

Embracing Change

Supporting NHS Staff in the West Midlands through Transition

1. Supporting Yourself

Preparing for a new job – practical advice

Part 1 - Understanding Yourself

Developed by:



Using information and materials provided by:



UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF

(Source: Transitions - An evolving guide to working through organisational change. ©NHS Yorkshire and Humber)

Please complete the summary below and then take some time to reflect upon the content. What does this tell you about yourself, how you like to work, what is truly important to you and the implications for your job search.

Any new employer, recruitment consultant or network contact needs to know what you are about! Can you articulate your top skills, what you are looking for in your next career etc. You cannot create a top class CV without understanding what it is about yourself you are taking to the job market. In today's highly competitive market, you will have to make yourself stand out from the crowd and be able to talk about your skills and achievements and to be ready to give detailed examples of how you can demonstrate your competencies.

Your Summary

Key criteria I am looking for	Key skills and abilities I offer
Top 10 achievements (at least 6 to be work- related)	

Matching your skills to the market

Think about how you can contribute to specific organisational goals.

ORGANISATIONAL GOAL	HOW COULD YOU HELP TO ACHIEVE THAT GOAL?
Contract Performance	
Partnership working	
Organisational performance	
Financial Resources & Controls	
Intellectual Property	
Innovation	

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Human Resources	
Social Responsibility	
Strategic Information	

Making Job Applications

This section will look at creating a professional CV, some hints and tips on completing application forms and what to include in covering letters/e-mails.

1. Creating a Professional CV

What is a CV?

The literal meaning of CV or Curriculum Vitae is 'journey through life' and in the past this concept determined how people tended to write them. This resulted in long, wordy and often over-detailed descriptions of every step in a person's life which seldom promoted their real strengths or skills.

In today's job market, your CV plays a vital role in your search for a new job or other career move and it is essential that you understand how you can make the maximum impact at every stage through the preparation of a good CV.

The purpose of a CV

Your CV must successfully:

- Get you an interview. Your CV alone will not get you a job!
- Describe the most important aspects of your skills and experience that will appeal to a prospective employer
- Clarify what you are offering a new employer and what they would gain by employing you (link this back to your key achievements)
- Work as a marketing document. It must:
 - have impact – keep it simple
 - be focused and aimed at the reader
 - be attractive and stand out from the others
 - be tailored to the job you are applying for
- Answer in advance some of the basic questions that an employer will ask, such as:
 - what can you DO?
 - in what situations have you DONE things successfully
- Stand alone as a document:
 - it is the first thing an employer/recruiter sees

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- it is what will be used to decide whether to proceed with your application
- it is often ALL that will be passed around inside an organization amongst all the people involved in recruitment and must have equal impact on whoever sees it.
- Never send out a CV on its own, it should have a covering letter or e-mail and match your key achievements/experience to the role you are applying for

The Best CVs are...

- Short and concise
- Clear summaries of your achievements, rather than your responsibilities
- In a helpful order for the reader i.e. chronological from the latest backwards
- Well typed, accurately spelled, and with good use of grammar, in plain English with any abbreviations fully written out
- Simply and elegant with plain font only used and sparing use of bold, italics and underlining
- Written in the third person

Types of CV

There are two main types of CV.

- *Chronological* – the usual and most frequently used format which presents your information in a time-based sequence. Always start from the present and work backwards.
- *Functional* – presents your work achievements and history in 'skill sets', typically under headings which may specify different and key aspects of your total experience.

Best used if:

- You are changing careers
- You are moving to a new industry or business sector
- You are returning to work after a long gap
- You want to emphasise specific skills that are not immediately clear from your chronological CV
- Functional CVs are difficult to write from scratch. Write your chronological CV first
- HOWEVER, not all recruiters/ employers welcome a functional CV format

More CV Hints & Tips

- Aim for a CV of 2 pages – never more than 3 pages
- If you really need more information than 2 pages, consider a supplementary document which is optional eg a list of projects completed in more detail
- Use a modern, clean typeface such as Arial, Verdana or Trebuchet.
- Use point size 10 or 11
- Avoid fancy typefaces, shaded boxes, colour etc – they never work well when photocopied or viewed online
- Use lots of white space and a clear layout
- Always print on white paper – good quality 100gsm eg Conqueror
- Do not include:
 - Photographs
 - Salary details
 - Reference details – use a separate sheet
 - Reasons for leaving/moving jobs
- If you have a long work history or have had lots of jobs, consider grouping together early work periods in summary sections covering a number of years
- Always check carefully for spelling mistakes, grammar and use of words and phrases that are not easily understood
- Keep sentences short and avoid ‘clever’ language. Write it as you would speak it!
- Think of the reader at all times. Will they understand? Do they really need to know this? If something does not really add value to your CV – then leave it out!
- There is no one successful way of producing a CV! You will get as much advice about it as the number of people you ask. Above all it must be accurate, honest and reflect YOU individually.
- REMEMBER – the average recruiter spends less than 20 seconds reading a CV! Make those 20 seconds count.
- Focus on what four or five most important things that you want to get across – ask someone who know you as a ‘sense-check’
- Remember also the ‘10 year rule’ – you do not have to go into detail of jobs you have held more than 10 years ago – they are no longer current and the chances are you will have superseded your achievement in these roles with you more recent experiences.
- Ensure your CV focuses on your achievements, not a repeat of your job description.
- Make sure you print it out so as you can see how it looks
- Email it to yourself

Electronic CVs

Nowadays, virtually all recruitment consultancies and agencies prefer CV's to be e-mailed to them. Even organisations who are recruiting directly, ask for CV's to be sent via e-mail (or via their own web-sites). Here are some useful tips:

- Software is used to scan CV's against certain key words - make sure you read the advert thoroughly and reflect the key words in your CV.
- Your name should be the first text – not words Curriculum Vitae (in fact for any CV, you should not use this as a heading – it is obvious what it is!). Use a new line after your name and then enter your contact details.
- Use a conventional font – not one that looks like hand writing as the scanning software will not be able to read it.
- Don't use underline or italics.
- Also, don't use graphics such as text boxes – they can stop the software from reading the contents.

CV Layout Guide – reverse chronological

Name *(Use the name you are known by and omit any middle name)*

Address

Other contact details including telephone and e-mail address

(make sure that this is professional and not jokey. Most recruiters prefer to use a mobile number these days. Make sure you have a professional message here too)

Have a short but strong profile – no more than 4-5 lines. This should be factual, position you in the mind of the reader and be focused on specific experience rather than a list of value judgments e.g. hard-working, enthusiastic, able to work well with people etc.

Career History

Current Organisation name

Dates (years only)

Most recent Job Title

Dates

Short description of your responsibilities and who you reported to. No more than 2-3 lines

To be followed by a number of bullet points highlighting your achievements:

- Use key action words to begin the statement e.g. created, improved, managed etc
- Quantity and qualify your statements
- Think about the difference you made – the ‘so-what’
- Prioritise the order according to your audience
- Do not use jargon
- Do not over simplify or over complicate

Previous organisation (if applicable) or previous job. Follow same guides as above

Education and Training

- Start with highest qualification, and think about what is relevant to your audience
- Do not include details of early education e.g. GCSE subjects and grades. unless you are early in your career – and these are your most recent qualifications
- Only include training courses attended within the last 5 years and relevant to the role.
- Include current membership of professional institutions if relevant

Personal Details

Not necessary to include this section but you may like to include any leisure interests or other activities outside of work if you think they present relevant information. Take care what image you are presenting and be prepared for questions on anything you have offered

CV Layout Guide – functional

Name *(Use the name you are known by and omit any middle name)*

Address

Other contact details including telephone and e-mail address

(make sure that this is professional and not jokey. Most recruiters prefer to use a mobile number these days. Make sure you have a professional message here too)

Have a short but strong profile – no more than 4-5 lines. This should be factual, position you in the mind of the reader and be focused on specific experience rather than a list of value judgments e.g. hard-working, enthusiastic, able to work well with people etc.

Professional Experience

Heading One – each heading should match against an area of competence or experience e.g. leadership, team working, quality improvement etc.

To be followed by a number of bullet points highlighting your achievements:

- Use key action words to begin the statement e.g. created, improved, managed etc
- Quantity and qualify your statements
- Think about the difference you made – the ‘so-what’
- Prioritise the order according to your audience
- Do not use jargon
- Do not over simplify or over complicate

Heading Two, Heading Three Etc

Career History

Organisation name and job titles

Dates

This needs to be a brief one or two liner on each position, together with dates so as recruiter can see at a glance your career progression and history.

Education and Training

- Start with highest qualification, and think about what is relevant to your audience
- Do not go into details of early education e.g. GCSE subjects and grades. However if you are early in your career – you can get away with this.
- Do not include long lists of training courses – only include if within the last 5 years and if relevant to the role.
- You can include membership of professional institutions if current

Personal Details

Completing your CV

Creating a Personal Profile

Remember to tailor this for each role you apply for. Use the following to help you create a profile:

- What you are – an experienced IT professional, HR Manager etc
- Your general experience – with a background in performance management, knowledge of Microsoft packages
- Your specific skill areas – detailed knowledge of project management tools, developing management development programmes
- Any significant achievements – excellent record of process improvement

EXAMPLE

An experienced Project Manager with experience of leading projects from risk analysis through to implementation in large, complex organisations. Specific expertise in leading organisational change projects involving IT and process change.

Writing a CV Bullet Point

Use the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) technique to help you to identify your achievements and turn them into bullet points. This technique will also help you with your interview technique.

EXAMPLE

Situation	No one knew where to find the latest training materials and the timetable information was out of date. Course take up was poor
Task	Get the training timetable up to date and tell people how to find the information
Action	Set up a new on-line timetable and database and trained people how to access it
Result	Saved time in finding materials and course uptake improved by 25%

- Created a new on-line database of course information and trained all departments on its use. This resulted in 25% more people booking onto training courses and improved knowledge of training available to the organisation.

To help you recall your achievement, go back to the Achievements exercise you completed in Section Two and also the summary at the beginning of Section Three.

Action word examples

Developed	Established	Revised	Managed	Improved
Created	Influenced	Supervised	Reviewed	Updated
Administered	Compiled	Controlled	Assigned	Standardised
Collated	Documented	Completed	Devised	Integrated
Built	Led	Saved	Maintained	Revised

Emailing CV's

- You can send your CV in the text of an e-mail instead of an attachment – this can sometimes avoid it getting bounced because of SPAM filters. This is an approach to consider if you are sending it out speculatively to a recruiter or potential employer. If you do this- remember to e-mail it to yourself or a friend initially. This way you can see how it will look.
- If you are sending your CV out via e-mail speculatively, always have an up to date e-mail address - not just a catch address such as HR@organisation name.co.uk.
- Just because you have sent your CV electronically, it doesn't mean you don't have to put equal efforts into creating a covering e-mail.
- Save your CV and letter with good file names – i.e. include your name/date/organisation name. Don't give an indication that this is the 100th CV you have sent out!

Example Skills CV

JANE SMITH MICPD

Jane.smith@xmail.com t 01865 904588 m 07867 455901

KEY SKILLS

Project management – Planning, implementation and management of projects

People management – Strong motivator and team builder

Organisational skills –Efficient and focused. Used to working to deadlines

Communication – Both verbal and written

Adaptability and personal organisation – Reacts to constantly changing priorities

ACHIEVEMENTS

Human Resources

- Managed two major change programmes including organisation design discussions, adherence to policy and good practice, training in news-breaking, competency interviewing and interview techniques, union negotiations, staff communications and staff recruitment.
- Successfully planned and managed a staff recruitment exercise for around 30 new employees. This involved the co-ordination of twelve team members and the provision of appropriate assessment and decision- making tools.
- Managed a serious disciplinary case involving someone with a disability who was harassing staff. This involved working with the person concerned and the medical profession to find ways of getting her back to work and helping colleagues to understand her condition and how they could help.

Financial / Costing

- Successfully managed, constructed and implemented a new costing system for the bank. This was a key project in the on-going enhancement of cost production and resulted in a reduction in workload and hence two staff (approximately £30,000 per year), improved accuracy and improved written instructions for all aspects of the work.
- Developed and implemented a tailor made costing systems for new branches as they were opened including the provision of on-going professional guidance and training.

Project and Staff Management

- Successfully managed and implemented a Performance Management programme for around 200 managerial and clerical staff. This ranged from writing the initial implementation plan through to final implementation.
- Successfully led a team of ten staff through a period of substantial restructuring resulting in the loss of two staff. Both timescales and quality standards were maintained and motivation remained high.

- Managed a team of managerial and clerical staff, leading them through an initial period of demotivation and lack of initiative to become an efficient and well respected team. This included all aspects from appraisals and objectives to coaching and mentoring.

Training

- Successfully installed:
 - A training package covering most aspects of the foreign exchange dealing room
 - An interactive training package for bookkeeping clerks using live terminals, enabling them to become fully competent in using the machines but in a training environment.
 - Written training guides for most of the major activities.

CAREER SUMMARY

LTSB BANK PLC **1976 – Date**

HR Manager **2002 – Date**

HR change management, recruitment, career interviews, policy guidance, job evaluation, discipline and grievance, and absence.

HR Projects Manager **2000 – 2002**

Project managed an administration and personnel service to around 100 staff. Directly responsible for five administration staff.

Manager of cost accounting **1990 – 2000**

Managed up to ten managerial and clerical staff first as assistant manager and then as manager. Staff involved in the twice-yearly production of unit cost information for use in the management A/Cs. Responsibilities also include project management; cost production; advice and training.

Programme writer **1987 – 1990**

Researched, wrote, tested and published written training material for the international branch network on all aspects of their work.

Career break **1984 – 1987**

Programme writer **1976 – 1984**

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

MCIPD

Part 1 of the Chartered Institute of Bankers

INTERESTS

Voluntary work, photography, foreign travel, bird watching and wildlife, gardening.

Example Chronological CV

JANE SMITH MCIPD

10 Cassington Crescent, Oxford, OX31 6YY T: 01865 904588: M: 07867 455901

jane.smith@xmail.com

A professional HR Manager with significant experience of advising staff on a range of generalist issues. Specific expertise in change management, recruitment, project management and training. Has managed teams of varying sizes, actively encouraging personal development, ownership and the need for high quality support.

CAREER HISTORY

LTSB BANK PLC

1976 to Present

HR Manager

2002 – Present

Key responsibilities: HR change management; recruitment; career interviews; policy guidance; job evaluation; discipline and grievance and absence.

- Managed two major change programmes from an HR perspective e.g. involvement in organisation design discussions, adherence to policy and good practice, training in news-breaking, competency interviewing and interview techniques, union negotiations, staff communications and staff recruitment.
- Successfully planned and managed a staff recruitment exercise for around 30 new employees. This involved the co-ordination of twelve team members and the provision of appropriate assessment and decision- making tools.
- Reduced recruitment costs considerably by implementing and marketing a staff referral programme.
- Managed a serious disciplinary case involving someone with a disability who was harassing staff. This involved working with the person concerned and the medical profession to find ways of getting her back to work and helping colleagues to understand her condition and how they could help.

HR Projects

2000 – 2002

Key responsibilities: Project management; HR generalist; policy guidance; HR change management; people management.

- Provided an administration and personnel service to 100 staff. This included implementing a HR guide to ensure that HR queries were answered quickly and with consistency and an administration management tool which significantly reduced admin costs.
- Successfully implemented a performance management programme for around 200 managerial and clerical staff. This ranged from writing the initial implementation, leading a project team of managers, IT personnel and HR and implementing the final product on time and within budget.
- Managed a small team of five clerical staff, leading them through an initial period of demotivation and lack of initiative to becoming a highly efficient and well respected team.
- Installed an on-boarding process for new employees which ensured a seamless transition into the company.

Manager/Assistant Manager of Cost Accounting 1990 to 2000

Key responsibilities: People management; project management; cost production; advice and training.

- Successfully managed, constructed and implemented a new costing system for the bank. This was a key project in the on-going enhancement of cost production and resulted in a reduction in workload and hence two staff (approximately £30,000 per year), improved accuracy, improved written instructions for all aspects of the work and an improvement in section morale.
- Developed and implemented a tailor made costing systems for new international branches as they were opened including provision of on-going professional advice and training.
- Managed the costing team including all aspects from appraisals, agreeing objectives and personal development, through to coaching, training and mentoring.

Programme Writer, Staff Training **1987 to 1990**

Key responsibilities: Researching, writing, testing and publishing written training material for the international branch network on all aspects of their work.

Career break **1984 – 1987**

Various positions **1976 – 1984**

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

MCIPD

Part 1 of the Chartered Institute of Bankers

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Interests: Voluntary work, photography, foreign travel, bird watching and wildlife, gardening

Some other examples of how to write CV statements

Associate Director, Service Improvement

- Working across the health community, particularly with GP lead commissioners and consultants, to achieve the 18 week maximum wait from referral to treatment ahead of target
- Centralised the inpatient booking service, with plans to retrain staff to provide support on a cluster basis - improving service levels and achieving project cost savings of £800K per annum
- Devised a pre-assessment process to reduce patient hospital visits, provide choice and reduce appointment cancellations

Senior Knowledge & Information Manager

- Designed and implemented a 'guidance production' process, an initiative that improved communication, increased understanding and reduced costs
- Responded to Parliamentary Questions, Trait Officials, Freedom of Information and other ministerial correspondence, and benchmarked best practice, and provided a lead on specific projects
- Worked in partnership with government - NPSA, MHRA, HPA, NIMH, HSE, PASA, NHS, NICE and other public / private organisations and facilitated a culture of support, mutual cooperation, best practice and continuous improvement to meeting the DH Plan

2. Application Forms

Many large organisations insist upon all applicants completing a standard application form – this is most likely to be electronic these days.

- Remember to always save a copy or print it off so you have a record of what exactly you said about yourself.
- If you do have to hand-write the form, take plenty of copies and practice, practice, practice. Never post off with Tippex or crossings out – this can get you instantly de-selected.
- If you are posting it off, don't cram it into a tiny envelope – always post in a good quality A4 envelope. Send by recorded delivery and check that it has arrived.
- The majority of information requested on application forms is factual but there is always the 'great white space' where you can go to town on selling yourself. Some typical questions are:
 - What particular skills and experiences do you have that qualify you for this role?
 - What are your career aspirations?
 - What are your key achievements?
 - Sometimes, the role will have key competencies and you could get asked to complete written responses to demonstrate your particular experiences e.g. Give an example of where you have made a significant improvement to a process.
- Keep your responses succinct and use bullet points to structure your responses. Try to avoid writing a long essay – the reader will not have the time to read it.
- If you are given a word count – stick to it!
- Often application forms are poorly designed and it is tempting to ignore them and instead attach a copy of your CV – this will also result in instant rejection as you haven't followed the instructions.
- For many who use application forms, it makes it easier to conduct an initial sift of applicants. It is OK to complete the form and to send a copy of your CV with it if you think it contains different and relevant information but do this judiciously as you are creating extra work for the recruiter. Some recruiters explicitly state that CV's are not to be included.

- If you are e-mailing an application form – please test e-mail it yourself and print out in order to check formatting etc.

3. Writing effective e-mails and letters

- Through your job search letters and e-mails, you are trying to sell another person the idea that they should:
 - Meet with you
 - Look at your CV
 - Respond to your phone calls
- Always keep the reader in mind when you are composing letters and e-mails – what messages are you giving out?
- Check thoroughly for spelling and grammar.
- Write to a named person wherever possible and don't use 'Hi' if you have never met them before
- Close e-mails with Kind Regards
- Keep all e-mails and letters as short as possible.
- Remember to include or attach your CV

Some sample e-mails

Responding to an advertised job

Subject Line – Office Manager, vacancy source and date

Dear Mr. Leaver,

Your advert as referenced above is of great interest as my skills detailed in the attached CV closely match the requirements of the position. In particular, may I draw your attention to:

- Experience of the last 5 years managing a busy office with a team of full time and part time staff, responsible for all aspects of administration and day to day management.

- Setting up a computer system to administer General Practitioner contracts as well as training office staff in the use of the system.
- Membership of the CIPD and experience of recruitment and training.

I can be contacted on the number below at any time and would look forward to the opportunity of discussing the above vacancy with you.

Kind regards,

Email signature:

Name

Telephone

Home address

NB. This can just as easily be sent as a letter using a letter head and remembering to use Yours Sincerely, not Kind Regards. Remember, if you don't have a named person to address – use Yours Faithfully.

A speculative e-mail

Subject Line – IT Management Opportunities

Dear (named person)

The purpose of my e-mail is to seek your advice and help in researching IT management opportunities within your sector.

I am an experienced IT manager with extensive experience of managing the systems development life cycle in the public sector, often involving cross site teams and serving a number of executive level stakeholders.

My key skills and expertise extend to the following areas:

- Achieving consistent project delivery to time and budget
- Creating and implementing complex project plans
- Motivating and leading teams
- Managing third party suppliers
- Prince Two qualified

As you will note from my attached CV, I have achieved regular promotions and achieved significant results in all my positions. I feel that my skills are transferable into the private sector.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss and explore current and future potential opportunities with you and I will telephone you in a few days in order to arrange a mutually convenient date.

Kind regards,

Email signature:

Name

Telephone

Home address

This is one of the best ways to tackle the unadvertised job market. See Part Three – Routes to the Market for more information of making speculative job applications.

Other examples of opening sentences for speculative approaches

- I read with interest in the Yorkshire Post that your company is opening a new facility within the Leeds areas...
- Brian Smith, Director of XY Services, mentioned to me that your company is currently expanding its administrative functions in the York area. I am an experienced administration manager with many years experience of working in complex organisations...