughout the CV
- o Make it relevant to each job advert
- o Use an attractive, readable font (e.g. Arial or Verdana)
- o Make sure there is plenty of white space

Do Not

- X Lie or exaggerate
- X Use jargon or pretentious language

The following page provides further guidance on developing your CV, along with a suggested Template CV to demonstrate how yours should look. Sample CVs have also been included in this section to give you some additional ideas.

A Short Guide to CV Writing

This guide to CV writing, personal profiles and covering letters is reproduced here with the permission of the Career Change Centre, in Kent www.careerchangecentre.org.uk

Why do you need a CV?

CVs are often asked for by employers when you apply for a job. They are also useful if you apply to a company that is not currently advertising vacancies or as a means of leaving your details with an employer that you have spoken to about the possibility of employment.

What is a CV?

Your CV is your 'sales' document. Its purpose is to show an employer that you have the skills, experience or potential to do the job. The information you put on your CV should be tailored to the needs of the employer and not just a general description of your work history or life so far.

It is not necessary to include information about your age, state of health, nationality or marital status unless you feel this information is relevant to the job you are applying for. However, you need to be truthful, as false information could lead to dismissal from the job you have worked so hard to get.

What information should be included?

- o Your name, address and contact details
- o A short 'Profile' that introduces you or identifies the job you hope for
- o Relevant skills for the job
- o Work history
- o Qualifications and/or training
- o Your interests outside work, including any relevant voluntary work

CV styles

All CVs will include the same basic information but the way that information is presented can differ depending on the emphasis and focus you want to present to the employer. You may need several versions of your CV if you are applying for different types of work, possibly using slightly different formats.

What should my CV look like?

Your CV should be a maximum of 2 pages but many people get their CV on 1 page. Make sure that your CV looks good, is easy to read, is positive about you and has no spelling mistakes. All CVs should be word processed using a minimum of size 12 type (font). Always include a short covering letter if sending your CV to an employer.

Is my CV effective?

A CV is often the first step in looking for work. Are you getting interviews? If not, then get some feedback on your CV from employers, Jobcentre Plus staff or Careers Advisers and make changes if necessary. There are many books written on CV writing. You can also get help and ideas from websites. The following page gives you an example of how to layout one style of CV.

CURRICULUM VITAE (EXAMPLE)

Your Name: (include any titles here)

Address;

Telephone/Mobile No.;

E-Mail;

Personal Profile	<i>Here you need to include a brief paragraph summarising your personal qualities/competences and experiences relevant to the area of work you are seeking. You could use the examples you gave in Section 2 of this workbook to help you here. Remember to highlight key words from the job advert and use these in your profile.</i>
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Key Skills	<i>Pick skills that are relevant to the area of work you are applying for and will interest an employer. You can use examples from current or past employment, training or education courses, voluntary work or other interests. Present as bullet points</i>
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Achievements (optional section)	<i>These are normally one off activities/events outside your normal routine, which add something extra to your skills and experience and will be of interest to potential employers.</i>
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Career History	<i>You should start with your most recent role and work backwards. Dates are generally from one year to another e.g. 2000-2003, not specific months. N.B for roles you undertook more than 10 years ago, it is enough to simply list the Company, Job Title and dates</i>
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Date (From – To)	Job title	Employer (name & town)
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<p>Key responsibilities and achievements;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o <i>Record bullet points of your key responsibilities</i> o <i>These will be outlined in the job specification for this role if available</i> o <i>List all your achievements during this time, including wherever possible a 'value' (example £X cost saving, X time saving £X worth of business, X% of target)</i> o <i>List any internal/external awards you have received</i>
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Date (From – To)	Job title	Employer (name & town)
------------------	-----------	------------------------

<p>Key responsibilities and achievements:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Date (From – To)	Job title	Employer (name & town)
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Key responsibilities and achievements:-
•

Date (From – To)	Job title	Employer (name & town)
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Date (From – To)	Job title	Employer (name & town)
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Educational Qualifications	<p><i>List qualifications including dates – in chronological order with the most recent listed first, including any relevant current training.</i></p> <p><i>If you have no qualifications – you can put “Completed Secondary School Education” if appropriate.</i></p> <p><i>You could also include some short courses/in-house training where relevant to the job you are seeking.</i></p>	Dates
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(N.B Qualifications can be listed at the beginning or end of your CV depending on how relevant they are to the job.)

Other information or additional information	<p><i>Leisure activities and interests-make this section interesting & individual. Use it to give information not already mentioned e.g. fitness through sport, voluntary work and hidden talents which may not appear elsewhere on your CV</i></p>
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A Short Guide to Writing a Personal Profile

Your profile sets the scene for your CV. It introduces you to an employer so it should be positive, informative and interesting. The examples below can be used to give you some ideas about how you could write your own personal profile

- o A fully qualified, experienced and professional estate agent with full knowledge of valuations, surveying, negotiating, scaled drawing and completion.
- o An experienced machine operator with a conscientious attitude to work. Able to follow instructions accurately, work to a high standard and take pride in a job well done.
- o A professional horse trader with thirty years experience of wheeling and dealing including bloodstock sales to royalty. I have experience and knowledge of breeding, from Arabian studs to Shire Horses and ponies.
- o A qualified production engineer with hands on knowledge of maintenance of machine tools and welding jigs. A handyman with full site service history.
- o Conscientious, accurate and hard working person who enjoys working with a team but can also work on own initiative, looking for an opportunity to build on present experience and work in a warehouse or production position.
- o A qualified caterer with silver service qualifications and standards to match. An innovative chef having superb food presentation skills.
- o Good customer service skills with ability to cope well and remain calm when dealing with difficult customers. I am looking to build on my existing skills and further develop my career in retail.
- o An experienced personal adviser in the Care sector offering quality information on caring for the disadvantaged.
- o A highly trained and efficient personal secretary with excellent organisational skills. Dependable, with the ability to calmly tackle any situation. Confident in dealing with all business situations and willing to meet any challenge.
- o A responsible and reliable person with an outgoing personality who enjoys working with people. Looking for an opportunity to work with children, using my creative talents and building on previous childcare experience.
- o A trained and enthusiastic telesales professional with excellent record in exceeding sales targets. A good team worker with a background in customer service, renowned for active support of junior members and training responsibilities.

Examples of Skills

Here are some examples to help you develop your own list of skills to include on your CV. Some of these skills will be directly related to the type of work you are seeking, for example; engineering, construction, sales or administration. Other skills will be more general and are called 'transferable' skills e.g. 'good communication' or 'good team working'. Give examples to illustrate all these skills in order to make your CV or job application interesting, personal and relevant to an employer.

- o Competent and efficient in the use of Microsoft Office and the Internet.
- o Friendly, supportive and reliable when working as part of a team.
- o Reliable, accurate and hardworking when operating as part of a team in a production environment.
- o Able to meet tight deadlines and work under pressure yet remain calm.
- o Punctual, good timekeeper and excellent attendance record.
- o Able to work quickly, carefully and methodically.
- o Polite, helpful and friendly manner when dealing with customers on the telephone and in person.
- o Discreet and professional when dealing with confidential information.
- o Experienced in a range of engineering craft skills e.g. welding, grinding and polishing.
- o Delivered presentations to groups varying in size from 6 to 100 people.
- o Clear and concise report writing skills targeted at audiences from the shop floor to the Managing Director.
- o Experienced in handling money accurately, using a till and giving change.
- o Very aware of Health & Safety issues in the workplace.
- o Flexible approach and open to new ideas and techniques.
- o Dexterous, quick and accurate in production techniques.
- o Interested in new ideas and willing to learn new skills.
- o Well motivated, keen, with a positive attitude to problem solving.
- o Good customer service skills with experience of dealing with a wide range of customer enquiries.

A Short Guide to Writing a Covering Letter

Your CV should always be accompanied with a short covering letter which highlights your key skills that are relevant to the job you are applying for. The covering letter should always be tailored to the job you are applying for.

Points to include:

- o Why you are writing. This can be in answer to an advertised vacancy quoting where the vacancy was seen, job title and reference number or can be a speculative letter enquiring whether an employer has vacancies in your field. However, avoid starting the letter with “I am writing” As this is not an accepted way of starting a covering letter – refer to the examples on page 48 for alternative ideas.
- o Highlight particular skills in your letter that are relevant to the job you are seeking
- o Make reference to further information in your CV – but do not repeat its entire contents!
- o Good presentation is essential. The letter should be word processed where possible. Remember to check your spelling and grammar.
- o Ideally the letter should be addressed to a particular person by name. Not sure of the name? Phone up the company and ask for the most relevant person.

SAMPLE CURRICULUM VITAE

SAMPLE 1 (PA/Administrator)

Joanne Smith
45 Job Search Avenue
London
SE3 3TY
Tel. No: 0208 456897
E-mail: jsmith@ntlworld.co.uk

Personal Profile A highly experienced and well-organised person with extensive secretarial skills (including audio typing). Having worked in a number of different and challenging environments, I am able to communicate professionally and effectively at all levels. Able to work without supervision, but also an effective team member, I am very receptive to the needs of others, with the ability to work under pressure and a confident and cheerful personality.

Key Skills

- o Competent and efficient in the use of Microsoft Office
- o Good customer service skills
- o Well motivated, keen, with a positive attitude to problem solving

Career History

2000 – Present Administration ABC Ltd

Key responsibilities and achievements;

- o Full administrative support to General Manager and six Line Managers, including keeping the diary and the arrangement and servicing of meetings.
- o Full corporate hospitality including arranging events at all levels
- o Overall responsibility for four personnel on reception, including recruitment and selection.
- o Responsible for all HR administration at local level. Maintenance of personnel records, both manual and computerised.
- o Responsible for all customer complaints for every department as first point of contact.
- o Complete responsibility for the facilities management of the building.
- o Responsible for some petty cash.
- o Responding to requests from charities/schools etc with regard to any projects.
- o Maintaining good external public relations.

- o Manage and progress motor insurance claims.
- o Full responsibility for the day to day running of a busy car dealership.

1997-2000 Legal Secretary ABC
Homes

Key responsibilities and achievements;

- o All legal typing for the company, including conveyancing documentation and all usual secretarial duties, including answering queries from solicitors in written form and exchanging all contracts on house purchases in the absence of the Conveyancer

1985-1997 Secretary to Director EFG Limited

Key responsibilities and achievements;

- o Audio typing of structural reports
- o Typing of all correspondence
- o Maintain both record and filing systems
- o Arrangement of appointments for surveys
- o Petty cash
- o Ordering and monitoring of stationery
- o Responsibility for receptionist
- o Dealing with customer queries and complaints

1970 – 1985 Career break to bring up family.

1969 – 1976 Secretary to Export Director HC Slingsby
Plc

1966 – 1969 General Secretary/Administrator Rogan
Textile
Machinery

Education

RSA I & II Typing	1966
RSA Shorthand	
Basic Book Keeping and General Office Procedures	
3 A' Levels	1965
6 O' Levels	1963

SAMPLE 2 (Customer Services)

John Smith
45 Job Search Avenue
London
SE3 3TY
Tel.No: 0208 456987
E-mail: jsmith@ntlworld.co.uk

Personal Profile I am a highly experienced individual with excellent interpersonal skills, whose career has spanned a number of different sectors where I have developed a variety of skills. Having been self employed for much of my career, I have been involved with all aspects of running a business, including sales, customer service, administration / finance. Recently I transferred my interpersonal skills into a customer service telephone role. I also possess the CLAIT qualification and am familiar with Microsoft Office packages.

Key Skills

- o Good customer service skills with experience of dealing with a wide range of customer enquiries
- o Friendly, supportive and reliable when working as part of a team
- o Discreet and professional when dealing with confidential information

Achievements o Won Leeds Bank 'Customer Adviser of the Year Award in 2004'

Career History

2000 - present Personal Loans/Sales Advisor Leeds Bank

Key responsibilities and achievements:

- o Responding to inbound customer service calls.
- o Dealing with customer enquiries and resolving complaints.
- o Cross-selling where appropriate.
- o Up-dating computer records on internal database.
- o Achieved 130% of annual sales target

1976-1999 Proprietor of Retail Sports Smith's
Business Sports and
Leisure

Key responsibilities and achievements:

Responsible for all functions associated with the operation of an independent retail outlet, including-

- o General management of the shop and business
- o Ensuring high levels of customer service were maintained
- o Planning and purchasing all stock for the shop
- o Undertaking all sales activity. Annual turnover £500,000
- o Undertaking all accounts work including sales and purchase ledger using SAGE Line 50
- o Responsible for all marketing and advertising of business
- o Built the business from scratch to annual profits of £150,000

1970 – 1976	Senior Service Engineer Course Instructor (North of England)	3M (UK) Ltd
1970	Wireless Technician (for Police and fire Service radio equipment at base stations and mobile)	H.M. Government, Wireless Establishment
1962-1970	Petty Officer – Radio Technician (all aspects of radio, radar, navigational aids and missile systems)	Royal Navy

Education & Qualifications

Joseph Priestley College CLAIT – Spreadsheets, Databases and Graphical Presentation	1999
Royal Navy Training Apprenticeship as Radio Technician (Artificer)	1962 to 1970
Castleford Grammar School 8 O-levels including Maths and English	1955 to 1962

Other information

I hold a full clean driving licence.

Example of a covering letter for an advertised vacancy

Mr J Brown,
Company address

Your address
Your Street
Your town
Kent ME7 5TJ
Tel: 0101 12356

Date

Dear Mr Brown,

I am very interested in the post of Head Waiter which I saw advertised in the Medway News on Friday 10th November and would like to apply for this vacancy (Reference 010203).

As you can see from my enclosed CV I have worked in the catering industry starting as a dining room assistant and through promotion I am now Head Waiter. I have experience of silver service, bar service and cellar management. Much of my experience has been through working at the George Hotel where we catered for non-resident as well as resident guests.

I feel I have many of the skills that you are looking for and I am very keen to develop these further by joining your company with its nationwide network of prestigious hotels. I am able to provide references upon request.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Maggie May

Enc.

Example of an accompanying letter with a speculative job application

Mr J Brown,
Company address

Your address
Your Street
Your town
Kent ME7 5TJ
Tel: 0101 12356

Date

Dear Mr Brown,

I read with interest in the Medway News that your nationwide chain of prestigious hotels will be opening a new hotel in Chatham in the Spring of next year and I would very much like to be considered for one of the new posts.

I am experienced in many aspects of hotel catering. I started working in the dining room as an assistant and through promotion I am now Head Waiter. I have experience of silver service and bar service including stock room and cellar management.

I am very keen to work for your company and feel that I have many skills that would be of value to you.

I enclose a copy of my CV, which gives you further information about my background. References would be available upon request. I ask that you please consider me for future job vacancies and would be grateful if you would send me relevant job descriptions when you start to recruit.

Yours sincerely,

Maggie May

Enc.

A Short Guide to Completing Application Forms

Many employers now ask prospective candidates to complete an application form to ensure they receive standard information from all applicants. Using an application form which asks questions relevant to the job role helps employers to assess whether applicants have the skills, experience, knowledge and personal qualities that they require for the role.

An example application form is included below, to give you an idea of the sorts of information employers will be looking for.

Many employers will also provide prospective candidates with a job description and/or a person specification when sending out a job application pack. Remember to read through this information carefully, as this will give you vital information as to the skills, knowledge and experience that the employer is looking for.

The next step is to ensure that the information you provide in the application form demonstrates to the employer that you have the skills, knowledge, experience and personal qualities that is required. You should give examples to demonstrate rather than just list your previous job roles and responsibilities. The examples you have provided in Section 3 should be a useful starting point to help you with this.

Standard Application Form

Personal Details

Title	Surname	First Name(s)

Home Address

Postcode

Telephone:

E-mail:

Mobile:

Education

Please list all **qualifications or relevant training courses** completed or currently being undertaken. **List the most recent first.**

From – To Month/Year	Education/Training Institution	Course Title	Results (e.g pass)

Employment and Work Experience

Please describe briefly any work (whether paid or unpaid) which you have undertaken.

From - To Month/year	Employer	Job Title/Responsibilities	Achievements

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Skills and Experience

The following questions are designed for you to demonstrate how you meet the required skills, knowledge, experience and personal qualities for the job you are applying for. Your examples can be taken from your education, work experience and any relevant voluntary activities.

Please tell us about your skills and experience that relate to this. You may also want to outline personal achievements to demonstrate personal qualities or interests:

Please summarise how you feel your skills, knowledge and experience meet the essential requirements of the post:

Additional Information

Please write here any additional information, not covered elsewhere, which will strengthen your application.

Personal Interests/Achievements

Use the space below to describe any part-time activities or interests.

Referees

Last Employer Referee

Name:

Position:

Address:

Telephone:

Other Referee

Name:

Position:

Address:

Telephone:

Declaration

The statements made on this form are true. I understand that any false statements may jeopardise my application and may lead to an offer being withdrawn.

Signed **Name (please print)**..... **Date**.....

Section 7.

Competency Based Interviews

Section 7.

Competency Based Interviews

What is a Competency Based Interview?

The aim of a competency-based interview is generally the same as any interview; that is to give you the chance to tell the interviewer as much about your past work performance as possible. What will probably feel different about the competency based interview is that it has a very structured approach.

The interviewer will have a set of questions to ask you that have been prepared in advance. They will read these questions to you from their page, almost like a script – the reason for this is that they will be asking exactly the same questions of each candidate applying for the role.

The questions will be based on the competencies required in the role and you should ask a prospective employer what these are prior to the interview. Most job specifications will detail the competencies required and you should be provided with this when applying for any job.

How do I prepare for the questions?

Once you know the competencies that you will be questioned on, you can start to do some preparation for you interview.

At the interview, in response to the interviewer's questions you will need to recount examples of situations where you have displayed this competency.

A good way to structure your answer is using the ‘STAR’ method.

For example if an interviewer asks you:

“Tell me about a time when you had to answer the phone to an angry customer”

You could structure your response as follows:

SITUATION	<i>Describe the exact situation that occurred</i> e.g. “I once took a phone call from a customer who was really angry because they had not received an important document we had promised them would be received that day.”
TASK	<i>Describe your responsibility in relation to this role</i> e.g. “As a customer service adviser, I was concerned that the customer was upset with our service and knew that I needed to resolve it as soon as possible.”
ACTION	<i>Describe what action you took</i> e.g. “I therefore let the customer explain the problem and listened carefully to their explanation. I apologised for the delay and told them I would investigate the problem and gave them a timescale for when I would get back to them. I contacted the deliveries department and discovered that there had been a problem with some deliveries as a driver was off ill. I therefore arranged for a special courier to deliver the document and advised the customer.”
RESULT	<i>Describe the result of your actions</i> e.g. “I rang the customer to ensure he had received the document and he was absolutely delighted that I had worked so hard to get the document to him on time. In fact he was so impressed that he asked us to undertake some more work for his company.”

Interviewers will want to hear what **you** did. You should therefore ensure you use the word ‘I’ during your responses.

In preparation for your interview, think of some good examples for each competency. A good way to do this is to go through your experiences and think of some of your best achievements. Ideally your examples should be from the last two or three years experience. You can draw examples from education, work experience, voluntary work or personal/leisure activities.

Use the examples of situations, which you detailed in Section 2 of this toolkit, regarding your own competencies.

How do I prepare myself for the interview?

Rehearse your examples. Find a friend/colleague to rehearse with and ask for constructive feedback. Or record your answers and listen back to them objectively.

Remind yourself that the interviewers are there to help you give your best – they are not aiming to trip you up or trick you. They have been trained to help you through the process of describing your skills.

Try to relax and ensure you get a good night's sleep the day before the interview.

Hints and Tips for during the interview

- o Ensure you know where the interview will take place and plan how long it will take you to get there
- o Allow at least 15 minutes extra to ensure you arrive feeling relaxed
- o Ensure your appearance is smart
- o Answer questions in a clear and logical manner. Do not be afraid to pause for thought when you need to
- o Keep your language specific and positive
- o Bring notes with you if you feel it would help as a reference during your interview but do not read directly from them
- o Research the company beforehand and prepare any questions you wish to ask

Section 8.

Further Development Resource

Training/Learning Opportunities for Adults

Organisation/ Source	Contact Details	Website	Provision
Age Concern Training	Age Concern England Astral House 1268 London Road London SW16 4ER Tel: 0800 00 99 66	http://www.ageconcern.org.uk	A range of training opportunities for people aged 50+. Provides information on age, discrimination and pensions.
Learn direct	Tel: 0800 100 900	http://www.learn-direct-advice.co.uk	Learn Direct provides post-16 learning and has an online resource of courses covering a wide range of subjects.
BBC Learning		http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/subjects/adult_learning.shtml	Provides on-line learning support and guidance for adults. Has a course search facility
Jobcentre Plus	Correspondence Manager Jobcentre Plus Secretariat Ground Floor Steel City House West Street Sheffield S1 2GQ	http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk	Lists training available for jobseekers. For training in your local area you will need to contact your local jobcentre.
Over50.gov.uk		http://www.over50.gov.uk	Guide, covering England and Wales, or Scotland is designed for people aged 50+ to signpost to learning and other services.
Worktrain	Worktrain Division N10, Moorfoot Sheffield S1 4PQ Tel: 0800 100 900 worktrain-team @dwp.gsi.gov.uk	http://www.worktrain.gov.uk	Jobs and careers information from Jobcentre Plus

New Deal for people aged 50+	Tel: 08456 062 626	http://www.newdeal.gov.uk	New Deal 50 plus programme assists people who have had difficulty in finding a job, or work that pays a decent wage. The programme includes training options and information and support.
TUC Learning Services	TUC Learning Services Suite 506-510 The Cotton Exchange Old Hall Street Liverpool L3 9UD Tel: 0151 236 7678	http://www.unionlearn.org.uk	This services supports unions in meeting the education and skills needs of their members.
UK Online	Tel: 0800 77 1234	www.ufi.com/ukol	Network of centres providing access to computers, internet and email locally

Further Help with Basic Skills

Organisation/ Source	Contact Details	Website	Provision
DFES National Test	Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit, Level 1 Caxton House DFES Tothill Street London SW1H 9NF	www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/learning	Provides information on the National Tests for Adult Literacy and Numeracy which are directly based on the national standards for adult literacy and numeracy. The website provides learners with practice tests and how to access course.
Move On	For general enquiries: E-mail: info@move-on.org.uk Tel: (01223) 478291	www.move-on.org.uk	Offers Level 1 and 2 learners the National Certificates in Adult Literacy and Numeracy with a free brush-up course for those who feel they need to brush up on their numeracy and literacy skills.

Further Education

Organisation/ Source	Contact Details	Website	Provision
Learning & Skills Council	Cheylesmore House Quinton Road Coventry CV1 2WT Tel: 0845 019 4170 Fax: 024 7682 3675 info@lsc.gov.uk	www.lsc.gov.uk	The Learning and Skills Council is responsible for funding and planning education and training for over 16-year-olds in England.
www.Direct.gov.uk	http://www.direct.gov.uk/DI1/Directories/UsefulContactsByCategory/fs/en	http://www.direct.gov.uk/Topics/Learning/AdultLearners/fs/en	Directgov contains information on a range of public service information from the UK government. Has a section on Adult learning with links to college and university prospectus information and guidance on available financial help
National Extension College	The Michael Young Centre, Purbeck Road, Cambridge CB2 2HN Tel: 01223 400 200 info@nec.ac.uk	http://www.nec.ac.uk	The National Extension College (NEC) was set up over 40 years ago as a charity to help people of all ages fit learning into their lives.

Higher Education

Organisation/ Source	Contact Details	Website	Provision
Hero (UK Higher Education & Research Opportunities)	Tel : 0191 243 8487	www.hero.ac.uk	Provides information on higher education establishments and courses in the UK
Open University	The Open University Walton Hall Milton Keynes MK7 6AA Tel: 01908 274066 general-enquiries@open.ac.uk	www.open.ac.uk	The Open University (OU) is the United Kingdom's only university dedicated to distance learning. For most courses there are no previous qualifications required to study, you have to be aged 18 when your course starts but there is no upper age limit.

Information & Guidance

Organisation/ Source	Contact Details	Website	Provision
Acas	Acas Helpline: Tel: 08457 47 47 47 Monday - Friday 08:00 - 18:00 Tel: 08456 06 16 00 - for Minicom users Monday - Friday 08:00 - 18:00	www.acas.org.uk	Acas (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) provides up-to-date information, independent advice, training for employers and employees on employment issues. Acas also provides information for employees on age discrimination. They also have a confidential helpline.
Age Concern	For information and advice ring the helpline on: Tel: 0800 00 99 66. It is open 365 days a year from 8am to 7pm.	www.ace.org.uk	Ace Concern runs a free national information line for older people, their families or carers as well as publishing useful factsheets on: - Care - Consumer Issues - Health, Housing - Income and Pensions - Work & Learning
Age Positive	General enquiries Tel: 0113 232 4444 agepositive@dwp.gsi.gov.uk	www.agepositive.gov.uk	The Age Positive team is part of the Department for Work and Pensions and is responsible for strategy and policies to support people making decisions about working and retirement. The Age Positive campaign promotes the benefits of employing a mixed-age workforce that includes older and younger people.
Citizens Advice	Tel: 020 7833 2181	www.adviceguide.org.uk	Offers advice on a wide range of subjects from housing and health, to debt and consumer issues.

Community Legal Service Direct	Tel: 0845 345 4345	www.clsdirect.org.uk	An organisation which is the first port of call for legal help and information in England and Wales.
The Age & Employment Network (TAEN)	TAEN 207-221 Pentonville Road London N1 9UZ Tel: 020 7843 1590 taen@helptheaged.org.uk	www.taen.org.uk	TAEN is an independent charity which provides support for individuals looking for employment, or who want to change direction, develop their careers or undertake training. They also provide a signposting service for jobseekers.

Career Development / Information Advice & Guidance (IAG)

Organisation/ Source	Contact Details	Website	Provision
Worktrain	Worktrain Division N10 Moorfoot Sheffield S1 4PQ Tel: 0800 100 900	http://www.worktrain.gov.uk	Jobs and careers information from Jobcentre Plus
New Deal for people aged 50+	Tel: 0845 606 2626	http://www.newdeal.gov.uk/newdeal.asp?DealID=50PLU&Show=SUMMARY	New Deal 50 plus programme assists people who have had difficulty in finding a job, or work that pays a decent wage. The programme includes training options and information and support.
Fiftyon.co.uk	Second Floor, Ryder Court, 14, Ryder Street, London, SW1Y 6QB Tel: 020 7451 0231 info@fiftyon.co.uk	www.fiftyon.co.uk	The Career Centre is designed to provide the FiftyOn job seeker with a range of tests and exercises to help decide what type of career change is sought, choose which skills and experience can be used to best advantage in the future, prepare for that important interview
Counsel and Care	Tel: 0845 300 7585	www.councelandcare.org.uk	Offers advice and help for older people
Pensioners' Guide	Tel: 0845 6065 065	www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/leaflets	A free guide for people aged 60 and over. It contains information on a wide range of topics

Volunteering Opportunities

Organisation/ Source	Contact Details	Website	Provision
REACH	Tel: 020 7582 6543	www.reach-online.org.uk	An organisation which brings together voluntary organisations and volunteers with career skills
The Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme (RSVP)	Tel: 0845 305 6979 E: rsvpinfo@csv.org.uk		Helps the over 50's to take part in their local area by volunteering
Volunteering England	General enquiries Tel: 0845 305 6979 volunteering@volunteeringengland.org	www.volunteering.org.uk	Volunteering England is the national volunteer development organisation for England and can signpost people to volunteering opportunities nationally.

Other Useful Contacts

This page has been kept blank for you to record the details of other useful organisations or resources which you have come across: