



Tips for Landing Your New Job!



Introducing our tailored guide for Social Work Graduates, offering essential tips to secure your desired job. From crafting standout CVs to mastering interview techniques, gain expert guidance at every stage.

Learn to highlight key skills and experiences that match job requirements. Whether you're starting your job search or seeking to boost your employability, this guide is your indispensable companion for success in social work.

Securing Your Dream Job: Perfecting Your Application Process

Your job application and CV are crucial first steps towards landing your ideal position. This guide will focus on providing you with helpful tips to ensure that your application process is smooth and successful.

Key Factors to Consider When Filling Out Your Application Form

- What does the role entail?
- Essential/Desirable Criteria
- Reflecting on your skills and experience
- Following instructions
- Tailoring your application



General competency questions in application forms

- Describe a situation when you lead a team/worked in a team
- Give an example of a time when you dealt with confrontation
- Describe a situation when you influenced or motivated others
- What factors do you consider when making an assessment?
- Describe a situation when you used initiative
- Give an example of when you solved a problem
- What factors do you consider when assessing risk?
- Give an example of how you have applied knowledge of legislation in a social work setting.

Using the S.T.A.R.E or C.A.R.L approach

Structuring Your Responses: Helpful Formulas

To ensure that your answers are well-organized and easy to understand, try using one of the following formulas.

S – SITUATION – When, where, with whom (contextualise)

T – TASK – Describe the situation or task you want to offer as evidence

A – ACTION – What did you do? What was your contribution? How did you make things happen?

R – RESULT – What was the result/outcome? (preferably positive) What did you learn?

E – Evaluation

C – Challenge – Briefly describe the context of your experience

A – ACTION – Explain what actions you took

R – RESULTS – Explain what happened as a result of your actions

L – LEARNING – Identify what you have learned

Make sure that around 40% of your answer is on the Action section.

Crafting a Personal Statement

Crafting a personal statement for public and voluntary sector roles is a frequent requirement in your application process.

Often, you are asked to write an overall statement:

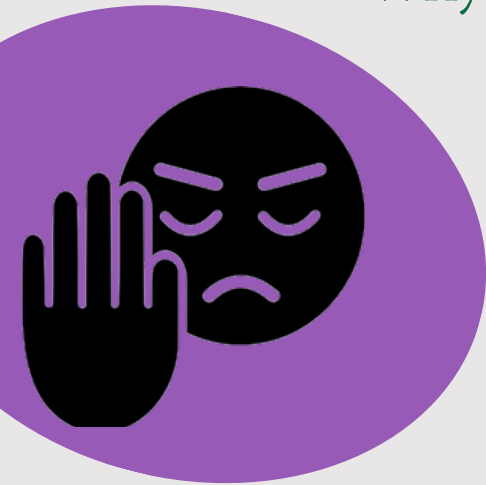
“Please outline below evidence of your suitability for this post, giving specific examples”

Other times, you are asked to write a series of paragraphs (often with word limits) around specific competencies.

Consider the following:

- To make a good impression, it's important to adopt a formal business tone and style.
 - Pay attention to the word limit and avoid exceeding it.
 - Consider the purpose of each question to understand what the employer is looking for.
 - Use examples from your study, work, or interests to showcase your full range of experience.
 - Plan ahead and take a moment to reflect on your responses to ensure they are clear and effective.
 - Seeking feedback from someone you trust can also be helpful.
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Why Some Graduates Face Job Rejection?*



Surveys quoted on www.graduate-jobs.co.uk showed that:

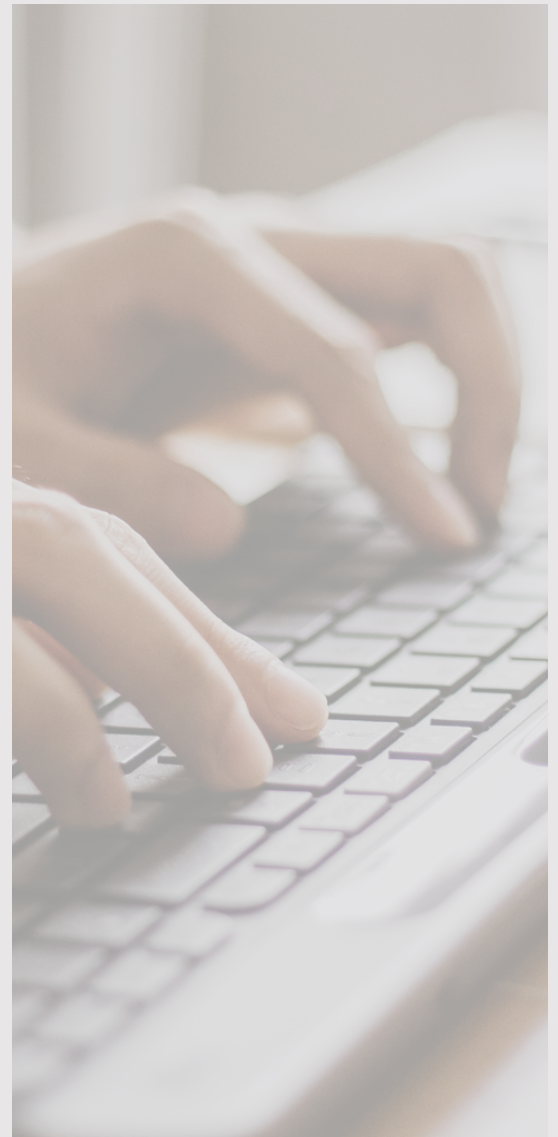
- 36% of employers mentioned “copy and paste” approach
- 21% mentioned errors in spelling or grammar or the inability to follow instructions
- 29% mentioned that applicants not having the basic requirements
- 14% mentioned a failure to research the role

Compiling your CV

When it comes to compiling your CV, there are a few key things to keep in mind. Firstly, make sure that you tailor your CV to the specific job that you're applying for. This means highlighting the skills and experiences that are most relevant to the position and making sure that your CV is easy to read and well-organised.

Another important factor to consider is the length of your CV. While you may be tempted to include every single job you've ever had, it's important to keep in mind that hiring managers are often short on time. Aim to keep your CV to no more than two pages and focus on your most recent and relevant experience.

In addition to your work experience, it's also important to highlight your education, any relevant certifications or awards, and any volunteer or extracurricular activities that demonstrate your skills and passions. And finally, make sure that you proofread your CV carefully before submitting it - even the smallest typo can make a big difference!



Your CV Structure

When compiling your CV, follow the outlined structure to assist you:

- 1. Personal Details** – Include your name and contact information.
- 2. Personal Profile** – Draft a concise summary outlining your strengths and career objectives.
- 3. Education and Qualifications** – List your academic achievements and relevant certifications.
- 4. Related Work Experience (Paid and Unpaid)** – Detail your professional experiences directly pertinent to the position you're applying for.
- 5. Other Work Experience** – Include any additional work experience that demonstrates transferable skills.
- 6. Skills** – Some individuals prefer a separate section; if not, ensure to incorporate them into your education and employment descriptions.
- 7. Achievements/Positions of Responsibility** – Highlight notable accomplishments and leadership roles.
- 8. Interests** – Briefly mention hobbies or extracurricular activities that showcase your personality or skills.
- 9. References** – Provide contact details for individuals who can testify to your qualifications and character.

IN

- Contact information
- Personal profile ?
- Education and qualifications
- Work experience
- Achievements
- Technical Skills
- Transferable skills
- Languages
- References on request
- Professional email address



OUT

- Date of birth
- Gender
- Race
- Political/religious affiliations
- Photo
- Marital status
- Unprofessional email address
- Reference contact details
- More than two pages in length
- Multiple phone numbers



Skills for Social Workers

Explore the Key Skills Valued by Employers for Social Workers:

- **Teamwork:** Work collaboratively within diverse teams to achieve shared objectives.
- **Problem Solving:** Utilise critical thinking and creative solutions to tackle complex issues.
- **Patience:** Exhibit composure and empathy when assisting individuals through challenging circumstances.
- **People Management:** Effectively support and guide individuals to enhance their well-being and development.
- **Time Management:** Efficiently organise and prioritise tasks to meet deadlines and commitments.
- **Organisation:** Maintain meticulous records and systems to ensure smooth operations and service delivery.
- **Interpersonal Skills:** Communicate effectively and build rapport with diverse individuals and communities.
- **Numeracy:** Utilise mathematical skills to analyse data and make informed decisions.
- **Communication:** Express ideas clearly and concisely, both verbally and in writing.
- **Administration:** Manage paperwork and administrative tasks efficiently to support service delivery.
- **Customer Service:** Provide compassionate and responsive support to meet the needs of service users.
- **Literacy:** Demonstrate strong reading and writing skills to comprehend and convey information accurately.
- **Leadership:** Inspire and motivate others to achieve common goals and drive positive change.
- **IT:** Utilise technology effectively to enhance service delivery and communication.

Job Application Reminders



1. Carefully read the job description and refer to it frequently while compiling your CV, application form, or cover letter.
2. Tailor your Cover Letter, CV, or Application Statement to match the specific job requirements.
3. Identify keywords from the job description and incorporate them into your application materials.
4. Ensure your responses are accurate, relevant, and free from errors, utilising the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) or CARL (Challenge, Action, Result, Learning) method where appropriate.
5. Complete all sections of the application process, addressing both essential and desirable criteria comprehensively.

Achieving Your Ideal Job: Mastering the Interview

Competition is fierce, with approximately 200 applications received. Out of these, around 70 applicants made it to the initial rounds, and 40 progressed to the final round for 25 positions in an annual recruitment cycle (2022) for children's Newly Qualified Social Workers in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

This trend is mirrored in other areas, indicating high competition for ASYE recruitment in London. To stand out, it's crucial to highlight your unique strengths and leverage your learning from placements. For some, this may involve incorporating personal experiences to showcase how they enhance your skills as a professional.

The Purpose of interviews

Interviews aim to Determine:

- Can you do the Job? - Skills and knowledge base
- How will you do the job effectively? - Relevant experience
- If you share the same values and ambitions as the organisation - will you fit in?

Before your interview

Before your interview, take the following steps to prepare effectively:

1. Review the Job Description (JD) thoroughly to identify the key points your interviewers will likely be seeking evidence for during the interview or test stage.
 2. Write down relevant examples from your experience that match these points, ensuring they align closely with the job you've applied for.
 3. Familiarise yourself with the borough you've applied to by researching its value base, practice model, local population, and strategic priorities.
 4. Ensure your examples and knowledge reflect an understanding of the borough's context and needs, demonstrating your suitability for the role and alignment with their objectives.
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Types of Interviews for NQSWs

Social work interviews often comprise multiple stages beyond a standard panel interview, with a focus on assessing various skill sets. To excel in these interviews:

- **Written skills**
- **Group work ability**
- **Presentation and performance at a panel interview**

Group Work Tasks

During group tasks in social work interviews, candidates typically engage in discussions around a case scenario that may provoke debate. Here's what to expect:

- Groups of 6-8 candidates discuss a case scenario observed by the panel.
- The scenario may involve contentious issues, encouraging debate.
- The panel assesses candidates based on value-based criteria, such as TOWER values:
 - Collaboration
 - Ethical and practical reasoning
 - Child focus



Common feedback points include:

- Dominating the group and not allowing others to contribute, reflecting a lack of self-awareness.
- Difficulty articulating practical approaches as a social worker regarding the case study.

Prepare by honing your collaborative skills, ethical reasoning, and ability to focus on the needs of children. Practice active listening and ensuring everyone has a chance to contribute. Additionally, work on articulating your proposed actions as a social worker in response to the case scenario clearly and practically.

Written Exercises



In written exercises for social work interviews, candidates typically encounter 2-4 case-based scenarios. Here's what to expect:

- Case scenarios assess your writing quality, structure, analysis, risk identification/response, and focus on children's needs.

- Feedback is provided sensitively but honestly to unsuccessful candidates, offering insight into areas for improvement.
- Avoid common mistakes such as misinterpreting adult diagnoses as pertaining to children, as this can negatively impact your assessment.

Prepare by practising concise and coherent writing, demonstrating your ability to analyse cases effectively while maintaining a child-focused perspective. Pay close attention to case details and avoid misinterpretations to maximise your success in these exercises.

Panel interviews

Panel Interviews in social work often consist of 2-4 interviewers. Here's how to prepare:

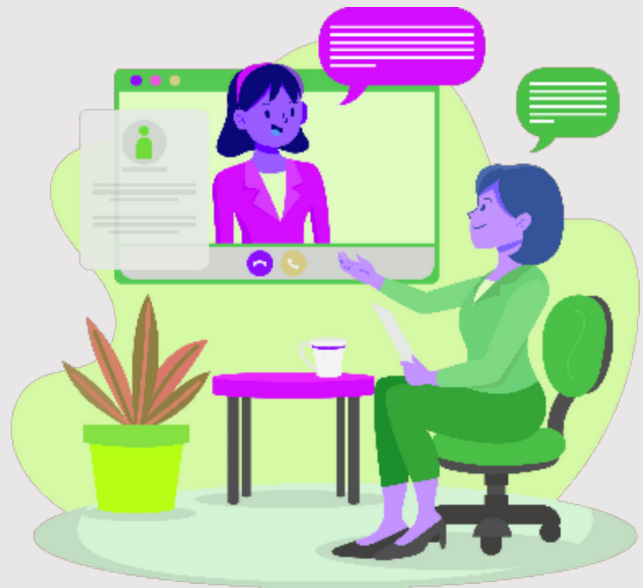
- Research the specific area you've applied for, showing curiosity about the setting and team dynamics.
- When discussing your experiences in various service areas, relate them to the applied-for position.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the local area and its challenges, including general statistics and the practice model.
- Expect common questions on conflict resolution, diversity, and discrimination.
- Be ready to explain why you're the ideal candidate for the job and how your experience aligns with it.

Prepare by familiarising yourself with the local context, reflecting on your experiences, and practising responses to common interview questions. Show enthusiasm for the role and a strong understanding of its requirements and challenges.

Virtual interviews

If your interview is online, prepare beforehand to ensure you have clear communication with as minimal to no distractions as possible:

- Practice using the interview platform beforehand, such as Zoom or MS Teams, to ensure familiarity and avoid disruptions.
- Check your internet or phone signal to ensure a stable connection throughout the interview.
- Find a quiet space for the interview to minimise distractions and interruptions.
- Ensure your camera, microphone, and lighting are set up appropriately for clear communication.
- Whenever possible, sit at a desk or table for a professional setup.
- Dress as you would for an in-person interview to convey professionalism and readiness.



By following these steps, you'll be well-prepared to showcase your skills and experience effectively in an online interview setting.

Practical Tips

- Ensure you are visible and present
- Show your willingness to contribute, even when faced with challenges; being too quiet will be noticed
- Address any technical difficulties promptly
- Focus on sharing what you know rather than what you don't
- Initiate discussions about boundaries and differing perspectives
- Consider how you will handle disagreements, both when disagreeing with others or vice versa
- Reflect on your communication style and behaviour
- Be aware of how you handle nervousness

Core Social Worker Skills



1. Undertaking Assessment:

Provide examples demonstrating your ability to assess individuals' needs and circumstances effectively.

2. Understanding Risk and Need:

Showcase your capacity to identify and address risks while meeting the needs of service users.

3. Challenging Discrimination:

Illustrate instances where you've challenged discriminatory practices and promoted inclusivity.

4. Promoting Equal Opportunities:

Provide examples of initiatives you've undertaken to ensure equal opportunities for all individuals.

5. Building Relationships:

Highlight your skills in building rapport and trust with service users, colleagues, and other stakeholders.

6. Communicating Effectively:

Demonstrate your ability to communicate clearly and sensitively in various contexts.

7. Applying Skills Practically:

Provide concrete examples of how you've applied your skills to engage with service users and support them effectively.

8. Legislative Knowledge:

Show a basic understanding of relevant legislation and how it informs your practice in the role you've applied for.
