

THE SOFT SKILLS TOOLKIT

*Useful exercises to help you choose,
find, win and keep a job that suits you*



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Introduction

This toolkit is to help people who are unemployed to get work that suits them. It aims to help them choose, find, win and keep a job.

Prepared exercises will help the user to prepare and compete for jobs in the open labour market. Each has been written so that it can be done by an individual working alone, but the toolkit can also be used by mentors and advisors working to help unemployed people to gain work.

Job-hunting is a skilful activity, one that can be learned and developed. Our research into employers' needs, supported by other evidence, shows that being able to get a job and then to keep it requires some skills, which many of us have, but many have never had the chance to develop them.

Though we hope this toolkit will be useful in training centres and employment services, we also want it to be useful to job-hunters working on their own, or with the support of mentors, advisors, friends and counsellors.

Using the toolkit

The toolkit is easy to understand and use, even though it has many things to do and read. Special equipment is not needed; a pen and paper will be fine for most of the time. Access to a computer and the internet will help some job seekers, but is not essential.

The toolkit is arranged into sections, and each of them into exercises. The exercises all have a short explanation, and then something practical to do. As well as these, the first chapter is about Everyday Skills that are helpful throughout job-search. Then there are four chapters that cover four stages of getting a job:

- Choosing a job that suits you
- Finding a job to apply for
- Gaining the job, competing and winning
- Keeping the job once you have got it

The chapters and exercises are arranged in order; it helps most people to do them in that order. But it is not essential. You can also do just the exercises that you need most and come back to others at another time.

There are no tests or reporting. But we do encourage all users to reflect on their experiences, to learn from them, and make their own special collection of skills that will serve them in the future. Feedback on your use of the toolkit is very welcome! We also need to learn from our experiences. You can write to us at the addresses that are at the end of the Toolkit. We would love to hear from you!

Things to remember while you use the toolkit

Many people find that time and experience helps them make decisions, and change them. The things they like at first may not be the ones they end up choosing. Feel free to go back to earlier exercises and do them again. It is OK to change your mind as you go along.

There are many different jobs. You may not know about the ones that would suit you. So don't worry if you cannot think of your perfect job right away. Many people only discover their career after trying a few things, or looking around.

Some people want a definite career and stick to one kind of job all their lives. Others like to change and try different things. Both ways are OK. Choosing a job can be about what is available as much as what you want to do. It can take time! Allow yourself to reflect on your activities and what you have achieved. The more time you spend looking for work, the more chance you have of finding a job you like. Practice helps. You get better at choosing and finding a job the more you practice it.

It is a good idea to do things you like and can succeed at. They help build your confidence and get you ready for things that might seem difficult at the moment. Being active is important, and helps you. Thinking about things is good, but if you do things, and talk to people, you will find you get along more. There are a lot of things for you to try in this toolkit.

Everyone has their own talents and things they like. We are all different. Work that suits you is easier to find and more fun to do. There are many kinds of

work and lots of reasons of your own why you should choose your own job. If you have a mentor helping you, it is worth discussing your ideas with them at every stage. Talking with people can help a lot. They can tell you about things and listen while you think about what you want. They can give you good information and save you a lot of time. Remember that they may not think like you or want what you want! It is your choice. People who tell you what to do are trying to help, but you should decide for yourself.

Your perfect job may not be available right away. Many people do jobs that they would not have thought suitable, and learn from them, and get to like them. Finding out what you want to do can take time, and one way to find out is to try different jobs from among the available professions.

Working with a mentor or advisor

If you are using the toolkit to help you find a job, and have the support of a mentor, coach, advisor or counsellor, there are some things to remember.

- Your mentor is there to help you make your own decisions, not to decide for you.
- Your mentor may be able to give information and guidance. Often they will help you work things out, for yourself, so that you can do it for yourself again. You should cooperate to make things happen for yourself.
- Your mentor will be helping you to develop your own skills, ideas, goals and priorities. This may take time: it is not usually a quick fix.
- Mentors should usually focus on helping you to find work that suits you. They should avoid unnecessary delays. Unless you ask them and they are qualified, they should not do any medical or psychological therapies.
- You should be ready to take on responsibility and commitment to your own learning and development. The Toolkit has been designed to make this easy. Your mentor should be able to help you choose how to do things in easy stages.
- Your thoughts about what you want to achieve and to learn are important. You can work with your mentor to develop your career plan and learn how to make things happen for yourself.

The toolkit at a glance

EVERYDAY SKILLS

Know yourself
 Quality of Life
 Keeping Healthy
 Food and Drink
 Getting Confident and doing things well
 Get Motivated
 Personal responsibility
 Action
 Managing your work and recreation
 Managing time and priorities

CHOOSING A JOB

Choosing a job that suits you
 About Myself
 What job would I like
 My Training, Education and Qualifications
 Professional experience
 Choosing your job priorities

FINDING A JOB

Thinking about jobs
 Looking for that job
 Networking
 People in your job
 Keeping looking

GAINING A JOB

Getting ready
 Nerves
 Talking confidently
 Finding out about the job
 Preparing your CV or application form
 Visiting the employer
 Doing the interview
 Saying why I want the job
 What to say about yourself
 How to practice
 Social events
 Writing letters and e-mails
 What if I don't succeed?

KEEPING A JOB

Keeping the Job
 Resting, being energetic
 Recreation
 Getting to know people
 Quality work
 Building speed and stamina
 When things go wrong
 What the job needs
 Standards in the job
 Unwritten rules
 Asking for help
 Travel to work
 Hours of work
 The social scene
 Your own needs
 Managing your stress
 Recognise signs of stress
 Improve your resilience
 Difficult people
 Learning at work

The toolkit

Everyday skills

These exercises can be used at any time. Read through them when you start using the toolkit, then you can do them all at the beginning, and come back to them at any time. Or you can pick and choose as you go along.

Know yourself

WHAT DO I LIKE DOING, WHO AM I, WHO DO I LIKE?

Make a list of all activities and things that make you happy, satisfied, fulfilled or glad. Include things from any part of life: family, work, relaxing, friendships are all OK. Activities, thoughts and feelings are good too. This can help you with your choice of work, or they may help you think about why you need to work. Use your own words, in any way you like. Draw pictures if you like drawing.

Now list some of your personal characteristics, such as: positive, happy, stubborn and reliable. You can give examples too.

Write three things (or more) that you think other people such as colleagues, family or friends would say about you.

Different jobs and workplaces have their own culture and ways of doing things. They attract people who fit in to the working environment. If you like being adaptable, you may have wider job choices; if you prefer to stay within your own experiences you may need to look for a job that suits them well.

Tick the boxes that are closest to your feelings or ideas:

	Not at all	A little	Yes	A lot
I am interested in learning about people from different places or different cultures				
I am interested in socialising with people from different cultures				
There would be conflicts being with people from different cultures				

Now about different workplace culture.

	Not at all	A little	Yes	A lot
I would be happy working in a diverse environment				
I have no difficulty adapting to new working environments.				

Now think about these things and work. Write down three ways that work can help you achieve the things you like and value.

Work can help me with these things by:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Does this give you any ideas about the work you might do? Write them here.

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Quality of Life

Think about the quality of life you have, and which you would like to have. Use the table below to write some things that you like and some that you would like to be different about your life at the moment.

My life at the moment:	What I can change:
What I like:	
What I want and how things would be in a better future:	

Here are some other questions which will help you think about your quality of life and how you might change it.

What does 'quality of life' mean to you? What is most important?

How much are you able to fulfil your priorities and do the important things?

What would help you fulfil your priorities?

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Keeping Healthy

REST AND SLEEP

It is a good idea to get plenty of rest. Rest and sleep give you a clear head and energy to do things. But if you are not in work, you can easily lose track of your sleep and rest so that you always feel tired.

These will help you sleep well:

- Go to bed as soon as you feel tired - even if it seems really early.
- Keep your bedroom quiet and dark, not too hot, not too cold.
- Set your alarm to give you plenty of time for a relaxed start to the day.
- Get up at the same time every day: it should be in time for work!

- Don't sleep during the day if you feel drowsy - stay awake until bedtime.
- Don't have a television in your bedroom.
- Don't stay up late watching television.

When you are at work and when you are working hard on looking for a job, take breaks during the working day. It gives you time to gather your thoughts and build up energy for the rest of the day:

- Decide how long your break will be.
- Go away from the work
- Have a warm drink or do something that is not work
- Go back to work as soon as time is up
- When you go back to work, take a moment to review your plan and do-list.

To help you get rest and work under control, you can record your rest times here.

Day	How much sleep and rest at home	Breaks in the working day	What I can do to be more relaxed
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

FOOD AND DRINK

Eating well and staying healthy will make you feel good. It will help you achieve your aims, by giving you energy and keeping you well. Some basic things to try to do are:

- If you are overweight, it is a good idea to do more exercise and try to eat well, and eat less. Get help and advice from professionals, and avoid fads and fashions in dieting.

- Base your meals on starchy foods such as potatoes, cereals, pasta, rice and bread.
- Eat lots of fruit and vegetables
- Eat more fish, fresh, frozen and canned,
- Cut down on salt, sugar and oil
- Drink well:
 - keep your alcohol intake low
 - avoid too many sugary drinks
 - but don't get thirsty.

If you have a limited budget, try these tips for better eating at little cost:

- Plan your meals ahead, make a list before you go shopping, so that you don't buy too much.
- Look around the shops and on the shelves to find cheaper products.
- Go for value: swap branded products for the supermarket's own brand.
- Buy fruit and vegetables that in season. Locally grown food is usually cheaper than imported.
- Go for long-life options and buy frozen and tinned fruit and vegetables.
- Look out for two-for-one offers on foods that keep, such as pasta, rice, cereals, pulses or tins.
- Supermarkets reduce prices on products that are close to their sell by date.
- But be sure that you'll eat or cook everything before it goes off.
- Make your own meals. It is healthier and cheaper.
- Buy cheaper cuts of meat

(tips adapted, with thanks, from the UK National Health Service

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Onabudget/Pages/Savemoneyfood.aspx>)

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Getting confident and doing things well

Getting a job can be quite challenging. Here are some tips to help keep your confidence up, and to choose what to do first.

Build your confidence:

- Do the things you know you are good at.
- Try new things one at a time, slowly and gently.
- Expect to take time to get good at new things.
- Think about things before you try them, and again after. You can learn from them.

Practice:

- Active practice will make you more confident and makes things easier.
- Practice the easiest things first. Practice in small 'chunks' or pieces at first.
- Don't expect everything to be perfect first time.
- Get expert help.

Deciding on your priorities

Break down new or difficult tasks into smaller pieces. Decide how confident you are about each piece. Do the easy ones. Get help with the difficult ones, or give yourself lots of time to try them. Here is an example about writing a CV. You can do the same for any new activity.

Some parts of writing a CV	How confident are you?	Examples of what you might do to make it easier and practice. You can find your own ways as well!
Collecting all the information and certificates		Collect it and keep it all in one place.
Filling 'gaps' in your career		Write down things you achieved and things you learned (like how to bring up a child!)
Writing about yourself and about your career		Write nice words about yourself. Then change them so they fit the work you want. Next, make them into short sentences.
Writing why you want the job		Ask why you want it. Give 2 or 3 reasons.
Making sure the spelling and grammar is OK		Use the spell checker AND read the printed Version with a pen to make corrections. Ask a friend.
Typing, doing the layout , Printing		If you are not skilled, ask a friend or learn the skill. Borrow a printer.
Writing a covering letter		Look up how to do it online. Get help from your mentor or advisor. Do several versions - practice makes perfect.
Sending to the employer		Where is the post office or post box? How long does it take to reach the employer?

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Get Motivated

Getting motivated to do things takes a little effort. 'A little at a time' is a good motto.

These notes and exercises include ideas about

- what motivation is
- the benefits of motivation
- goals, values and interests
- identifying your own motivators
- seeing employment as a project

Motivation in employment is about trying again and again until we reach our target. Obstacles and setbacks are part of a successful result. Motivation can be enhanced by what is appropriate for us personally as well as by external pressures and demands.

MOTIVATING YOURSELF

Three main things will help your motivation: **Confidence, Competence and Autonomy**

- **Confidence:** to feel that you can achieve the task. Have another look at the exercise on Building your Confidence
- **Competence:** to be able to achieve the task. If you have the skills, knowledge and

experience you need, OK. If you need skills, knowledge or experience, getting them is a good first goal

- **Autonomy:** do things on your own, or do things with other people helping. If you don't have the freedom or can't do things on your own, getting help is a good choice.

INTRINSIC AND EXTERNAL MOTIVATION

'Intrinsic motivation' comes from YOU. It is about what you value, what interests you and what you want. For example:

- I want to find a job that will help me to start on a career
- I want to find a job that will provide a higher standard of living
- I want to work with people

'External motivation' comes from outside you. It can be a reward (such as salary) or a penalty (such as being disciplined for being late to work). It includes the requirements, goals, and values of others as they affect you. For example:

- I have to buy a travel ticket and get to work on time, to keep my job and have more money. Check all that apply:

What will you gain by finding the right job?	
have more money	
independence	
developing myself and my skills	
intellectual pursuits	
higher standard of living	
turning my hobby into work	
doing something I enjoy	
getting new friends/social network	
achievement	
my reputation	
add any others....	

Write a sentence or two about your favourite occupation or job, and how helps you.

Fill in the boxes below using the lists you have made to remind and help you:

Some things I value about work, some benefits that I want.	Some people and things I need to include in my plans	How people can help me and what I should do to get their help.

KEEPING GOING

When you really want something, you try hard at it. But there can be times when

- things do not go right
- you make a mistake and wish you had done better
- you feel tired or down-hearted
- someone else gets the job you wanted

These are all normal things! Keeping going and trying often is one of the ways towards success. You can help overcome these setbacks by planning in advance, and thinking about what happened afterwards. Use this table to write some things that may help you:

Before you start		
What I want to do	what might go wrong	what I can do to reduce the risk of it going wrong
After the event		
What I did, and what happened	Why did this happen? what did I find out?	What can I do in future?

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

ACTION

While you are getting your job, you will need to be exploring your own choices and looking ahead; deciding what to do, reflecting on what happened. Having a plan and taking one step at a time makes this happen.

Plans do not need to be complicated. A simple step by step plan is easier than a complicated one, as things often change as you go along.

Usually you need to add detail to your plan as things get closer. For example, you might write 'Apply for a job' in your first plan; as you get closer, you might change that to say what job and where to find it.

It often helps to talk about your plan with a friend, advisor or mentor. They can ask questions you might have forgotten.

Here is a format you can use at any stage, and in any of the exercises, to help you plan ahead.

What I want to achieve: my definite goal				
Things I will do	When I will do them	Who can help	Problems I need to solve	How I will benefit

LEARNING FROM MISTAKES

Everyone makes mistakes now and then. Correcting them and keeping going is part of your action planning! To overcome a mistake we need to accept it, reflect on it learn what we can do differently.

Imagine this scenario:

There is a company that is offering a suitable job on their website. You have emailed them to send you an application. But you have got distracted and you have missed the deadline for applications and you can no longer apply.

What to do?

Keeping calm is difficult when you do not meet your expectations. But how will you learn from the experience?

First, work out what happened. Either you received the forms and forgot about them, or they were lost in the mail, or they weren't sent.

Then what could have prevented it: if you had scheduled the CV in your calendar, you would have noticed that you didn't have the forms, and would have followed up.

Then make a change to your practice: schedule your calendar more carefully - leave nothing to chance and memory.

Go ahead with your job-search plans to find another opportunity!

In this way you learn from your experiences and renew your motivation.

Think of a time when you could have done better. What would you have done differently?	
Why do you think you did not do well? What did you learn from that experience?	
Who could help you evaluate what you did?	
Is there anything similar in your situation now? What could you change to improve things?	

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

MANAGING YOUR WORK AND RECREATION: A JAR FULL OF TIME!

In this exercise is a metaphor about setting priorities. It shows you how doing the important duties first can leave time for recreation and fun, but not the other way round! By the end of this activity you will have had more practice in identifying your priorities and planning to do important things first.

Collect a litre jar or jug or pot, with the label "24 hours", six ping-pong balls and 500 grams of rice.

- The jar represents the 24 hours in a day.
- On each ball write a task or duty that is important. Remember to include 'sleeping' since it uses up some of the 24 hours!
- The rice represents pleasure and recreation such as fun, meeting friends, watching TV, etc.

Now fill your jar - your day. If you start with the rice, it will be difficult to put in the balls that stand as your duties or tasks.

But if you start by putting in the balls, then there is space for the rice between them, and everything fits well.

If we give priority to the duties and important tasks, we will have time for fun. But if we start with fun, we often do not have time, strength or will to take on difficult and important tasks.

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Managing time and priorities

Using time on important things helps keep plans on track. Wasting time on unimportant things makes life difficult. The best way to manage time is to do what matters first! Use this chart to describe the things you need to do, and decide if they are important, or not important, and if they are urgent or not urgent.

Write some of your daily tasks in these boxes, for example, read the paper, go to the shop for food, work on my employment plan:

Daily or short term things	Less urgent things	Urgent things
Important things		
Less important things		

Decide which to do first.

Now do the exercise again, thinking about the longer future. For example - pay off my loan from the bank, or learn to swim, or get a job:

Long term plans	Less urgent things	Urgent things
Important things		
Less important things		

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

ACCEPTING PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

We are responsible for all of our life, even though some things happen to us without our creating them.

Accepting responsibility helps us be creative and purposeful. It encourages us to change what we can. Some things we can do and think about are:

- accept responsibility for the outcome and experiences of our lives
- give up complaining and blaming other people
- talk and think in positive ways about our plans and experiences.
- be more aware of our thinking, of when we are critical, when defensive, when positive and forward-looking, when we are helpful, among others
- recognise important decisions, identify the options and consequences, and make decisions
- make long-term gain more important than immediate pleasure or escape from discomfort
- relying more on our own authority and decisions, less on external things and other people

Here are some things to do and think about:

Read the statements below. Make a short summary of how they apply to you:

<p>I do what needs to be done: for myself for family for work for my community</p>	
<p>According to others, I am dependable</p>	
<p>I use good judgment and think through the consequences of my actions</p>	
<p>I exercise self-control</p>	
<p>I am accountable for my actions; I don't make excuses or blame others</p>	

Things everyone can do better:

- Be trustworthy. It's important for people to know they can count on you.
- Answer for your own actions. Don't make excuses or blame others for what you do.
- Don't rely on others too much, but ask for help when you need it. You take the responsibility.
- Think things through and use good judgment.
- Don't put things off. When you have a job to do, do it.

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Choosing a job that suits you

About Myself

This exercise will help you decide what sort of job or activity you will enjoy. It will help you think about what you like and are good at, about people you like to be with, places you to prefer be, things that please you and things that annoy you. You will be more able to choose the kind of work that suits you.

Doing work that suits you is good for your health and your happiness. Everyone has their own talents and things they like. Work is easier to find and more fun to do when it suits you. There are many kinds of work, and lots of reasons why you should choose your own job.

So think about things you like and things you want to do can help you find work.

First read these examples:

Bill is a builder. He likes being outside, working with his friends, making things, and travelling to different jobs. He likes this better than being indoors all day, even though it is very cold in the winter. He enjoys a pint in the pub and sports. But he really likes it when he finishes a job for a customer and everything looks good and well made.

Jim works in a call centre. He likes being on the phone, and enjoys getting other people to do what he wants. Although he isn't a sociable person, he does like the contact with people on the phone. He doesn't mind the pressure to get a lot of sales, and says that it is worth it for the extra money. He does not enjoy the bus journey to work, but says that is just part of the work.

Janice runs her own hairdresser shop in a very small town. She learned hairdressing because it was easy to do when she left school. She quite likes the chat with customers, but mainly likes having her own shop because she can be her own boss.

She worked in a bigger hairdresser's where she rented a chair for several years, and is happier on her own, even though she isn't making more money.

Shelia is training to be a building inspector with her Municipal Council. As a trainee she does not get much money, but she wants to have a steady professional career. She likes everything to be in order and done properly, so inspecting building works suits her temperament. She feels strongly about this, so she is able to cope with hostile responses from builders when she tells them to change something: she knows she is right and that is for the good in the long run.

Now think about work, and allow yourself to imagine what suits you.

You do not have to come up with the perfect job right away! Lots of people need time and experience to come up with their best choices

Are there any jobs you can imagine yourself doing and enjoying? Write them down here.	
Is there anything you really want to achieve, do or learn? Write it here.	
Make a list of three things you like doing and are good at. They can be anything you like.	Write down what it is that you like about them.
Write down three kinds of places that you like to be?	Why do you like them? Are they solitary or crowded, indoors or outside, risky or safe.... or what? Write your answer here.

Look again at the Exercise **'Know yourself; what do I like doing, who am I, who do I like?'** If you have not done it yet, now is a good time.

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

What job would I like?

This will help you decide on the jobs you want to go for and find the jobs there are where you (want to) live.

You will not get all the answers at once. You may have to ask around a lot before you start to feel able to decide on things.

Some people choose a job and stick with it for a long time. Others like to try different things and follow opportunities as they come along. Either way is OK.

**Look back at your answers to the exercise About Myself
Keep the answers in mind as you do this exercise. They will help you make
choices. But it is OK to change your mind as you find out more.**

Now read more about the examples we met before:

Bill is a builder. He makes the wooden frames and shuttering that goes into a building while the basic structure is built. He often has to construct quite complicated shapes in wood, for concrete to be poured before it sets hard. Bill liked the outdoors and is practical. He talked to his older brother about the building trade. He thought about being an electrician or a plumber. Then he got a job as a labourer on a building site, and enjoyed it. But he wanted to do more, and found out about learning carpentry at a local college. Now he feels he has a really good all-round experience as well as a special trade.

Jim was average at school. He thinks he could have gone to college, but wanted to earn money and be near his family. When the call centre opened he went along to a recruitment day and thought it looked OK. So he went for the recruitment tests and was pleased to do well. He didn't really expect to like the work, but it has turned out well.

Janice was always sure she did not want to work in an office or bank. Her friends had gone into hairdressing and she thought it sounded a bit more glamorous, and went to college to get the basic qualification. Then she had to spend a couple of years as a junior in a salon, before she could get her own 'chair'. It was only then she realised how important it is to her to be independent.

Shelia is training to be a building inspector with her Municipal Council. She left school with qualifications in basic science, and had her family very soon after. When the time came to go back to work, she wanted a career. It took a lot of time to find out what she could do locally while learning a profession. She had a friend in the Municipal Council who gave her a few ideas, and she was able to talk to their Personnel Officer, who told her about the training scheme.

CHOOSING WHERE TO WORK

Where do I want to live and work? Write down:	
Where you would like to live?	
Would you move to find the right job?	
Would you be happy with a job that is just OK, as long as you are where you want to be?	

FINDING THE JOBS THERE ARE THERE WHERE YOU (WANT TO) LIVE.

Every day, ask at least one person what sorts of jobs there are. You are not asking about actual vacancies, just about work people do.

Most places have people who can help you choose a job!

- Careers Services
- Jobcentres
- Employment Offices
- Employment schemes and projects
- Colleges
- Social Services
- Drop-in centres
- Professional Associations

Use these methods to find out who can help you:

- Ring your local Municipality or Council.
- Look at notice boards in official buildings such as surgeries and council offices.

Make a special visit and ask at the enquiry desk too.

- Go on the internet. Make a list of organisations or people who can help you. This can take time!

- Get a friend to help you use the internet and local library
- Ask people you know for contacts and organisations that can help.

Every time someone mentions a job or occupation, write it down here. Try to 'collect' a new job each day. Use another sheet of paper if you like.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Write why you like or don't like this job. Discuss it with your mentor or advisor.

Do at least one thing every day. Write down what you have found out here:

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

My Training, Education and Qualifications

This will help you have a clear picture about what you have studied, the training you have done and the qualification you have. It may help you choose the job best matches to you. You can use this information when you write your CV, so keep it safe! Fill in this table. Include any training or education of any kind: school, university, apprenticeship, in-work instruction, learning for hobbies, everything.

Year of completion	Training and skills I learned Formal Title and a short description of what you learned.	Qualifications gained	Institutions that trained me (include home-learning and self-teaching)

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Professional experience

Listing your former jobs or activities will help you think about what you liked and disliked in the past. You can use this information when you write your CV, so keep it safe! This will help you to identify your experience, your skills and the successes you have had, whether at work or outside work.

The exercise:

Date	Job title or Occupation	Employer (include yourself, or other activities like hobbies, bringing up children and so on)	Tasks I carried out	Skills I learned or practiced

Now put a big star beside any you enjoyed.

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Choosing your job priorities

List three jobs you think might be suitable. It is OK to change your mind later.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Find out more about your top three jobs.

- ask your advisor, Careers Services, Jobcentres contacts
- ask anyone you know who has done the jobs or ones like them
- fill in as much as you can about the jobs in the form below.

Fill in these forms for each job:

My preferred job-1:
what skills experience and qualifications does it need?
how can I get them?
should I do another job to get ready for the one I want?
how can I get real-life experience to help me choose and learn?
how much can I earn?
what journey to work, what tools and clothes do I need?
how do people get to hear about opportunities (papers? word of mouth, contacts, agencies)

My preferred job-2:
what skills experience and qualifications does it need?
how can I get them?
should I do another job to get ready for the one I want?
how can I get real-life experience to help me choose and learn?
how much can I earn?
what journey to work, what tools and clothes do I need?
how do people get to hear about opportunities (papers? word of mouth, contacts, agencies)

My preferred job-3:
what skills experience and qualifications does it need?
how can I get them?
should I do another job to get ready for the one I want?
how can I get real-life experience to help me choose and learn?
how much can I earn?
what journey to work, what tools and clothes do I need?
how do people get to hear about opportunities (papers? word of mouth, contacts, agencies)

This is a really active exercise. There are things to do every day, people to see places to go to. Some people are more helpful than others. Be sure to thank them all as this will encourage them to help you more. Do you want to change your choices or ideas? Go ahead! Some people are quicker than others at making decisions. Take your time. Some people are more confident than others. If you feel you are not making progress or cannot decide, you need to keep going and also give yourself more time to decide. Do the easy things first!

Talk to your mentor about what you have found out. Discuss it with a friend. It might be a good idea to get a friend to see if they agree with your choices.

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

--

Finding your job

This chapter will help you with finding the job you want to apply for. In it you will do some more work on the active business of looking for a job:-

- Where do my kind of jobs occur?
- What are the networks for finding my job, and how does word-of-mouth work?
- Where are my jobs advertised?
- Asking an experienced person, or authority
- Visiting jobs or employers
- Trying work, trials, tests
- Looking for work enough of the time

You will prepare by

- understanding that the job will be available
- keeping going when the job you want is not available right away
- being in the right place and with the right people to get to hear about jobs
- reading, researching and learning from the things you find out

Many jobs are not advertised at all, but filled by contacts, word of mouth and just getting along with people. Many other jobs are filled by specialist agencies (recruitment agencies and professional networks) and do not appear in Employment Offices, Agencies and Newspapers. Some sectors, usually including administration, catering, building trades, are available at employment offices (job centres).

So finding a job is about looking in the right place! It can take time and effort, but you learn a lot about the job while you do it.

Even in difficult times, there are lots of people moving into and out of jobs. Whenever someone retires, leaves for another reason, a job becomes vacant. Very roughly, one job in twenty is available in this way each year. That's a lot of jobs!

Bill is a builder. He works on short-term contracts, and rarely stays with one firm for more than few years. So he looks for another job often. His visits to the pub give him news about who is hiring and who is without work. He also plays football and people in his team talk about the job scene.

Jim expects to be in the call centre for a couple of years, but would like a change sometime in the future. He wants to live near his work, so he reads the papers, talks to friends and co-workers about any new developments. Another call centre has started nearby, and he is thinking about getting in touch with them in case he fancies a new job.

There are times when Janice's business is slow. She has to adjust her income and spending through bad times. She has learned to have a lot of personal resilience, and it is a great help to her. Lately she has joined several clubs to keep her in touch with the community and help to bring in customers.

Shelia had to wait six months before the competition for the traineeships in the Municipal Council began. It took her a year just to get to applying for the job. At times she felt quite low, and worried a lot about money. She had a few temporary jobs to help, but kept her sights firmly fixed on the job she wanted. She wrote and phoned the Municipality, and visited the Department where she wanted to work, and rang to check that they had received her application.

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Thinking about jobs

Think about your chosen job and things like it. Be quite general - unless you have set your heart on a very definite job - so you can see opportunities that are near to your ideal. Remember that lots of people leave work, change jobs and move on, which creates opportunities for new people (like you) to get a job. Firms close, firms open, new products and new contracts appear.

Write three things you can do to find out about opportunities and changes while or before they happen:

How often do you have to do each one, to stay in touch?

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Looking for that job

If you don't look for a job, you will not find one. Every time you look for a job, there is chance of finding one. But many times you don't find the job you are looking for. Look for a job every day. Tick the box for each day that you look, and give yourself some reward for your effort. Keeping going is part of the plan!

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Often you find a job that is a bit like the one you want, but doesn't really attract you.

When this happens write down the job, and whether you could be interested in it.

Job:
I would be more interested if:
This job is not for me because:

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Networking

Being in the network is a good way to hear about jobs and helps finding jobs. Networking is being with people who are in the business you want to join, being where you might find out about a job, or meet a person who does. Some of the places are business clubs, professional groups, community organisations, conferences, exhibitions, anywhere that you might hear about jobs, and get to be known by people who are hiring.

Networking starts with people and places you know, including family and friends. Networking does not have to be hard work or unpleasant. If you are enjoying yourself in a professional way, you are doing it right!

To get started:

- talk to family or friends about job opportunities
- find places and events to meet people connected with work
- look for information that will help you find a job to apply for
- talk to people you meet about job opportunities
- join a group to find out more about jobs

If you feel unsure about this

- start by doing the thing that you feel most confident about
- find a friend to go along with

- join a group that you like
- use 'official' helpers such as Employment Projects and Jobcentres
- talk to your mentor about ways you can get used to 'networking' without getting too worried

Write what you do and what you find here.

Reading

Think about your choice of job. Can you get it by applying in answer to a public advertisement? If so you might not need to do networking, and can concentrate on looking for the advertisement you want.

Reading and finding out information can help with your job search.

Read about:

- jobs that are on offer
- things that are happening in companies you might want to work for
- changes to jobs and occupations in your area
- what the jobs actually are - what you do in them, what kind of people and places.

Write what you read and what you find here.

Visiting

Visiting workplaces can give you a lot of information.

- visit the area where you want to work. Decide if you like it.
- how you will travel to get to work. Notice anything about it that you like or care about.
- talk to people in similar areas (places or occupations). What can they tell you that helps you?

Write what you find here.

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

People in your job

Find out more about the people in your chosen job. Ask people who do the recruitment, or people who have got a job there. Ring the Manager or Personnel Office and ask.

What professional association are they in?

Where and when do they meet?

How do employers recruit?

- Word of mouth?
- Advertising in papers?
- Internet?
- Agencies?
- Employment Offices (Jobcentres, public services)?
- Internal organisational advertisement ?
- National newspapers and magazines?

Make a note of what you have found out here:

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Keeping looking

The number of jobs available changes all the time. You cannot always tell when a lean period will come and when there will be lots of jobs. So you might have to do something in the meantime.

Write down what you can do to include each of these in your plans:

keep looking so as to be sure not to miss an opportunity I can do this by...	
be ready change your ideas as time goes by I can do this by...	
do things now to improve your chances I can do this by...	
make your own job by being self employed, or talking to an employer who might want you I can do this by...	
look for a short-term job to keep you going I can do this by...	
look for a job that prepares you for the one you want I can do this by...	

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Gaining a job

This chapter will help you with applying for and winning the job you want. It includes help with

- Applying for the job
- Telling the employer why you want the job
- Talking confidently and knowing what to say about yourself
- Keeping going in case you are not successful
- Studying what the job needs: qualifications, experience, tools, clothing, attitude, licenses etc
- Preparing your CV
- Getting ready for the competition: practice, travel, timing, nerves, questions, telling about yourself
- Going to the interview
- Keeping a checklist of jobs you are interested in

When you apply for a job it will probably be in competition with other people, and usually the people going for the job have similar backgrounds. If you have the right background there's a chance you will get the job. You can make it easier for yourself with some preparation.

Hardly anyone gets a job straight away. Keeping going and trying often is one of the ways towards success.

If ten people apply for a job, only one will get it, so there is a lot of chance. Learn to keep going. And you can be proud and glad when you succeed.

Bill is a builder who works on short-term contracts. He needs to compete for jobs very often. He makes sure that his reputation in the business is good: he works hard, and is on time, and adapts to the job he is working on. Bill always feels unsure of himself when he is looking for work. But he has learned that feeling worried is quite normal, and doesn't let it stop him. He just goes on visiting work sites, employers

and social scenes. When he does find a job to apply for, he goes to see the employer right away. When Bill is looking for his next job, he always asks around to find out about the company. He tries to find out what contracts they are working on and where the contracts are. If possible, he finds out if any of his friends are working there, so he can ask them more about it.

Jim knows that when call centres open, they usually have too many applicants for the jobs. Even his experience may not be enough to win the job. So he has decided that if he doesn't get the job in the new call centre, he will go to the manager afterwards, and ask why he did not succeed. Jim knows that call centres vary a lot. Some want people to be formally dressed, others are relaxed. He thinks it best to wear a suit and tie for the interview, and to ask about the dress code while he is there...

Janice is her own employer. She has a lot of worries about business and money. She has been in hairdressing for few years, so she knows that it is good to get other people's ideas and to be active. She gets her hair done in other salons, and watches to see how they are doing. She talks to her friends a lot, and has recently got in touch with a mentor from the local Employment Service. She does not have to interview herself for the job. But she does have meetings with her bank manager for a small business loan to re-decorate and buy equipment. So she treats this like a job interview, and has her CV ready, as well as practicing her questions and getting her business plan ready beforehand.

When Shelia's job in the Municipal Council attracted over 100 applicants. She thought she would not get the job, but she talked with friends about why she wanted it, and practiced lots of replies to questions they might ask. She practiced saying why she wanted the job, and she practised asking sensible questions about the job. When she got to the interview, she was nervous, but it went quite well. She was really surprised and happy when they offered her the job!

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Getting ready

Here are some things that you may need to do to get the job.

- Finding out about the job (qualifications, experience, tools, clothing, attitude, licenses, what you have to do to get the job, etc)
- Preparing your CV, application letter or application form
- Sending in your CV, letter or application form
- Visiting the employer to find out more
- Doing an interview
- Doing work tests or exams
- Being at social events connected to the application
- Writing letters
- Telephoning the employer for more information
- Getting practice with the interview or tests
- Getting ready for the interview: dressing well, travel, timing, nerves, questions, telling about yourself
- Going to the interview
- Keeping a checklist of your jobs and progress

BREATHING

Think about being in a job interview. Imagine yourself walking in to the interview room. Take a slow deep breath and breath out slowly too. Pause. Now say something to your imaginary interviewer.

Try this several times. Say something different each time.

TELLING THE INTERVIEWER HELPS

It reminds them that this is not something that happens while you are at work. Practice explaining that you get nervous in interviews. Use your own words to explain how you are, and end with some words about wanting the job.

Write your ideas here.

SWEATING

Lots of people get very hot during interviews, even more so if it needs a suit and tie. Explain to the interviewer that you feel hot, and that it is just about the nerves.

SMOKING AND DRINKING ALCOHOL

Should be avoided before an interview.

Alcohol reduces alertness and performance, even if you feel better. The smell may mean you don't get the job. Smoking is OK, but the smell of recent cigarettes may go against you. Try to have a break between the last cigarette and the interview. Be in the fresh air. Take a mint and a soft drink to help.

Now write down some things you think you can do to help get ready. Add anything you think will help.

Look at the exercise called **Action** in the **Everyday Skills** chapter. It will help you here. Write down here the first things you are going to do.

What I want to achieve: my definite goal				
Things I will do	When I will do them	Who can help	Problems I need to solve	How I will benefit

Nerves

Worry and nerves can help you! Everyone feels nervous about applying for a job. It is normal to feel that way, and can help you get in the right mood. Some people find the nerves are hard to cope with. They get tense and feel they might not do well. Here are some things to practice.

SLEEP

Read the section on **Rest and Sleep in Everyday Skills.**

Write anything that worries you.

Are these normal worries?

Practicing interviews will help calm the worries.

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Talking confidently

In the examples and exercises above, you have written - and perhaps discussed with your mentor - lots of things about yourself.

Now practice saying them.

Ask yourself a question, out loud, such as 'tell me more about why you want this job?'

Answer the question out loud as if you are talking in an interview.

Try this three times and then give yourself a rest.

You don't need to learn a script word-for-word. Just think of what you want to say, and say it clearly and calmly. Use a friendly tone of voice.

It really helps to say things out loud: you get more relaxed at breathing, and your voice calms down from the nerves. Just 'thinking the words' is OK as at the beginning, but speaking out loud is best.

You can go even further and dress for the interview, and practice your words in front of a big mirror. It feels really nervous at first, but then it helps you be calm and more confident.

Practice this until you feel you are getting more relaxed talking about yourself

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Finding out about the job

Here is a list of things that a job may need. Complete it as much as you can.

Remember that employers will be choosing people who match their needs. If you are really good in one area, it may make up for being weaker in another.

Make phone calls, talk to people, and get advice. Add anything special that you find out.

For each item, decide if you have or can do what is needed. Then decide what you can do to prepare. Write your answers. Your answers can go on your **Action Plan**

What qualifications do you need?	
Have I got these, or can I show something that is equally good? How can I prepare?	
What experience do you need? Have I got it, or can I show something that is equally good? How can I prepare?	
What tools or clothing do you need? Have I got these, or can I show something that is equally good? How can I prepare?	
What licenses (driving license, safety licenses, professional accreditations and so on) do you need? Have I got these, or can I show something that is equally good? How can I prepare?	
What test will they make you do? Can I do it well? How can I prepare?	
How does the selection or interview work? What happens? Is it formal, informal? Is it an interview, a test, or both. Can I do it well? How can I prepare?	
Where will it be? Can I get there in plenty of time, feeling ready and relaxed? How can I prepare?	
Who will be there? What do I know about these people? How can I prepare?	

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Preparing your CV or application form

A Curriculum Vitae (almost always called as CV) is a description of your work and skills. It includes:

- Your name and contact details
- A short list of things you are good at that the employer can use.
- Your education and Qualifications
- The jobs you have done, and for each one a short description of your achievements and skills

There is lots of advice about preparing your CV available. You can find help

- online
- from your mentor or employment advisor
- from local employment services, though you may need to enrol to get it
- from colleges and community organisations

To make your CV look good:

- say something positive about gaps between previous jobs (or after school or college), about what you learned or did during that time.
- adjust your CV for each job you apply for, so the employer sees that you are really keen

If you have personal matters that affect your work, think about when to mention it. Usually people who mention any problems are seen as reliable and honest. You can mention them in the CV, in an interview, or when you have the job. Earlier is usually better.

It is often easier to think of good things to say if you talk it through with someone else like your mentor, who can help you feel positive about what you have done.

Now decide how you will write your CV:

<p>Do I know what a CV should be Like? Or do I need help...? who from?</p>	
<p>How confident am I about writing and the words to put in my CV? If I am confident... get started or...</p>	
<p>Have I got all the information I need to include? If yes - get started, if no... collect it now</p>	
<p>Who can help me with my CV? When I will contact them for an appointment...</p>	
<p>Have I got the equipment - computer, printer, paper, envelopes, stamps and so on? Yes - great, I can start writing my CV on... No - Who can help me get it, or give me help typing and printing? When I am going to contact them...</p>	

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Visiting the employer to find out more

It is a good idea to visit the employer. A visit will:

- help you find out what the job is really like
- show you what the work place and colleagues are like
- let you try out travel arrangements
- bring out anything important that you did not know
- let you ask questions and show your enthusiasm
- give you practice for the interview

A few employers do not allow pre-visits, in case it gives an unfair advantage, but most will be glad to talk on the phone even if you cannot visit.

To arrange a visit or phone call:

- Have your main questions ready before you phone, in case you need them quickly
- Telephone the contact (if there is one) or reception
- Explain that you want to apply and ask for a short meeting, if allowed, by visiting or on the phone
- Arrange a time and short meeting - ten to twenty minutes is usually about right
- Ask if you should bring anything or do anything to prepare.

When you go to the meeting:

- Be sure you have tested the travel so you arrive early
- Have your questions ready beforehand
- Dress well, according to the standards you expect in the interview
- Make sure they know you have arrived
- Be very polite and thankful for the time
- Stay only as long as you have arranged
- Thank your host when you leave.

Now write down:

What do I want to find out?	
What questions do I have?	
Who is my contact?	
How should I get in touch?	
Can I talk to the person in charge of the actual job?	
I will call them on...	
My appointment is on...	

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Doing the interview

Here are some practical things you can do to get ready for an interview.

TELLING THE EMPLOYER WHY I WANT THE JOB

Employers want people who want to work for them. Your ability and your pleasure in the job are important.

Ask yourself - why do I want this job? What will it do for me? Here are some headings for you to complete:

I am good at this job because...	
in it I will be able to develop myself by...	
and I will make a contribution by...	
I will enjoy this job and be good at it because...	
this job will pay me so that I can...	
what is special about this employer and this job?	
add your own ideas too...	

KNOWING WHAT TO SAY ABOUT YOURSELF

Look again at what you said about yourself in the exercise **Who am I in Everyday Skills** - what did you say there? Practice saying the positive things to an employer.

WHAT I AM GOOD AT?

Write some words about yourself in these headings. Remember to include things about you that you might have learned outside work. Maybe you like making things, or helping people. Give an example of each thing you like.

My experience	Your examples
My skills, or things I do well	
The kind of workplaces I like	
How do these fit with this job?	
Other things that matter to you...	

HOW TO PRACTICE

Do the exercises Talking confidently. They are especially useful here. Smile while you talk. It makes you sound happy and confident. You don't need to grin and laugh. Practice each question several times. It gets easier and more fluent, and reduces the effect of nerves.

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Social events connected to the application

Some interviews include a social event as part of the selection.

Things to remember are:

- This is designed to let you show off your relaxed social skills, not your work competence or qualifications
- It is an unusual situation, and many people feel very nervous
- The social skills are valuable in lots of situations, so practice can be quite useful.

Preparing for a social interview event:

- Ask in advance what the dress code is, so you can be ready
- If alcohol is served, drink only half as much as you normally would. Replace the rest with soft drinks
- Shake hands with other guests, and ask their names. Make eye-contact (look them in the eyes) and sit or stand with a relaxed but straight back
- Ask people about themselves, using 'open questions' that encourage them to talk. Open questions begin with 'what' 'how' 'where' 'when'. For example 'How far did you have to travel today?' 'How do you come to be in this profession?'
- Be complimentary to others. It makes you look like a nice person to work with
- Be modest in your contributions and statements
- Make only contributions you feel confident about

- Be free to ask questions and explore others' ideas. Phrases like 'That's interesting, tell me more...' are helpful.

Who can you practice this with? Anyone who has the time and can give you feedback can be helpful.	
When and where can you practice?	
What feedback did you get?	
How will you use the feedback, and when can you practice more?	

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Writing letters and e-mails

Many applications ask for letters about yourself, supporting your job application. Letters can be very short requests for help or information, or longer but still short. One page is enough.

Letters and e-mails have their own ways of being polite and their own forms. You can get advice about that.

Letters are best when typed out or printed, but signed in your own handwriting.

If you are good at writing letters, get someone to read a sample and give you feedback.

If you are not confident at writing letters, who can help me with it? Guidance is available

- online
- from your mentor or employment advisor
- from local employment services, though you may need to enrol to get it
- from colleges
- from community organisations

Guidance from a real person is often good, because you can discuss what you want to say. But you can get samples to copy from in lots of places too.

I am going to get help from:	
and I will do this on...	

Keeping a checklist of your jobs and progress

You will soon have several applications and job possibilities. Keeping track of them will stop you making mistakes and help you plan your time.

Make a form to fill in for each job. It should have at least these headings:

- Job title
- Employer
- Contact details
- When and where advertised
- Closing Date for applications
- Date of any planned visit or call
- Date you sent or made your application
- Date of the interview or events
- Results and any feedback from the interview
- Notes about the employer and job
- Notes on how well you did and what you want to do next

Every day, look at your forms. Put any new dates in your diary.
Practicing interviews will help calm the worries.

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

What if I don't succeed?

KEEPING GOING

Most people need to apply several times before they get a job. You have to keep going, and it is good to learn from the practice of a real interview. Everyone feels disappointed when they do not get a job.

Most people have rejections after interviews. It is partly luck and partly skill, and a lot to do with the other people who are there. So you can expect to get rejected sometimes - it happens to everyone.

You need to decide:

- I am going to do my best
- The practice and experience will make me even better
- Afterwards I will know what I need to do even better

Write down what you think you could practice to do better before the interview.	
What I think I will do well at in the interview or test...	
Write down what you think you did well in the interview or in a practice session.	<p>What I did well...</p> <p>What was unexpected....</p> <p>What I can do better...</p>
Other jobs I can look for or apply for...	

Now re-read this chapter from the beginning. Make any changes and do any exercises that will help you do better next time.

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Keeping the Job

This chapter will help you with keeping the job you have got. The activities will help you do things, and feel confident, that help do the job better and in a more relaxed way. Starting a new job is exciting. There is a lot to learn, new people to meet, and new things to do. Every job is different. When you first start, there may be some special activities to help you get to know the job, called an 'induction'. Often there is only a short introduction to a few people, and sometimes you are expected to get on with almost no guidance at all.

Bill has to get to know the team that is working on each new short-term contract. He knows his skills very well, but sometimes there is a new procedure or a new piece of equipment. His last job was working in a restricted security zone at an airport, which meant having to carry his identity pass everywhere and only going where permitted. On his second day he left his pass in his toolkit while he went for lunch break and was stopped by security. They took him away for checks, and so he was late back to work. He decided it would be best to talk to his supervisor and explain right away, to show that he had made a mistake but was sensible enough to understand and get back to work as soon as possible.

Jim has got a job in the new call centre. In his last job he got used to taking 'incoming' calls, where customers ring up for help. But in the new job he is making 'outgoing' calls, ringing people to try to sell them house or car insurance. He gets a lot of rejections, and is finding it hard to keep going. So during a break he asks the people he works with what they do to keep going during times when they do not get many responses. Most of them just laugh and say it is part of the job, but one person explains how she copes, by taking it at a steady pace and trying not to expect too much. She says that at first she tried to go faster and faster, but it didn't help; now she works in a more relaxed way, still prompt, but less stressed. Jim tries this and finds he is able to get back to a better way of working.

Janice was very excited and energetic when she first opened her salon. After a few months, with everything going OK but rather slowly, she found herself letting things slip - not sweeping up as promptly, forgetting to order new supplies. One customer complained, and she realised that she needed to stay on top of the work. Now she has written a list of all the things that have to be done to make the salon look good all the time, and that the business must have. She checks it every day, and makes it her first job to get everything in order.

Shelia's job in the Municipal Council included a three-day induction, when she went round all the departments, and met many people. She was shown the council chamber and met the Leader of the Council. But when she started work, no-one explained fully how all the paperwork had to be done, and where and how to use the filing system. The IT technician set up her e-mail, but there did not seem to be an address book so she could not write to anyone.

After a few days, Sheila realised that she would have to ask for help. So she took herself on her own trip round the office, introducing herself again, and asking people what they wanted her to do, and getting copies of the administrative procedure documents. It took quite a while for her to see how it all worked, but gradually she got confident to do things with less help from others.

Shelia's job is governed by a collective agreement between the employer and union, on hours, pay and conditions. These rules are contained in a big loose-leaf book that is available in each office. One of the unwritten rules is that the head of each section should be informed before any action is taken on a particular case. Some people say this is so the head can know what is going on, and can change decisions; others say it is to protect the junior in case they make a mistake.

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Resting, being alert and energetic

Look at the **Everyday Skills** section on **Rest and Sleep**. Make sure you get enough rest and sleep when you are at work.

A new job is tiring and stressful, even if you are really good at it. You need to keep your energy up and have enough rest. You may be tempted to stay up late, working, or just enjoying yourself, but be sure to rest enough!

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Recreation

You might be tempted to work all day and take work home as well. Some jobs seem to expand to fill the time you give them, especially ones where you work at your own pace, such as sales, administration, management.

Make space for your usual recreation in your days and weeks. Giving all your time to work can cloud your judgement and make you over-tired and likely to make mistakes.

You can record your recreation here.

What I like doing	When I am going to do it	What I did

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Getting to know people

People can be the most important part of any job. Fitting in with work colleagues makes you feel comfortable. Knowing people around makes it easier to get help, and you can help them too.

Most people are pleased to get to know someone who is new to their workplace. Even if you feel shy about meeting new people, saying hello is a good way to get started. You do not have to be best friends with everyone. The first people you meet may not be the ones you get along with best: it is OK to change as time goes by. Most people like being asked about themselves, and like it when you tell them a little about yourself too.

You can record your new contacts and colleagues here.

Who (name, job, location...)	When I will say hello and introduce myself	What I can ask them or how they can help me.

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Quality of work

Doing good work is one of the most important things. Usually it is more important to do good work than to do a lot of work that is not so good. When you start a job, it is worth taking time to do it well. Getting advice on what 'good quality' means is helpful. Asking people how you are doing and what they can tell you helps too.

What makes my work 'good quality'	Who can help me	How I can improve

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

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Building your speed and stamina

Many jobs need you to work fast and keep going for a long time. Being able to keep up and do your share of work matters.

When you are new, it can be difficult to keep up - there are lots of things to learn. It gets easier as time goes by. Here are some things you can do to help yourself. Ask what the standard is.

If you have difficulty, tell someone responsible. Explain that you are new and getting used to it.

Watch more experienced people and copy what they do. Ask their advice.

Ask if you can do anything differently so you can work more quickly and easily.

Allow yourself time to get used to things.

You can use this list to help yourself.

What I find difficult	Who can tell me about this	What I can do

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

When things go wrong

In a new job, or when changes happen at work, things can go wrong. It can be things you can't control, like the bus to work being late.

It can be changes in the way work is organised that makes it hard for you to do well.

It can be the people at work and how they behave with you.

It can be that you make a mistake, or you may even do something wrong that you

need to put right. Taking time to think about it and then taking action will help you cope with things like this. Think about what has happened. Write it here:

Does it need some action?	
What will happen if I do nothing?	
What will other people think and do if I do nothing?	
Who can help me?	
Who should I tell?	
What can I do to put it right?	

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

What the job needs from you

These activities will help you make the job more successful.

Every job is different. As well as the actual tasks and duties of the job, there is the social setting. For example: working with the public in a shop is different from

working with the public as a police officer.

Many jobs also have a social scene. It might be just a celebration of a festival (Christmas and Diwali are examples), but many places also when staff leave, or just occasions to get together.

As well as the 'formal' or written duties of the job, there are unwritten rules that apply to people in the organisations. For example: it may be expected that people stay late and work at weekends in busy periods; a fair employer would let them relax more in quiet periods, but things like this are often not written down.

Adjusting how you react to these kinds of things will help you get along in the workplace. One way of finding out is to ask for help and advice from other people.

One of the most important things for a new job is getting to work. Travel can take a lot of time and money, and can influence:

- how alert and energetic you feel when you arrive
- how much time you have for yourself after work
- the amount of money you have
- whether you can be on time.

You may have your own needs that must and should be satisfied at work. For example, you may have a disability that should be accommodated, or a religious need that can be part of the work or social scene in some way. Getting these things right early on can make things easier for your colleagues as well as for you.

FINDING OUT ABOUT STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS IN THE JOB

You may have a list of the official duties of the job which you got during your interview or appointment. These kinds of lists often don't give you a very clear idea about the day to day work, so you can use the table below to add anything that helps make it clearer.

First, do the exercises on **Quality of work** in this chapter. Now complete this list of your main tasks, as they actually happen.

What I have to do	Who do I do it with?	Who is in charge?	When do I have to do it?

Now write anything that you are uncertain about, and who can help you find out what you need to know:

I need to know more about...	the person who can help me is...

FINDING OUT THE UNWRITTEN RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

The unwritten rules are harder to find out, but people can tell you what to do, and watching people around you can give you a good idea of what is expected. Use this table to record what you see and hear, and what you will do.

What I need to know more about	What I have noticed, seen, heard or read	Who I can ask or watch	What I have found out
What I need to remember and do in future:			

ASKING FOR HELP

When you don't know what to do, who to ask, how to go on, it is certainly time to ask for help!

Write down who you can ask, what you have found out, or what you would like to know.

People I can ask are...	
I have found out...	
I would like to know more about...	

TRAVEL TO WORK

Use this table to work out when you have to leave home to get to work on time.

You might not need all the journey options - just use as many as you need.

My starting time at work	
Add some time for delays	
How long to walk from transport to the workplace	
How long on third leg of the journey (car, bus, train etc)	
How long on second leg of the journey (car, bus, train etc)	
How long on first leg of the journey (car, bus, train etc)	
How long to get from home to the transport	
Time to leave home	
Time to get ready	
Time to wake up or start getting ready	

HOURS OF WORK

Fill in this table. What does it tell you?

My 'official' hours	
Add any extra time such as - overtime - finishing off an important piece of work - talking to a colleague after work - other delays (weather, late starting, doing some shopping and so on)	
My journey time	
When I will get home	

GETTING INVOLVED IN THE SOCIAL SCENE

The social scene at work can take lots of different forms. For example :

- some people go for a coffee or drink after work. some go directly home
- some organise sporting events
- some have charitable activities such as fundraising events, which may have approval and support from the employer.

Mostly the social scene is a gentle way for people to be friendly and co-operative. It also gives people a welcome extra dimension to their social life.

You can join in the social life a little or a lot. It depends on how you feel and whether you enjoy the activities. Most work colleagues will like it if you do join, so participating can help you feel accepted and welcome at work.

Most people are pleased to get to know people in their workplace. Even if you feel shy about social events, they are a good way to get to know people.

You can record your new contacts and colleagues here.

What is the event / outing / party	
When will it happen?	
Who can tell me about it?	
What happens, what do I have to do?	
Is there a cost? How much?	
If I don't want to do it, how can I avoid it without embarrassment or rejection?	

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

My own special needs

By now you should have a good idea of how things work. So you should be able to tell if you have special needs that should be included in some way. For example:

- you may not drink alcohol, and that can have a small impact on socialising with work colleagues
- you may have a disability that affects your travel or work. If this is so, the employer should make reasonable adjustments to the work so you can do it well
- you might need medical care - from temporary illness or for a permanent condition. The employer and colleagues should help.
- you might have dietary needs such as regular food or special foods.

Getting help with special needs is best done early on. If you wait until a problem comes up, it can make things seem worse than they are.

Sometimes you need 'official' or management approval for things. This would usually be from your manager, supervisor and (if there is one, human resources department).

Usually work colleagues are OK with helping. It is unusual for people to be intolerant, so asking for their help and telling them how to help you is a good idea.

If you can offer something in exchange for their help it will be appreciated. But it is not essential. Examples would be:

- doing more of a kind of work you are really good at, while they do things for you
- sharing your special foods or meals sometimes
- telling them about other customs you have met in other places

You can write your own needs and a plan of action here

My needs are	
If this requires official action, I should ask these people	
Among work colleagues I should tell	
Things I can do to help	
Things other people can do to help	
What I am going to do	

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Managing your stress

Work can be stressful, but you can manage your stress effectively, so that it does not impact on your work and life in a negative way. These activities will help you identify what makes you stressed, recognise when you are under stress, and apply some good ways to improve your resilience.

Some stress is useful: it can spur us on to get things done or work faster, for example, in an exam or a job interview. But too much stress can be bad for us.

Everyone is different: what stresses you might not stress another person. You need to know what makes you stressed. Stress can be caused at work or outside work: Here are some common causes.

Tick the ones that apply to you

Unrealistic high expectations by your boss	
Financial problems	
A feeling that the organisation is not playing fair with you	
Feeling lonely	
Boredom	
Lack of control over your job	
Feeling disrespected	
Tiredness/illness	
Bad working environment	
What else? List anything that applies to you	

Common signs of stress include these: tick them if they apply to you

Stiffness in your neck/back/jaw	
Sleeping badly	
Irritability	
Eating too much or loss of appetite	
Lack of energy	
Recurring infections	
Palpitations	
Dizziness	
Digestive problems	
Are there any others for you?	

In the past, when you have successfully dealt with stress, what did you do? Think of an example. Discuss with your mentor and/or reflect on successful strategies you have used in the past.

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

IMPROVE YOUR RESILIENCE, MANAGE YOUR WORK

List your tasks. Just doing this should make you feel more in control.

Have a look at the exercises on Time management in **Everyday Skills**. They are very useful at work.

Organise your workload. What is urgent, and what is important? They are not the same. Here is a useful diagram. Fill it in with the things that are on your to-do list.

Things on my work to-do list	Less urgent things	Urgent things
Important things		
Less important things		

Look after yourself - eat and sleep well. Do the exercises in the Everyday Skills Chapter.

Talk about it all with someone you trust. This could be a relative or your mentor. The sooner the better.

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

DIFFICULT PEOPLE

This exercise will help you think about what sorts of people who cause you stress, and how you can improve things. It will help you keep calm and :

- identify the sorts of people and situations at work that make you stressed
- realize that it is not always your fault
- practice ways to respond that to help you

It sometimes happens at work that you feel out of control, or not able to do your work properly.

This is often caused by how people react to you, or how you react to them. It can cause stress and it can make others think you are not doing your job properly.

First list some examples where you have felt stressed by people at work.

Include other non-work situations that make you stressed.

Write what you have found to be an effective way of dealing with them.

Talk about them with your mentor or a friend. Are there any common features (for example, do you feel you are to blame, do you think it is unfair, or it is morally wrong)?

THINGS TO DO AND THINK ABOUT

It is not always you that is making things difficult. Do not assume that you are in the wrong! Other people experience stress too, and many people find they cannot manage it well.

Stay calm. If you are with someone who is being difficult or threatening, you could imagine them in their pyjamas! This reduces their power and shows them to be a human being just like everyone else. If you are being bullied or wrongly accused, keep your self-esteem! If you act as if you are to blame, or as if you have low value, you will be treated like that. If you respond to anger with anger, you will not achieve anything constructive. Use facts, logic and calmness to assert your own position. Try it with your mentor or a friend - get them to pretend to be angry with you, and try out three responses to see what effect they have. These could be :

- extremely sorry and tearful
- angry
- logical, stating your case and holding firm

What are the differences?

If someone is being unfair to you at work, and you cannot sort it out, do not try to face it alone:

- get help from your family, mentor, your manager (if this is not the person causing you stress!) or a colleague
- explain the situation
- take notes on all the interactions that happen. If the worst comes to the worst and you are facing dismissal, you will have all the evidence to support your version of events
- Remind yourself of previous success, and of positive relationships you have forged at work. Keep your morale up by thinking of them and by trying to transfer some of those good feelings into the present situation. You will find that this gives you renewed purpose and courage.

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

Learning at work

Everyone has to learn new things in a new job. This activity will help you decide if you like learning, and what to do to encourage yourself in learning.

HOW MUCH DO YOU LIKE LEARNING?

Give yourself a score on the scale 1 to 10 by putting a circle round the number that shows how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

How much do you like change in your tasks? Change happens, but is often difficult to accept. Some people like it, others less so.

How much do you like change or stability?

10 means: "I am open to change and happy to adopt new things and methods."

1 means 'I do not like change and prefer things to be steady and stable'.

My score: **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**

How much do you like learning new things?

10 means 'I have a very strong desire to learn new skills, techniques and gain knowledge'

1 means 'I don't really care to learn about new things. I already know everything I need'

My score: **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**

For fun, you can multiply the two figures together: Low scores show you are a steady person who likes to rely on what they already know

High scores show you as a person who likes learning and change.

Now fill in the table:

Things that work demands that I don't have skills for, that have changed, or that seem uncertain	What I can do to learn new skills	What I can do to make changes that are OK for me

REFLECTION

What does this exercise tell you? How did you benefit? What will you do differently?

About the toolkit and project partners

The Learning Partnership Gaining and strengthening 'soft skills' for employment through models of supporting methods (peer coaching and mentoring) includes nine European partners from eight countries: Hungary, Greece, Austria, Great Britain, Italy, Poland, Cyprus and Denmark. The partners represent very different parts of Europe, not just geographically but also with their national characters.



Pandokrátor
Kft

PANDOKRÁTOR KFT (Hungary), project coordinator, is a private cultural and educational organization promoting multiculturalism, linguistic diversity, European intercultural and environmental awareness, personal development as well as new educational technologies. It provides courses, seminars, workshops and consultancy.



Classes Greek School of Hungary (Hungary) is a public educational organization. It promotes and teaches the Greek culture and language to children and adult learners. It aims to promote diversity and multilingualism and to support learners from minorities, and their parents. It focuses on students in

disadvantaged situations, such as living in isolated areas of the country and having special needs.



VRC

Vocational Rehabilitation Consultants Ltd (Great Britain) is a consultancy in vocational and employment services. VRC helps organisations to offer empowering work and economic integration to disabled and disadvantaged people. VRC provides staff development, training and programme design to service providers in the public, NGO and private sectors across Europe.

MMC Mediterranean Management Centre

MMC Management Centre Ltd (Cyprus)

provides quality learning solutions that enable business excellence by increasing

our customers' competence and practical knowledge using internationally recognized consultants in a pleasant training environment and using innovative learning methodologies. MMC develops leaders and enables clients to achieve and experience excellence in their personal and professional life by developing their skills and designing their lifestyle.

SZF **Schulungszentrum Fohnsdorf**

Schulungszentrum Fohnsdorf (Austria) is a

vocational training centre that specialises in provision of personalised adult education to unemployed people and employees of small

and medium sized enterprises. It offers a flexible modular individualised training. It offers professional qualifications adapted to the current situation of the labour market and to the demands of customers.

meltingPro
Laboratorio per la cultura

Melting Pro- Laboratorio per la Cultura (Italy)

is a cultural association which enhances and promotes cultural heritage at Italian and European level through cultural initiatives and

training courses for cultural professionals and adults in general. Melting Pro specializes in cultural training, fundraising, design, development and management of cultural projects, with particular expertise in the European model.

ITeE
PIB

Instytut Technologii Eksploatacji-Państwowy Instytut Badawczy (Poland) is a state-owned research and development

institution conducting applied research and implementing advanced technologies in vocational education, machines manu-

facturing and maintenance, materials engineering, environmental protection and systems engineering. ITeE-PIB is involved in expert activity in economic innova-

tion, manufacturing activity and special technological devices, as well as scientific printing and publishing.



Randers Bo- og Erhvervsstræning (Denmark) provides general education and vocational training, connected to social support and to housing. Social housing and vocational training is offered to young people who have difficulties getting on in the established educational system, among other things because of their learning disabilities. The educational courses are planned individually and often consist of both vocational support and in-house support.

The partner organizations represent formal, informal and non-formal development settings and have a wide range of educational experience and sub-sectors, across the EU and its different cultural, economic and legal systems. This resource has aimed at creating a toolkit that can be used not only the local situations, but across the European arena as a whole.

This project, including this toolkit, is driven by the challenge of unemployment in Europe and the need to increase the number of adult learners in lifelong learning. The project's results are directed at unemployed people, people with special educational needs and people over fifty years old. The project aims to reinforce competencies in work-related 'soft skills', in order to improve the integration of individuals, especially those with disadvantages, and enhance European employability. The project also aims to raise the awareness of the need for Soft Skills among individuals, enterprises and local, regional, national and European authorities. The main results are the development of a new learning process through two new products, the 'Soft Skills Toolkit' and the 'Guideline for models of supporting methods (Peer Coaching and Mentoring)'.

In strengthening 'soft skills', the project aims to increase employability and motivation for all ages. The project addresses the lack of resources on soft skills and related training.

'Soft skills' refers to a cluster of personal qualities, habits, attitudes and social competencies that make someone able to compete in the labour market and to be a stable, effective employee. Companies value soft skills because research and experience show that they can be just as important an indicator of job performance as the 'hard skills' that are associated with particular job tasks. Soft skills enable individuals to participate in learning, to develop their own life plans and activities, from learning, volunteering and cultural and social activities, to economic engagement.

The participant countries of the partnership are in an extremely difficult economic situation today, some with the highest percentage of unemployment in Europe. In this era of crisis, there is a great need for skills, especially "soft skills" and hence for the creation of learning opportunities about soft skills.

The partnership also believes that older people have a lot to teach to the young and are a valuable resource in society through their life experiences and special skills. The knowledge offered by younger to older people, such as digital and languages, learning styles and environments, is equally important. The mentoring element of the project addresses this resource, aiming to catalyse interpersonal support in aid of enhanced skills and employment.

In the era of economic crisis and mobility, we think that a common 'soft skills' toolkit which can be used and accessible to all in Europe will be welcomed. This is our offering to our colleagues across the EU.

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