



Need a Hand to get a Job?



Let us Help

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Let us help

1 - Where and how to look

There are people, places and things, which can help you find work.

Who?

- nextstep staff
- Job Centre staff
- Friends
- People you know who are in work
- Employment agency staff
- Family
- People from local community groups
- Employers themselves!

Networking or word of mouth is a way of using the people you know to help you to find work. Around half of all jobs are filled without ever being advertised. This is where networking can be very useful to you. **Don't be afraid to ASK!** If you don't approach possible employers “on spec”, you are missing out on a lot of job opportunities.

1 - Where and how to look

Where?

- Jobcentre Plus offices
- Shop Windows
- Supermarket Noticeboards
- Community Centres
- Libraries
- Employment Agencies
- nextstep offices
- Factory Boards
- Local Radio Stations
- Colleges

Some of the above places are there to advertise jobs and help you to find work. The others often have job boards or noticeboards to tell people about vacancies. Some places fill jobs by simply putting an advert in the window.

1 - Where and how to look

What?

- Newspapers
- Telephone directories, www.yell.com
- Internet recruitment sites
- Books
- Magazines
- Business Directories
- Company brochures and websites
- Teletext

Newspapers tend to have certain days for vacancies. In the Shropshire Star most vacancies are in on Thursdays although there are a few adverts on most days.

The internet is a good way of finding out about jobs. If you are not sure about using it, all local colleges run introduction to internet courses which would give you enough information to “surf the web”! You can also get access to the internet at most libraries. Try the local nextstep website on www.nextstepstw.org.uk. It has lots of local information and advice on job hunting.

Telephone and business directories are also great for finding out about firms doing the same work in a local area. Reference libraries usually have a good selection of information on employers.

2 - Ringing up for a job?

Being prepared before ringing about a job is very important. Have you got pens, paper, the details of the advert and the firm you are contacting? If you are using a public phone, have you got enough change?



If you are nervous about using the phone, try practising with someone you trust before the “real thing”! If you have a CV, keep it in front of you as this is a useful prompt about your previous dates of employment in case you are asked any questions about this.

You should know the answers to these questions before picking up the phone.

Checklist

- Do you know who to ask for?
- Do you know the job title or reference?
- What would you say if they asked you to tell them about yourself?

2 - Ringing up for a job?

- What would you say if they asked why you want the job?

- Do you know your postcode?

... and if you are ringing on spec...

- Have pen and paper ready
- Ask for the personnel department (there might not be one, but it would stop you from repeating yourself 3 times!)
- Find out something about the company before you phone, what do they do or make? Try to show that you have done your homework!
- Use flattery (within reason!) “I know your company has a good reputation for training” or “everyone I know who works for you enjoys their job” can work but you need to back it up.
- If there are no vacancies, ask where they advertise and whether they keep a list of interested people
- Keep ringing! Trying the same firm once or twice a month may help to get your name known. Keep a record of who you call, when and what they say. This helps you to avoid calling too much, which could just end up irritating them!
- Don't give up, always be polite, always say thank you....it could pay off!

3 - Writing the letter

Some job adverts ask you to write a letter to tell them a bit about yourself and why you want the job. This is often called a covering letter and is sent with your CV (find CVs in the next section).



Checklist

- Make sure you put your address and the date on the letter
- If you know the name of the person to write to use it to begin the letter. If not, write Dear Sir or Madam
- In the first line or so let them know why you're writing. Say which job it is you are interested in and where you saw the advert

3 - Writing the letter

- Don't go into too much detail about your past job experience, but do say something about why you want the job. Always try to mention one or two of your main skills that you feel make you suitable for the job, giving examples if you can. Try to put something in the letter that shows you have found out something about the company - this shows that you are interested and motivated
- Tell them when you are available for interviews. Let them know if you're just about to go on holiday or be away for a while
- If they have asked for a CV, tell them you have included it and make sure it goes in the same envelope
- Say something positive! "I look forward to hearing from you" tells them you are interested
- If you started with Dear Sir or Madam use "Yours faithfully" to finish, if you used a name to start use "Yours sincerely"
- If you don't think your writing is neat enough, it might be worth getting it typed!

3 - Writing the letter

Example Letter

2 Gardenside
High Hill
Pontesbury
Shropshire
SY5 5TG

30.09.07

IT Solutions
Wyle Cop
Shrewsbury
Shropshire
SY1 4NF

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing regarding the position of IT Support/Technician which was advertised on the Jobcentre Plus website.

I have enclosed my CV for your consideration. My work experience includes PC sales, IT support, repair and maintenance. As you can see I have strong IT skills with both formal qualifications as well as practical experience. I am now hoping to find work with an employer who can use my skills and hopefully offer me the opportunity to show my full potential.

I would be pleased to have the chance to discuss my suitability for any positions and I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours faithfully,

Richard Gray

4 - What is a CV ...and how to do one

CV stands for Curriculum Vitae.

Often employers will ask for a CV to be sent with a job application. CVs are useful for employers because they are very clear and simple. They are set out to make it as easy as possible to find out about someone by just looking down one or two pages. Your CV will change every time you learn a new skill or do a new job.

A CV needs to be clear, easy to understand and include things like name, address, education, training, skills, jobs and the names of two people who would be prepared to provide references for job applications.

There are different ways of putting together a CV. You will find books and websites with lots of information in libraries, colleges and Connexions (careers) offices. The nextstep website at www.nextstepstw.org.uk has a free online “CV builder” that will do most of the work for you!

The following is an example of a “skills based” or “functional” CV, which concentrates on the skills you have shown over the years, rather than what you have been doing. We all have skills that can be used in a variety of different jobs. You need to think about what yours are and some examples you can give to prove it. This doesn't just have to be evidence from workplace, for example if you have been a full-time parent, you may well be particularly good at time management, budgeting, communication etc. Don't be afraid to show off your strong points, but be prepared to back them up!

4 - What is a CV ...and how to do one

CURRICULUM VITAE

JAMES CURRAN

16 Coppice Row, Shifnal, Telford. TF11 1HE

Contact No. 07932 345678

Personal Profile

I consider myself to be a reliable, hardworking individual with excellent time-keeping and attendance records. I have a conscientious and caring attitude towards others, with proven ability to communicate effectively with people of all ages. I am flexible and willing to learn new skills, can work well as part of a team but at the same time be responsible for my own actions and display common sense at all times. I have performed well in a variety of roles but am now keen to continue a career in care as this has been the work that most motivates me.

Skills and Qualities

- **Communication**
I can relate well to people of all ages and backgrounds. I am a good listener and always demonstrate a caring, sensitive approach to colleagues and customers alike.
- **Team worker**
I understand the importance of fitting into a team, being aware of the bigger picture and my role within that. I am supportive of colleagues and can respond to changes in priority such as covering for colleagues who are sick or responding calmly to emergencies.
- **Adaptable**
I have a varied employment history and feel that this highlights my ability to fit into different roles and quickly become a productive member of any team. I can pick up new skills rapidly and follow instructions to the letter, which has been essential throughout my career to date.
- **Reliable**
I have been put in positions of trust, for example quality assurance and also given additional responsibility by employers who recognized my ability and willingness to seek out new duties. I have been responsible for care and welfare of elderly residents of a residential nursing home, including personal care and allocating medication.

4 - What is a CV ...and how to do one

Employment History

2000 - date	Raising a family as a single parent. Currently seeking full-time employment and attending courses to update my current skills.
1996 - 2000	Wolverhampton City Council - Care Assistant
1990 - 1996	Whitney Travel, Dudley - Bus Driver
1985 - 1990	Stevensons Builders, Dudley Carpenter

Education and Qualifications

2003 - date	IT Training Centre NVQ 1 in Information Technology
1990	Wolverhampton City Council NVQ2 Care
1985 - 1989	Bilston Technical College City and Guilds Carpentry
1980 - 1985	Norton Secondary School 3 GCSE's including English

Additional Information

I am in good health and keep fit with regular cycling and walking. I still enjoy woodwork, using it for home DIY and helping older neighbours with repairs. My main hobby is training and managing my local football team. I hold a full clean driving licence.

References

Available on request

This is just one style of CV. There are others such as chronological, targeted, academic and online. If you want to talk about these and which one might be best for you, you can contact nextstep using the details at the back of this booklet.

5 - Filling in an application form

Does just the idea of it stress you out?

Some firms will want you to fill in an application form when you apply for a job. You need to understand what you are being asked before filling it in. It is always good to get a photocopy of the form so you can do a rough copy.



Don't Panic

If there is anything on the form you don't want to fill in such as criminal record or health problems, it's best to write "see attached letter" in the box and write something separately to go with the form. Alternatively, if you feel confident to do it, you could phone up and speak to the person in charge of recruiting before you send in the form to tell them about it. This way, you don't need to worry about it on the day of the interview.

5 - Filling in an application form

Checklist

- Read the form from beginning to end before writing anything on it. Sometimes forms have important information on the back, like, “please write in black ink”. Odd but true!
- Always try to do a copy of the form. If you have no access to a photocopier write the answers on a blank sheet first
- Follow the instructions on the form
- Most Careers/Connexions offices and colleges have example application forms to practice on. You can get an idea of the sorts of things firms want by looking at a few different ones
- If you do make a mess of the form, it's better to ask for another one. Don't send a form covered in crossings out and tippex!
- Forms always have an “additional information” section. Many people don't put much in here, but this is possibly the most important part of the form as it gives you the chance to tell the employer exactly why you are suitable for the job! You should study the job description and think of examples which you can put in to prove this.

6 - Making the best of yourself

To get the right job you need to feel confident. To feel confident you need to know what you are good at and **believe it!**

For anything job related such as writing a letter, doing a CV, going for an interview, you need to spend some quality time with **you!**

Checklist

- Ask your closest friends and family to tell you, or write down all your good points. Keep it, read it and believe it
- Write down all the things you feel proud of
- Think about all the skills you have, not just skills from work, but anything you have learned
- Think about the qualities you know you have. Are you patient? Are you a good listener? Are you good with your hands?

6 - Making the best of yourself

There are also practical ways of feeling your best before you go for interviews.

- Be clean, not just freshly showered but clean fingernails and hair. Employers notice these things
- Always dress smartly. You don't need to get something new. It needs to be clean and sensible. The general rule is shirt and tie for men and nothing revealing for women!
- Don't wear strong aftershave or perfume. We all have different tastes!
- Think about your breathing before going into the interview. If you breathe too deeply, you'll probably faint! If you breath too fast, you won't be able to speak. Just take a minute or so to breathe evenly and think about all the brilliant things you have to offer!
- If you don't get the job, you still have your list of all the good things people said about you and you can move on to the next challenge!
- It is always a good idea to ask at the interview if you can approach the employer for feedback about how you did at the interview. Most employers are happy to give this. It can give you valuable clues about what you could have done better, or possibly suggest some training or qualification that you need to give you a better chance next time around.

7 - Getting through the interview

Interviews can be very hard for some people and others seem to sail through them without problems. A good interview takes two. A good candidate and a good interviewer. Remember, if you don't get the job it could be because the interviewer wasn't up to the job!

How to cope with an interview and what to say is very much down to you and your own style. There are, however a few rules which are unlikely to change.

DO

- Prepare well!
- Know where you are going and plan your journey to be there 10 minutes early
- Know the job title and the interviewer's name
- Know what you would be doing in the job

7 - Getting through the interview

DO

- Dress appropriately
- Shake hands and smile
- Give some eye contact
- Wait to be asked to sit down (don't sit in the interviewers chair!)
- Answer questions as fully as you can
- Ask if you are not sure of what is meant
- Pause before answering
- Speak clearly
- If you don't know the answer, pause, think, ask for the question to be rephrased and if you still don't know the answer, say so
- Come back to a previous question if you have something to say about it later in the interview
- Have some prepared questions written down if you need to
- Explain that all of your questions have been answered during the interview, rather than saying you haven't any questions
- Ask when you are likely to hear about the result of your interview

7 - Getting through the interview

DON'T

- Mumble or look at your feet
- Talk with your mouth covered, it's difficult to make out what you're saying
- Give one word answers
- Slouch in your chair
- Bite nails / fiddle with keys etc
- Argue with the interviewer
- Make jokes, some humour is good, but jokes can backfire especially as you don't know the interviewer
- Rush!
- Tell long stories which aren't related to the question
- Expect the interviewer to be good at their job. You may need to help them interview you by building on your answers and giving examples of your skills. Thanking them for the interview can boost their ego!
- Ask about pay as one of your first questions
- Allow the firm to think you're only going for the job because of the money or the perks even if you are!

8 - Voluntary Work



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Voluntary work is unpaid work. So why do it?

- Voluntary work can help you to
- Try out a job
- Get useful work experience for your CV
- Learn new skills
- Meet new people
- Start a new career
- Be more confident
- Communicate better
- Work in a team
- Get an up to date reference

8 - Voluntary Work

What type of voluntary work can I do?

There are many to choose from. For example, you could

- Help people with special needs
- Drive
- Do office work
- Give information or advice
- Take part in countryside projects
- Work with your hands

These are only a few of the types of work available. There may be other jobs which would better suit you.

For some voluntary jobs, e.g. the Samaritans, you will need to do a training programme before you can start work. Some organisations will help you to gain qualifications while you work for them.

For other jobs, e.g. for Social Work, you will need to have done some voluntary work before you can start training. If you apply for any job, paid or unpaid, which involves young people or people with special needs, you will be police checked.

8 - Voluntary Work

If you have been in trouble with the police this doesn't mean you will not be able to apply, just that the organisation will know about any convictions.

How do I find a voluntary job?

Contact your local volunteer bureau, their number is listed in the telephone book. They can tell you about vacancies and help you to find the best voluntary job for you.

- Local Charities
- Citizens Advice Bureaux
- Hospitals
- Countryside Projects
- Homes for the elderly
- Community Projects

These are all examples of organisations who employ volunteers. You can contact them directly to ask if they have any vacancies, their numbers are in Yellow Pages. Look on the local nextstep website at www.nextstepstw.org.uk for information on local and national voluntary organisations and opportunities.

9 - Work and criminal records

“.....I'd had no luck even getting an interview; after you helped me with my CV I got the next Job I went for.”

If you have been in trouble with the police you may be wondering what you should say to employers at interviews and in applications. There are ways of getting things across in a positive way. You need to plan well. You also need to be positive about what you can offer the job.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 tells you what you have to say and what you don't. It explains how long you are legally required to tell employers about offences and when you can stop.

It is quite a complicated Act and as there are lots of different parts, it is good to go through it with a worker who is dealing with it regularly. There is a booklet called “Just for the Record” which you can get from job centres and probation offices which will help to make sense of the Act.

9 - Work and criminal records

- You may not need to tell employers about your convictions. Check it out with a Probation Officer
- Cautions don't count as a criminal record
- If you were sentenced to two and a half years or more in prison or a young offenders institution, you will always have to declare if asked by an employer
- If you have to declare, it's best to write it down separately on a letter for the attention of the person who will be interviewing you. Alternatively, if you feel confident enough, you could phone up in advance and talk to the person in charge of recruitment - that way, on the day of the interview you won't need to worry so much about bringing the subject up.
- Each case is different. If you have been in trouble with the police, it doesn't mean you won't get a job!
- Get some help to make sense of your rights and responsibilities. If you haven't got a probation officer, go to the job centre or ring the number at the end of this booklet

Further Help

Shropshire Area call/text

07967 226683

Telford Area call

01952 382946 or 01952 382949

If you can't get through, leave a message and we will ring you back.

You can write to us at

Nextstep STW
8 High Street
Hadley
Telford TF1 5NL

Alternatively you can email us at:
nextstep@telford.gov.uk

Good Luck!



nextstepSTW is managed by Telford & Wrekin Council.
Printed December 2007