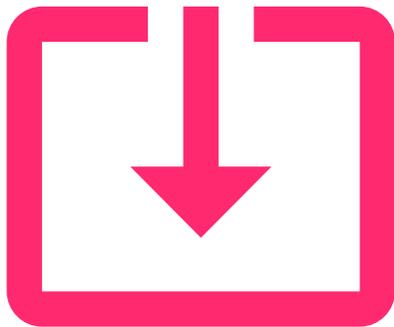


YOUNG PROFESSIONAL
LOOKING FOR
EMPLOYMENT



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INTRODUCTION

This booklet brings you all the information that you need to look for your first role or move on into a new position with a career you will love!

We believe job-hunting is a game – if you know the rules of the game, along with a few cheats or top tips, then your chances of winning will be much higher.

Not everyone has the benefit of being told these rules, so this is your opportunity to develop your own job-hunting game. But just like with any other game you might play, you also need to sharpen your skills and that can take time and resilience. We are not all naturally good at sport, and even the professional players we see on the TV have spent time mastering their skills to be world class. This is the same for your job-hunting game – put in the time and hours and it will pay off!

There is a lot to cover and it might take you six hours or more to work through this booklet – the more time you spend on really getting to know the content and completing the range of activities, the stronger your chances will be of finding employment.

You can however, complete this booklet in your own time. You also have the flexibility of jumping to certain sections and getting straight into the detail that you think you need right now.

Whatever decision you make about using this booklet, please know it has been developed with only your best interests at heart. We believe that every person has the right to build up their job-hunting skills and understand how recruitment decisions are made. With all this information at your fingertips it is simply down to you as to what path you take.

Wishing you lots of luck on your journey,

The Youth Employment UK Team



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WHAT ARE EMPLOYERS LOOKING FOR?

When it comes to looking for employment it is important to start with the end in mind. Spending some time thinking about the types of employers you are going to meet on your journey to work and what sort of business they run, why they are hiring and what they think makes an excellent candidate can really get you in the right mindset to start looking for work.

In the UK there are nearly 6 million private sector businesses, small businesses count for 3/5's of the business population and there are more businesses with less than 10 employees than any other type.

This is not to say that you should not have ambitions to work for a large corporate firm, indeed there are over 8,000 businesses that employ more than 250 staff in the UK and they employ 40% of the working population in UK and 48% of the UK turnover.

This means that the opportunity to find employment is rather endless, but also it is worth bearing in mind that you may end up working for a smaller company just as easily as you may work for a big corporate brand. But the way the different types of businesses will recruit and the type of opportunities they will have for training, personal development and career progression will all be different. The business culture will be different too, working in a small firm feels very different to being in a large business with thousands of staff on the payroll.

Understanding these differences and what to expect will provide you with some excellent insight that will help you to plan for your job applications or interviews or indeed choosing what sort of business you want to work in.

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Activity

Can you name 3 businesses in each of the categories below? They can be local businesses or national ones. Think about the places you might visit, e.g. shops, service providers (garages, hairdressers), parks and leisure spaces.

Number of staff	Name 3 companies that you think have this staff number
0-9	
10-49	
50-249	
250+	



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How do businesses recruit?

Smaller businesses are likely to recruit staff in different ways. They may not use multiple online job boards and may not have online recruitment processes. A larger firm might use a number of different job boards and according to the site [Zety](#) are likely to have 250 applications for every vacancy. Of these 250 people, only 4-6 will be short listed for an interview and only one will be offered the job.

The smaller the firm is, the less likely they are to have a Human Resource (HR) department; more often the senior managers of a small business do their own hiring and staff management.

What is important to remember is that whether you are applying for a large firm or a smaller one there will be some tough competition. You might be competing with people who have a lot of work experience, who have good qualifications or who have a connection with the business.

This means that you need to spend the time to get your **Job-Hunting Game** on!

We see too often people applying for jobs who have clearly not read the job description or taken the time to learn about the company and tailor their application. In fact, we have also seen young people submit a CV or job application with spelling mistakes.

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CASE STUDY

In 2020, Youth Employment UK (a small business in the 0-9 employee category) advertised for a Marketing Apprentice. This was for a Level 4 Apprenticeship paying £16-18,500 per year.

Youth Employment UK used the Job Board Indeed to advertise its vacancies. The vacancy attracted 58 candidates.

27 candidates were immediately rejected because the advert had asked the candidates to complete a short task before applying for the role and 27 people had ignored this request and just clicked the “apply” button without any care about the requirements of the business.

15 candidates were listed as maybe’s – they had completed the task which asked them to describe themselves in 3 sentences, create 3 different tweets for the organisation and to list 3 reasons they would be good for the role. The candidates were listed as maybe’s as they had either; not spell-checked their response, not taken the time to review the companies website and social media channels, or just had not been able to show that they had the key skills the organisation was looking for.

The final 6 candidates were invited in for an interview, although 1 candidate did not show up for their interview slot. 5 candidates did and once again the organisation was able to see who had really prepared themselves for the interview, who had done their research and was able to present themselves and answer the interview questions in a really brilliant way.

Youth Employment UK hired one of the best candidates they had ever seen who is now loving her new role in the organisation, making a difference every day!



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WHAT ARE EMPLOYERS LOOKING FOR?

Skills are key

It is not just about having the right CV and being prepared for an interview; most employers are looking for someone with the right skills and qualities to fit their business.

At Youth Employment UK we undertook a large research project to find out what skills employers are most often looking for and were able to put these skills into five core categories:

- Communication
- Teamwork
- Problem Solving
- Self-Belief
- Self-Management

There are a range of skills that fall into the core skills we have identified including; Leadership, Presenting, Creativity, Resilience, Motivation and Aiming High – all of which will be really important depending on the role you are looking for.



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Activity

Most employers are looking for people with a range of skills that will help the business to grow, or at least that meet with the company's image or core values. Take a moment to think about some of the businesses you know and see if you can name at least three skills that you think are important for people who work there to have and what might be the consequence if they recruited people without these skills.

Name of the company	What skills do their staff have?	What might happen if they do not recruit staff with good skills?



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Recap

Now that you have read through this section and completed the activities, let's take a quick recap of the key information you have learnt:

- There are lots of different sizes of employers in the UK and each will have different recruitment processes.
- Getting the application wrong by not customising to the job advert, or proofreading your application can cost you the opportunity for an interview.
- Developing key skills that employers are looking for will boost your chances of employment.
- Candidates with a good **Job-Hunting Game** are most likely to do well!



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Skills are things that you can do, and we all have lots of them. There are 3 types of skills:

- **Basic or Foundational Skills:** Being able to read and write (literacy skills), work with numbers (numeracy skills) and use some technology (digital skills).
- **Employability Skills:** The essential skills that almost everyone needs to some degree to do almost any job.
- **Technical Skills:** Skills that are job or role specific – like plumbing, nursing or accounting qualifications, and a lot more.



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The Young Professional

The Young Professional is a free programme for young people aged 14-24, created by Youth Employment UK with a range of partners, employers and young people. It exists to provide young people with all the support, information, and inspiration they need to prepare their skills for life and work.

The programme provides advice and support to help you develop your basic skills, employability skills and help you

to understand what technical skills different careers require. It also aims to support young people with the practical know-how of looking after your mental health, managing your money and much more.

Once you register you will then be able to complete the Young Professional Quiz and sign up to the newsletter which brings you weekly advice, tips and support about all aspects of your journey to being a Young Professional.



Become a Young Professional

Jobs and careers help

employers that care? Look for the Youth Friendly Employer Mark.

Aged 14-24? Get FREE Young Professional training boost

Build your life and work skills - whatever stage you're at in your career journey.

Aged 14-24? Become a Young Professional. A small step, but a great leap ahead. Hot tip: Sign up to our [newsletter](#) for free weekly training too!

Explore hot jobs you'll want to apply for - and learn how you could get them.

There's more than one way into any career! See what's out there, job trends, and how to find opportunities as a young person.

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Activity

You are invited to sign up to the Young Professional today and receive these benefits:

- **By completing the short quiz...**
 - you will receive a certificate by email to confirm that you have become a Young Professional – this is something you can put on your CV
 - you will get exclusive access to our Young Professional Members Dashboard where you can learn more about the skills, careers and opportunities available to you.
- **Sign up for the newsletter and...**
 - you will get the opportunity to continue to develop your skills,
 - learn about different career opportunities with our youth friendly employers,
 - learn about different events and opportunities from career fairs to volunteering programmes or competitions,
 - you will be invited to take part in our short surveys and help us inform and influence government policy and the behaviour of businesses.

www.youthemployment.org.uk/young-professional-training/



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The Skills Builder Framework

Employability skills can be difficult to understand because lots of employers use different language which can be confusing. We support the Skills Builder Framework because the skills it promotes fall into the five core skills we know are key and it provides a great framework for young people to develop their skills.

There are eight skills in the Skills Builder Framework. Most jobs use these skills, although not every job will need you to be as good in each one of the skills.



Listening: This skill is all about being able to effectively receive information – whether it comes from customers, colleagues or stakeholders.



Speaking: This skill is all about how to communicate effectively with others, being mindful of whether they are talking to customers, colleagues or other stakeholders and in different settings.



Problem Solving: This skill focuses on how to solve problems. Part of problem solving is technical know-how and experience, but there are also transferable tools that you can develop and use.



Creativity: Creativity works alongside problem solving, and is about coming up with innovations or ideas which can then be improved through the problem-solving process.



Staying Positive: This skill is all about being able to manage your emotions effectively and being able to remain motivated, and ultimately to motivate others, even when facing setbacks.



Aiming High: This skill is about being able to plan effectively – both to achieve organisational goals, and also to set your own personal development targets.



Leadership: This skill is about supporting, encouraging and developing others to achieve a shared goal. It is relevant not only for individuals in positions of management with formal power, but also for anyone working with peers in teams.



Teamwork: This skill is about working co-operatively with others towards a shared goal. It applies to working within both formal and informal teams, and also with customers, clients or other stakeholders.

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Activity

How confident are you with the core skills for life, study and work?

The Skills Builder Framework breaks each of these essential skills down into steps. That way you can see what you can do already and be able to describe that to an employer with some examples. You can also see what the next step is that you could work on to get better.

This self-assessment has been designed to help you think about your employability skills and how you can get better.

More resources are available at www.skillsbuilder.org

Over the following pages, rate yourself against the Skills Builder Framework and see if there are skills you are already good at or if there are areas or skills that could do with some more work...

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LISTENING (learn more about developing your listening skills with the Young Professional)		I do this...			
		Never	Sometimes	Always	Not Sure
Step 0	I listen to others without interrupting				
Step 1	I listen to others and can remember short instructions				
Step 2	I listen to others and can ask questions if I don't understand				
Step 3	I listen to others and can tell someone else what it was about				
Step 4	I listen to others and can tell why they are communicating with me				
Step 5	I listen to others and record important information as I do				
Step 6	I show I am listening by how I use eye contact and body language				
Step 7	I show I am listening by using open questions to deepen my understanding				
Step 8	I show I am listening by summarising or rephrasing what I have heard				
Step 9	I am aware of how a speaker is influencing me through their tone				
Step 10	I am aware of how a speaker is influencing me through their language				

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SPEAKING (learn more about developing your speaking skills with the Young Professional)		I do this...			
		Never	Sometimes	Always	Not Sure
Step 0	I speak clearly to someone I know				
Step 1	I speak clearly to small groups of people I know				
Step 2	I speak clearly to individuals and small groups I do not know				
Step 3	I speak effectively by making points in a logical order				
Step 4	I speak effectively by thinking about what my listeners already know				
Step 5	I speak effectively by using appropriate language				
Step 6	I speak effectively by using appropriate tone, expression and gesture				
Step 7	I speak engagingly by using facts and examples to support my points				
Step 8	I speak engagingly by using visual aids to support my points				
Step 9	I speak engagingly by using tone, expression and gesture to engage listeners				
Step 10	I speak adaptively by changing my language, tone and expression depending on the response of listeners				

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PROBLEM SOLVING (learn more about developing your problem solving skills with the Young Professional)		I do this...			
		Never	Sometimes	Always	Not Sure
Step 0	I complete tasks by following instructions				
Step 1	I complete tasks by finding someone to help if I need them				
Step 2	I complete tasks by explaining problems to someone for advice if I need				
Step 3	I complete tasks by finding information I need myself				
Step 4	I explore problems by creating different possible solutions				
Step 5	I explore problems by thinking about the pros and cons of possible solutions				
Step 6	I explore complex problems by identifying when there are no simple technical solutions				
Step 7	I explore complex problems by building my understanding through research				
Step 8	I explore complex problems by analysing the causes and effects				
Step 9	I create solutions for complex problems by generating a range of options				
Step 10	I create solutions for complex problems by evaluating the positive and negative effects of a range of options				

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CREATIVITY (learn more about developing your creativity skills with the Young Professional)		I do this...			
		Never	Sometimes	Always	Not Sure
Step 0	I imagine different situations				
Step 1	I imagine different situations and can say what I imagine				
Step 2	I imagine different situations and can bring them to life in different ways				
Step 3	I generate ideas when I've been given a clear brief				
Step 4	I generate ideas to improve something				
Step 5	I generate ideas by combining different concepts				
Step 6	I use creativity in the context of work				
Step 7	I use creativity in the context of my wider life				
Step 8	I develop ideas by using mind mapping				
Step 9	I develop ideas by asking myself questions				
Step 10	I develop ideas by considering different perspectives				

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STAYING POSITIVE (learn more about developing your staying positive skills with the Young Professional)		I do this...			
		Never	Sometimes	Always	Not Sure
Step 0	I can tell when I feel positive or negative				
Step 1	I can tell when others feel positive or negative				
Step 2	I keep trying when something goes wrong				
Step 3	I keep trying and stay calm when something goes wrong				
Step 4	I keep trying when something goes wrong, and think about what happened				
Step 5	I keep trying when something goes wrong and help cheer others up				
Step 6	I keep trying when something goes wrong and encourage others to keep trying too				
Step 7	I look for opportunities in difficult situations				
Step 8	I look for opportunities in difficult situations, and share these with others				
Step 9	I look for opportunities in difficult situations, and adapt plans to use these opportunities				
Step 10	I look for opportunities in difficult situations, and create new plans to use these opportunities				

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AIMING HIGH (learn more about developing your aiming high skills with the Young Professional)		I do this...			
		Never	Sometimes	Always	Not Sure
Step 0	I know when I am finding something too difficult				
Step 1	I know what doing well looks like for me				
Step 2	I work with care and attention to detail				
Step 3	I work with pride when I am being successful				
Step 4	I work with a positive approach to new challenges				
Step 5	I set goals for myself				
Step 6	I set goals informed by an understanding of what is needed				
Step 7	I set goals, ordering and prioritise tasks to achieve them				
Step 8	I set goals and secure the right resources to achieve them				
Step 9	I set goals and plan to involve others in the best way				
Step 10	I create plans that are informed by my skill set and that of others				

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LEADERSHIP (learn more about developing your leadership skills with the Young Professional)		I do this...			
		Never	Sometimes	Always	Not Sure
Step 0	I know how I am feeling about something				
Step 1	I know how to explain my feelings about something to my team				
Step 2	I know how to recognise others' feelings about something				
Step 3	I manage dividing up tasks between others in a fair way				
Step 4	I manage time and share resources to support completing tasks				
Step 5	I manage group discussions to reach shared decisions				
Step 6	I manage disagreements to reach shared solutions				
Step 7	I recognise my own strengths and weaknesses as a leader				
Step 8	I recognise the strengths and weaknesses of others in my team				
Step 9	I recognise the strengths and weaknesses of others in my team, and use this to allocate roles accordingly				
Step 10	I support others through mentorship				

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TEAMWORK (learn more about developing your teamwork skills with the Young Professional)		I do this...			
		Never	Sometimes	Always	Not Sure
Step 0	I work with others in a positive way				
Step 1	I work well with others by behaving appropriately				
Step 2	I work well with others by being on time and reliable				
Step 3	I work well with others by taking responsibility for completing my tasks				
Step 4	I work well with others by supporting them if I can do so				
Step 5	I work well with others by understanding and respecting diversity of others' cultures, beliefs and backgrounds				
Step 6	I contribute to group decision making				
Step 7	I contribute to group decision making, whilst recognising the value of others' ideas				
Step 8	I contribute to group decision making, encouraging others to contribute				
Step 9	I improve the team by not creating unhelpful conflicts				
Step 10	I improve the team by resolving unhelpful conflicts				

You can find out more about **Skills Builder** and the framework here: www.skillsbuilder.org



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Activity

Now that you have assessed your skills, can you think of some activities that you can do to boost your proficiency levels?

We have provided some suggestions to get you started...

Skills	Things you can do to boost your skills		
Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register for the Young Professional and read through some of the communication articles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice your active listening skills 	
Speaking			
Problem Solving			
Creativity			
Staying Positive			
Aiming High			
Leadership			
Teamwork			

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Different jobs require different skills

It is important to remember that different roles will require different skills and also depending on your level of work experience employers will have different expectations in how well you should be performing in different skills.

Even people who have 20+ years of experience of work are still developing their skills, as people change career, or need to learn new technology or get promoted they all need to keep developing their skills. Just like a muscle, skill development is something that you can be doing today and the more you practice the stronger the skill becomes.

By researching the type of roles or career you are looking for you can begin to build a picture of what skills you may need to develop to impress a future employer.



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Activity

Visit the [Youth Employment UK Careers Hub](#) and search for the following careers. Take a look at what skills each career requires.

Career Role	Skills Required
Mechanical Engineer	
Social Media Co-ordinator	
Care Worker	
Transport Planner	

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Recap

Now that you have read through this section and completed the activities, let's take a quick recap of the key information you have learnt:

- There are a range of different skills and you could be developing your skills today, preparing for your future.
- You will need to build your basic, employability and technical skills to get ahead in work.
- The Young Professional is a free programme that will help you to develop your skills but also provides a range of really useful help and information for life and work.



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They say first impressions count, and it is absolutely true! Think back to a time recently when you met someone for the first time – did you assess them, give them a once over, make a quick judgement or assassination of their character?

It is quite instinctive to assess someone when you first meet them (maybe try and cut out the character assassinations). We use our past experience to make judgement calls – what school did they go to, where do they live, who do they socialise with, how do they dress, etc.

Those first impressions do not just count when you meet someone in person, but when someone looks at your online profile too.

Have you ever searched your name online? In the world of social media everything we do leaves a footprint – post a picture of you and your mates behaving a little badly, have a rant about something or someone and there is a strong possibility that your future employer might see it.

What impression do you really want to make? Understand the difference between personal and professional, make sure that you know what the privacy settings are on your social media platforms and that everything is set to the highest level.

But when it comes to your professional brand you do want the right people to find you. If you use the right social media channels future employers could find you before you find them, and they certainly come in handy for building up your network and making sure you have some contacts in some high places!

Using professional social media sites like LinkedIn or creating a blog or YouTube channel that allows you to promote your professionalism, skills and expertise is a great way of standing out from the crowd when you are looking for work in a competitive job market.



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Here are some tips to get you started:

- **Research the different platforms** – get to understand their purpose, who uses them and what professional benefit they could bring you.
- When you choose which platform you want to use, you then need to **create a professional profile**. What first impression do you want to make?
- **Use a professional photo** – you may need to get dressed up for it and rope your friends or parents into helping, but make sure you take a good clear photo.
- **Get involved** – follow people that work in the sector you are interested in, follow companies you might like to work for or a brand you admire, find out who the leaders are and make sure you check out what they are saying on a regular basis. With platforms like LinkedIn you can join groups of professionals and get involved with conversations. With Twitter it might be a case of learning which hashtag to use.
- **Connect with people** – reach out to people you think would make good connections, send a short professional note telling them why you want to connect and when they accept your connection send a quick thank you. It never hurts to be polite and courteous online!



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Activity

Complete these activities to get you started:

- Search your name online – what comes up? Are there images or posts you need to take down? Are all your media settings set to private?
- Make sure you do know how to stay safe online and are not sharing private information – [Read this article](#)
- Research different professional platforms and learn which one you should focus on and build your professional profile using the advice above.

TOP TIP

If you use LinkedIn and have completed the Young Professional programme, do not forget to add it to your profile and connect with us. That way our network opens up to you!



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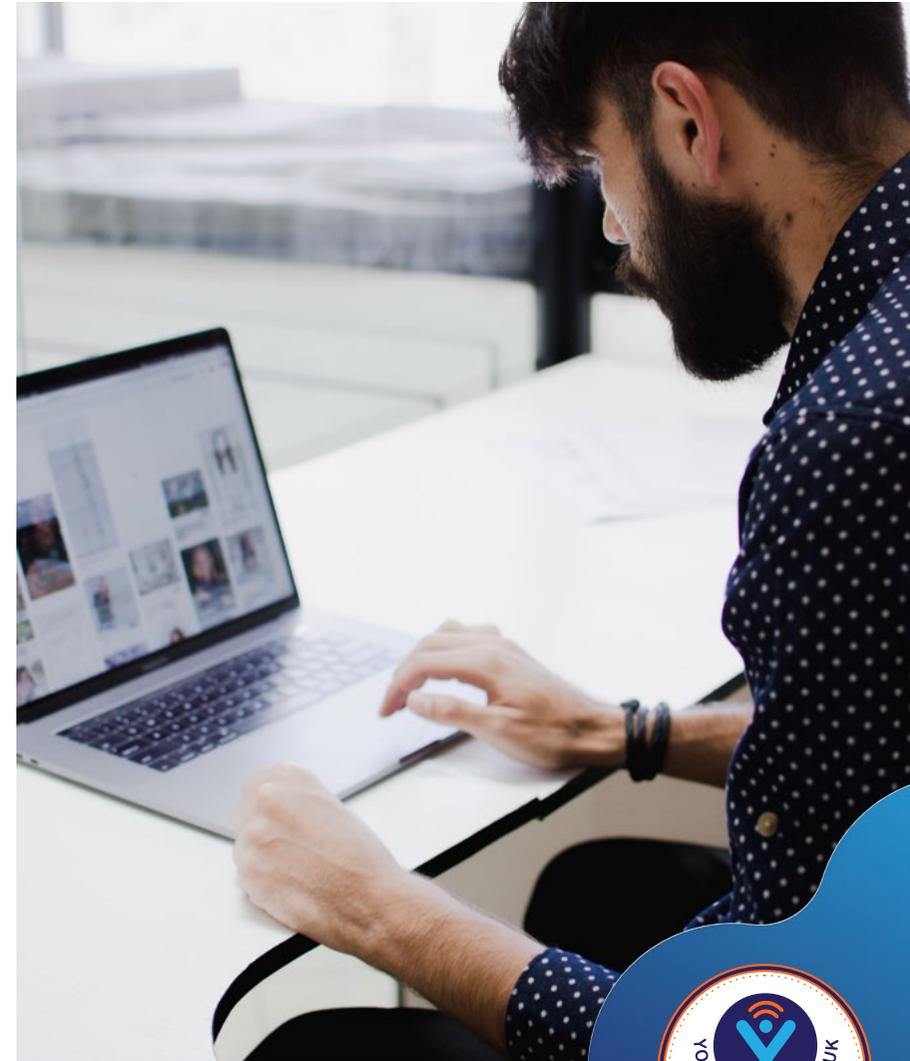
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DEVELOPING YOUR YOUNG PROFESSIONAL BRAND

Recap

Now that you have read through this section and completed the activities, let's take a quick recap of the key information you have learnt:

- Future employers are likely to search for you online.
- Making sure you keep your professional and private life very separate is important.
- Build a good professional profile to stand out from the crowd and build your network.



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JOB HUNTING

Right, now that you have a better understanding of the mindset of employers and the sort of candidates that they are looking for, it's time to start thinking about job hunting.

Some people say that looking for work can be a full-time job, and they are not wrong. Putting real time and effort into job hunting can save you lots of time and stress in the long run, so it is worth the investment of getting it right.

With millions of businesses across the UK all using different approaches to their recruitment it means that there is not one simple quick and easy way of job hunting.

If you have a clear idea of the job role, location and company you want to work for, your job hunting can become really focused. If you are not sure about these things we recommend that you spend some time researching your career options. You can start by reading [this article](#).

But even when you are super prepared, you may find it takes a long time to find the job you want and be successful through the recruitment process. You are

entering a competitive world and will need to build up a positive mindset that is resilient, so you do not let the process get you down. Read these [articles](#) about self-belief to ensure you have the right mindset to get going!

Using social media

As we have already discussed social media can really help you to connect with employers that you are interested in. By following a company on Twitter or LinkedIn you will see any posts about available vacancies.

You can also visit an organisation's website and look for their "career" pages – these pages will often have useful information about their up-to-date vacancies or an alert or email service that you can sign up to.



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Make connections

Again, as we have explored, professional platforms like LinkedIn will allow you to build connections. If you are able to connect or follow HR Managers, Recruitment Managers or Senior Leads, they may share updates when they are recruiting.

Another approach will be to see if the company has a Careers contact option, then you can email the careers team and ask if they are recruiting and let them know you would be interested if any vacancies become available. If the website does not have a contact email you can always ring the company and ask for the information.

Registering with job sites

There are a number of job sites that companies can use to post their vacancies – they are usually free to register with and you can set up a profile that will send you alerts every time vacancies become available that meet your requirements.

Make sure that you keep your details up to date with these sites and that you are giving yourself the best chance of finding work by having a good profile and CV uploaded to the sites.

When you do find a role you are interested in applying for, **do not just click the auto apply button!** Remember that an employer is going to give more time to someone who has clearly read the job description and done some research about the organisation.

Some of the most common job sites:

- [Young Professional](#) – if you have registered and signed up to our [newsletter](#) we will let you know when the Youth Friendly Employers we work with begin to recruit
- [Find a job](#)
- [Find an apprenticeship](#)
- Indeed
- Total Jobs
- Monster



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Recruitment agencies

In most town centres you will find a range of recruitment agencies, from national brands such as Adecco, Brook Street and Staffline, to small independent branches. The role of a recruitment agency is to work with the employers in the local area and help them to fill their vacancies by building a large candidate base, getting to know those candidates and being able to make strong recommendations to the employer. A recruitment agency can save an employer a lot of time and resource by doing much of the recruitment work for them.

Recruitment agencies can offer both temporary and permanent jobs – a temporary job might be something that lasts only a few weeks, usually to provide cover for a staff member who is off work or to cover for an extra busy period.

Temporary work can be great for candidates with little experience as it can build up your skills, knowledge, and network! It can also be useful for people who need to be earning a wage whilst looking for the perfect career or who are looking to fill gaps in the summer while they are on a break from education.

Permanent jobs are just that – you would work for the company permanently should you be successful through the recruitment process.

We recommend getting to know the recruitment agencies in your area. Find out which agencies recruit for the sort of employers or roles you are looking for. Print off copies of your CV and go and visit the agencies in person, get to know the staff and find out how you can get onto their register. Stay in touch with the agency once you are registered, call or email them every week to let them know you are still looking and see if they have any suitable vacancies.

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People you know

The final area to think about is your own personal network. When you are looking for a job it can be useful to spend some time writing down the names of all the people you know who have different careers. When you look at the list you might be reminded of someone who works for a business you are interested in or has a job that you would like to do.

Reach out to these people and let them know you are looking for work. Ask them if they can spare some time to talk to you about their organisation and role. You can learn a lot in a 15 minute conversation and people are usually very happy to offer their advice and expertise. You might find that one of your connections has a great lead to an opportunity and can even influence the recruitment decision.

Do not be afraid to reach out to people that you do not know very well, usually people are flattered to be asked for this sort of advice. Just make sure you ask in the right way, be professional, use your listening skills and take the time to thank them properly. This might be a follow up note or phone call, remember the impression you want to make and leave this person with, you never know when you might want to speak with them again.



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Activity

It is time to develop your job-hunting master plan. How are you going to approach your job search to give yourself the best chance possible? Set out some goals and activities that we have discussed in this session.

	What steps you need to take	When will you take these steps	What might stop you and what can you do about it
Using Social Media			
Making Connections			
Job Sites			
Recruitment Agencies			
People You Know			

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JOB HUNTING

Recap

Now that you have read through this section and completed the activities, let's take a quick recap of the key information you have learnt:

- There are lots of different ways to find jobs. The more effort you put into the process of job-hunting, the greater your chances are of finding a job and a company you love.
- Don't expect it to happen for you overnight. Be prepared to work at it and make sure you have the best mindset in place to support your journey to work.
- Being professional throughout the job-hunting process is key. Remember to make and leave a good impression with people, you never know when you might meet them again!



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There is a lot of information online about CVs, covering letters and online job applications – yet still too many people make basic mistakes when it comes to these important job-hunting tools.

In this section we will cover the essentials, but we strongly encourage you to go and do some further research. The Youth Employment UK website has a lot of information on it and links out to other trusted resources.



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CV writing

A CV (or Curriculum Vitae) is a document that provides an employer with key information about you, your skills and experience and if you meet the criteria they are looking for. Professionals may sometimes have a couple of versions of their CV depending on the type of role they are applying for.

What is important is that for every job you apply for, you make sure that you take the time to personalise your application. This may seem like a big effort but it will be worth it, employers are always impressed by candidates who have taken the time to show that they are a great match for the company and why they are interested in the role available.

What should a CV contain?

- Your name
- Contact details – make sure you are using a professional email address
- A brief introduction or personal profile
- Your key skills – this is where you need to draw from the job description
- Successes – do you have any standout moments that you can share; awards or projects that you were key to
- Your education history – list most recent first
- Your work experience – list most recent first

CV DO'S & DON'TS

- ✓ **DO** more research on building a great CV.
- ✓ **DO** create yourself a standard CV and then tailor it to every role you apply for.
- ✓ **DO** remember to keep developing your CV as you gain experience, learn new skills or gain more qualifications.
- ✓ **DO** get someone to proofread your CV, make sure it is someone with good literacy skills who can be honest with you.
- ✗ **DO NOT** use a CV service that looks like a standard template.
- ✗ **DO NOT** send out as many standard CV's as you can to see if you can beat the odds.
- ✗ **DO NOT** assume your own proof-reading skills are good enough, we all can miss mistakes in our work.

- Your hobbies – spend some time on this as listing "reading, cinema and socialising" is not particularly interesting. Add in some detail, things of interest (even the quirky bits), add that you are a Young Professional Member of Youth Employment UK and committed to developing your skills.

The key to a CV is to make the reader think you are an interesting person, that you match what they are looking for and are someone they might like to learn more about.

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Covering letter

Sometimes you may be asked to include a covering letter with your CV or you might decide to send your CV in to a company on “spec” (that means you do not know if they are hiring but you want to make contact with them just in case).

In both cases, making sure your covering letter is just as right as your CV is crucial. This is another opportunity to make a great first impression or fail at the first hurdle.

Just like with CV writing, there is a lot of information online that can provide help and support. Do your research and seek advice from some of the people in your network.

You may be creating the covering letter as an email before attaching your CV, or printing it out and sending it via post, or even hand delivering it. It is important to check the address and the name of the person you are sending it to – getting those details wrong at the very start will not be a great first impression.

COVERING LETTER DO'S & DON'TS

- ✓ **DO** more research on writing a great cover letter.
- ✓ **DO** use a Word or Document service to ensure that it looks professional.
- ✓ **DO** ensure you have researched the company and the job description properly so that you can make references to both in your letter.
- ✓ **DO** get someone to proof-read your letter before sending it.
- × **DO NOT** use the same covering letter every time, make sure you are tailoring it.
- × **DO NOT** rush the process, take your time and think about the things that will be important to the hiring manager.
- × **DO NOT** forget to add your contact details should someone to get back in touch with you.



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Online job applications

Some employers will not want you to send a CV or covering letter as they have created bespoke applications processes.

There are several reasons for this and these include:

- Ability to manage a large volume of applications at any one time.
- Removing bias from the recruitment process (judgments made about the education, qualifications or experience a person has, and even the ethnicity, age or gender of an applicant) – a youth-friendly company will have developed an application process to avoid the potential for bias.

You need to ensure your application is well written, reflects the company and job you are applying for and showcases you as the best candidate. It is also really important that you spend time reading the company's website and online application system to make sure you understand what you are doing, but also a company might often drop in clues about the process and how you can stand out.

Some employers have developed a range of tests of quizzes that they ask applicants to complete. There may be a test to see how good your attention to detail, literacy or numeracy skills are. You might be asked to complete a psychometric test that asks you a series of questions about your likes and dislikes or how you behave in certain situations, and the results can tell the employer a range

APPLICATION FORM DO'S & DON'TS

- ✓ **DO** more research on writing a brilliant application form.
- ✓ **DO** as much research as you can about the company and the role.
- ✓ **DO** get someone to proof-read your application wherever you can.
- ✗ **DO NOT** rush, take your time and look for little clues that might help improve your changes.
- ✗ **DO NOT** start the process if you are tired or have to rush off somewhere.
- ✗ **DO NOT** forget to practice the types of tests you might be asked to complete.

of things about you specifically to do with your skills and qualities. You may also be asked a set of situational or skill-based questions that ask you to describe how you would respond in certain situations.

You can prepare yourself for the types of online tests that might come up by searching online for some practice tests. The employer might also give short explanations or practice tests before the real thing, so take the time to prepare as much as possible.

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Activity

There is a lot that you can do to improve your chances of getting through the recruitment process if you spend the time to develop your CV, cover letter or job application. But it does take effort on your part. Make a list of all the things you need to do to get yourself and your first CV ready for the world of job hunting.

Action Plan	
Step 1	
Step 2	
Step 3	
Step 4	

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Recap

Now that you have read through this section and completed the activities, let's take a quick recap of the key information you have learnt:

- A CV, cover letter or job application is your chance to make a great first impression.
- It takes effort to get these tools right, but the effort will pay off as your chances of success are greatly improved.
- There is a lot of help available through the Youth Employment UK website and other online sources. You can also ask some trusted people in your network.



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INTERVIEW PREPARATION

There are so many different interview situations, it's not possible to cover all of them in detail in this booklet. Here we will guide you through the key information you need to know, and explore the essential do's and don'ts of interview preparation.

Interview type	Brief description
Telephone	You may be asked to do an initial telephone interview. Here the employer is looking to understand your suitability for the role before inviting you into a face-to-face interview.
Video	Video interviews are becoming more common, particularly if you would be working remotely, in a freelance role or for a satellite office. You will be asked to login to a conferencing/video software and go through the interview online.
Formal	This is usually a face-to-face interview at the employer's premises. There may be one or more interviewers and they will most likely be seeing a range of candidates and have a set question list they are using to judge each candidate.
Assessment	Some employers ask candidates to complete a range of assessments as part of the process. These might be tests or activities, you might also be alone or placed within a group of candidates where you are all competing for the same position.

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Interview type	Brief description
Competency Based	These interviews will be structured to ensure that questions or situations are part to you that reflect the job description and person specification. You may be asked to describe a time you have worked in or led a team.
Sequential	In this situation you might attend an interview and be asked to meet several people. These are usually people that are making the hiring decision or make up part of the team you would be working in. They're ensuring you're a good fit for the business.
Panel	A panel interview is much like a formal interview but where you are brought in to meet two or more staff who will take turns to ask you questions.
Lunch/Dinner	Occasionally an employer might ask prospective candidates to attend a lunch or dinner. This provides a more informal opportunity to get to know the candidate and see how they might handle professional social situations.
Final	You can interview once, twice or even three times before the final interview. This is usually where the best candidates have been identified and a final interview is needed to make the hiring decision.

Remember that this is not an exhaustive list and organisations are developing different types of interview and assessment all the time. If you can speak to your contact at the organisation and ask them what the interview process will be, this should then give you an idea of what area of interviews you can research and how to prepare yourself.



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INTERVIEW PREPARATION

Preparation

The key to any interview is the time and effort you take to prepare yourself. Here is a list of the things you can do to be ready for the big day:

- **Research, research and research** – Research the company, not just their website but use other sources (i.e. news sites) – and really get to know them. As you are reading the research, take time to think about the reasons behind the information you are reading. Why did they choose a certain operating model? What are their key values? The more you know, the better you can respond to the interview questions.
- **Get to know the people interviewing you** – Just like with company research, if you have the names of the people who are going to interview you, you can find out a little more about them online. How long have they worked at the company? Where did they go to school? These insights might help you to build rapport with them. LinkedIn also lets people know when someone has looked at their profile – people are often impressed or flattered when they can see someone has taken the time to research them. Just make sure your own profile is up-to-date just in case they search for you in return.
- **Do a practice run** – There is nothing worse than someone being late to the interview. Make sure you have mapped out the journey and even do a practice run if you can to check your timings and see if there might be any unforeseen delays (roadworks, school runs, etc.)

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Practice

Practice interview questions, possible tests you might be asked to complete and if you can, practice your greeting.

There are lots of examples of interview questions and even how to answer them online if you know what sort of interview you are attending, i.e. formal, competency based or assessment. You can get specifics about the sort of things an employer will be likely to ask and what responses they are hoping to get.

It is likely that you will be asked if you have any questions, so prepare a couple before the interview and practice them. This way you are less likely to hesitate when put on the spot like that.

Spend time with a friend or family member practicing your answers and make sure you include a practice introduction – how will you introduce yourself or shake hands? Is it strong and confident or does it need more work?

First impressions

Plan your outfit – whilst we advocate for people to be themselves, it's usually best to lean towards a professional outfit and make sure that you are tidy, clean and smart. Research making a good impression at interview and adapt the advice to suit your style.

Check your nervous habits; Do you fidget when nervous? Do you lose your train of thought? Do you get easily flustered? If so, what can you do to minimise them? Try keeping your hands in your lap; have a notepad with some questions on; asking for some water will give you time to refocus and stay calm. By knowing these things about yourself and developing coping strategies, you will feel more confident that you can control these habits.

Make sure you greet everyone you meet in the company professionally and with as much confidence as possible. It has been known for hiring managers to ask the reception staff what their first impression was of the candidates who came in!

Another way to build a good impression is to build a good rapport with the interviewer. Rapport is when two or more people are in tune with one another, where they feel comfortable in each other's company. You can build rapport in several ways, including:

- Showing an interest in the other person's life – asking how long they have worked at the company, what aspects of their role they enjoy, generally showing an interest and listening to the person tell their story.
- Mirroring the person's tone and body language – if someone is speaking quite and slow, try and slow down your own speech and tone, watch how they sit and subtly mirror them (be careful not to look like you are mimicking them!)

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Closing an interview

Arguably one of the most important things you can do is to nail the end of the interview. Quite often you will be asked at the end if you have any final questions or anything you want to add.

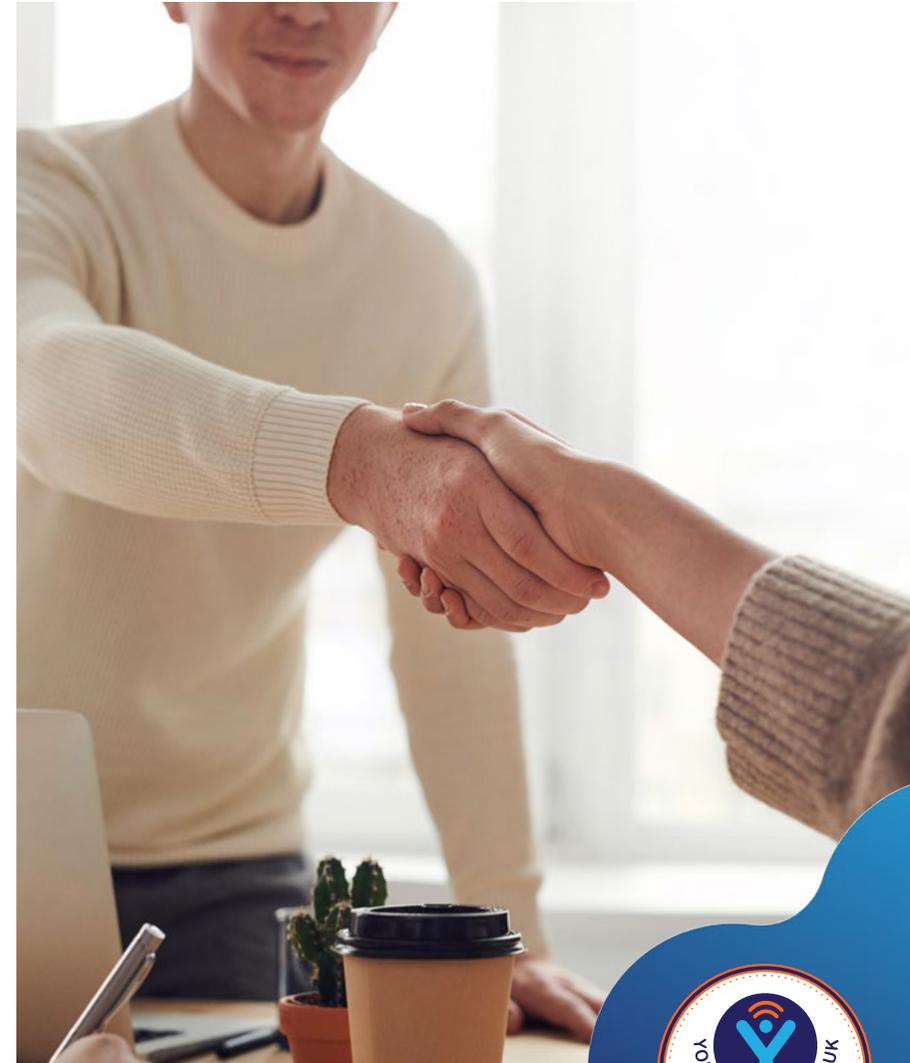
This is a great opportunity to deal with any areas of the interview that you do not think went particularly well. You can also ask one of the best closing questions – “I have really enjoyed this interview and would be very interested in being taken on to the next stage, do you have any reservations about my application or interview that would stop you from progressing my application?”

If you are able to ask this question, you are essentially calling on the employer to give you a chance to respond to their concerns and persuade them that you are the best candidate for the job.

Make sure you practice asking that question and find the wording that is most comfortable for you.

Finally, remember to thank the interviewer, make sure they understand how much you enjoyed the interview and that you are looking forward to hearing from them.

Within 24 hours of your interview, write a short email to the person that interviewed you thanking them for the opportunity and time that they have spent reviewing your application.



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Activity

Within this section we have suggested that research and practice will be two of your biggest friends when it comes to an interview.

Take the time now to plan in your diary when you are going to spend an hour or more researching and practising for interviews. Make sure to ask someone for their help!



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Recap

Now that you have read through this section and completed the activities, let's take a quick recap of the key information you have learnt:

- Interviews come in all shapes and sizes. Wherever possible find out what the interview process is you are going to be going through and practice!
- Research and practice are two of the most important things you can do to help you feel confident and have a good interview.
- Closing the interview well and leaving a good impression can help the interviewer make the right decision and hire you!



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DEALING WITH REJECTION

As we have already outlined, job hunting can take time and patience. The job market is competitive and you will never know if you are competing with 10, 50 or 250 other applicants. This is why you need to invest in your **Job-Hunting Game** to give yourself the best shot possible.

But there will be times when you are unsuccessful and handling rejection well is an important part of the process and an important way to build your resilience skills.

Type of rejection	What you can do
<p>No contact at all – unfortunately some companies do not take the time to contact candidates who they do not wish to take through the process.</p>	<p>First it is best to make sure that the company had received your application. If you have not heard back with any acknowledgement in 5 working days or 24 hours before the closing deadline, drop the organisation an email and check to make sure they had received your application.</p> <p>If they had and you have simply not been successful and they have not contacted you, decide if that is the sort of company you wish to work for. If it is then you could consider replying and thanking them for their consideration and asking if there is any possibility of feedback and if they would keep your application on file and contact you with other similar opportunities.</p>

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DEALING WITH REJECTION

Type of rejection	What you can do
Some companies will send a standard rejection email out to candidates because they have had so many applications it is too big a job to manage personal responses.	If you had spent a lot of time preparing and it is a company you are really interested in, you can always reply with a professional email, thanking them for the consideration, asking if there is any possibility of feedback and if they would keep your application on file and contact you with other similar opportunities.
You made it through to interview but didn't quite make the offer stage. Hopefully the company will take time to let you know and give you some constructive feedback.	<p>Make sure you are open to any feedback. You might not feel that it is all fair but sometimes we can have a different perspective of a situation or you might not even be aware of something the interviewer had picked up on. This feedback can help you improve on your technique for the next interview.</p> <p>Some people say that the rejections that you have a long this journey are essential so that you are ready for the job you were supposed to have. That can be true, so staying positive and embracing the feedback is an important thing to do.</p> <p>It is also important to remember that this type of rejection is not personal, it may have been really hard for the company to make their final decision and it simply was not your lucky day. Getting through each stage of the application process is a real triumph, especially if there were tens of other applicants.</p>

Remember your successes and learn from the mistakes. This will help you take the next step in your journey and help you to stay positive.

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CONGRATULATIONS! You made it through the huge challenge of job hunting, applications and interviews – you competed with some brilliant candidates and you were offered the job!

What comes next is quite important, so before you head out to celebrate, just be ready to move through these final steps...

Receiving an offer

Once you have heard that you have been successful, you should also be told what sort of salary, package and start date you are being offered.

It is important to get all of this information in writing and to not accept immediately – it is good to take a day to think about the offer and decide if you want to accept it, reject it politely or negotiate anything.

You may also realise you have a few more questions before you accept, so take 24 hours to sleep on things when you get the offer in writing.

Negotiation

Unless there was only one salary being offered, you might find that there is room to negotiate your starting wage, hours of work, training package or other benefits. Make sure you know what a good package looks like and that you are being treated fairly within this opportunity.

It can take a lot of confidence to negotiate an offer, but it is worth it in the long run. Be polite and firm, explain your reasons for looking for something different and be ready to reject the offer or lose the opportunity. It won't often come to that, there is almost always a little room for a little negotiation.

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References and other checks

Your offer may be subject to reference checks or other checks such as financial or criminal records, now known as a DBS check. It is good manners to ask permission from anyone you are listing as a referee and let them know to expect a call or letter.

If there is a chance your previous employer might not want to give you a reference or that any checks might not be perfectly clear you should deal with that as soon as possible. Honesty is definitely the best policy!

Make sure you get any paperwork complete as soon as possible so that you do not hold the process up.

Contract of employment

An employer should send you a contract of employment within two months of starting the role. But most employers make this a priority and you should be very clear about your legal responsibilities and accountabilities.

You should know as a minimum what the employment conditions are, your rights, responsibilities and duties. Some employers include more detail of their company policies and procedures in a company handbook. Make sure you understand what you are signing and have read all the information that details your responsibilities.

If you are taking a job with training such as an apprenticeship then you will need to have an Apprenticeship Agreement, which outlines the terms of your apprenticeship and the responsibilities of the training provider, employer and yourself.

Accepting the offer

Once the negotiations and checks are complete, you are in a position to accept the offer. You can sometimes do this over the phone or by email. It is a useful point in time to ask any questions you have forgotten to ask in the interview or negotiation process; Do you need a parking permit? Who will you report to on your first day? etc.

If you are taking a job with training such as an apprenticeship, then you may also have questions about your training provider, or how and when training will take place.



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Information the employer might need

You may be asked to provide proof of identification such as a passport or driving licence, proof of address, bank details, National Insurance number and a P45 if you have worked previously.

Keeping these documents safe at home will ensure that you can provide them when asked and then you should not experience any delays or higher rate tax payments.

If you are taking a job with training such as an apprenticeship, you might be asked to bring your education certificates along with you.

Starting your new job

So, the big day is now looming – you can use a lot of the information in this booklet to prepare for that too...

- Remember to be prepared; practice the journey to work in rush hour so you can get your timings right.
- Check with the employer any information you need to bring; if you need to provide lunch, if there is a dress code, where the parking/bike racks are, check you know who you are reporting to and what time.

- Make contact with colleagues – use LinkedIn or other professional platforms to see who else works at your company and build a network.
- First impressions are being made all the time! Remember you may only have met a small handful of people, so maintaining the professional image you want to have is important on day 1 and day 250.
- Do not be afraid to ask questions – if you are stuck or unsure of anything it is OK to ask, but also take notes so you are not asking the same questions over and over again.
- Keep building your skills – you can still use the Young Professional to build your in-work skills. There is a lot of advice about being an employee or apprentice such as; working as part of team, dealing with difficult work situations, managing your time, and much more. Take the time each week to read the latest skills information and tips and keep developing your professional self.
- **And finally, ENJOY IT! This is it, your big break, the opportunity to start your professional career. Put a smile on your face and get to it – you are going to be awesome!**



We hope you've found this guide useful, if you can spare 5 minutes we would love to have your feedback to help improve our services for you and other young people:

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