

# GETTING A JOB

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**A HELPING HAND FROM**



**The Rotary Club of Sidcup**

Thank you for visiting us today. We hope you gained something from your time with us and will go away thinking more positively about job-hunting and with a much clearer understanding of what you need to do to be confident of getting that job!

This booklet is a small reminder of the issues we covered. We hope it will be a useful point of reference for you - hopefully for not too long.

Gaining an insight into what employers are looking for, how they think and how you can interact with them should help you to be much more effective with job applications and interviews and make you much more employable in an employers eyes.

Let's run over the areas discussed.

### 1) The General Situation

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There's no point in beating about the bush. The job market remains stubbornly poor and is a serious concern for everyone.

In your 18-24 age group the U.K. unemployment level at the time of writing (Spring 2015) is nearly 1 in every 7 without a job. But the situation is slowly improving .To put that into perspective unemployment in your age group is worse in other parts of Europe - in Spain and Greece more than half are out of work, in Italy more than 1 in 3 and in France 1 in 4 and getting worse.

The figures for Germany look better than here but their system of recording is somewhat different. In reality they are much the same as us.

Although the picture here is improving there's a long way to go. So keep your fingers crossed and don't relax your job-hunting for one moment.

Believe us - you WILL get there!

## 2) Things to bear in mind

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Many people have a strong idea of what they want to do in life - their dream job if you like - but are finding it's just not there at the moment. These are early days in your adult life and change will inevitably come about so DO NOT give up on your dream job but DO find yourself some sort of job in the meantime.

It will get you into the CULTURE of working. It will give you a history of employment. Importantly, it will also give you a much better chance of success when the right job comes along.

Do not worry if interim jobs don't make full use of your qualifications or training. Employers, by and large, are a pretty sensible and understanding bunch. They know what the job market is like and they will all regard you in a much better light if they can see that you have taken any work going rather than sitting at home, unemployed, getting an ever more difficult to explain gap in your CV.

Be flexible. Get yourself whatever job you can. Get into the culture of work and get yourself earning.

Sometimes jobs come along in areas you haven't considered before that turn out to be quite fascinating and rewarding. I know. It happened to me .From starting out in the Civil Service (which really wasn't for me) to running a fleet of ships, where I had a great time. Certainly at your age I couldn't have dreamed of ending up doing that.

So - keep your mind as well as your eyes open. You never know what may come along with your name on it.

We are well aware that there is no magic wand and that not everyone will find a job right away.

If you are in that situation then it is very important to be doing something constructive with your time.

Its not just a question of morale and having something interesting to do with your day - it's also the very down to earth point of being able to show on your CV that you made good use of your time instead of frittering it away.

There are plenty of voluntary work opportunities out there and they're easy to find.

Voluntary work is never time wasted and will always help with your skills - admin skills, people skills and quite often leadership skills as well. You will also be making a contribution to your community that you can be proud of.

And a very big plus, it also looks very good on your CV compared to an unexplained gap.

The phone number of the Bexley Volunteer Centre is at the back of this booklet along with other information that we hope will be useful to you. So why not drop in to talk it over or give them a call?

Work experience is great if you can get it.

JCP and ourselves are both pushing local businesses to help provide work experience opportunities. You too can help yourself by being proactive. Get in touch with firms and organisations to ask if they can take you on for a few weeks. It gives you the opportunity not just to learn but to showcase yourself. Show people what you can do - it could result in a job offer.

What's the worst that can happen if you ask?? They say no and you try another firm .

It costs you nothing and even if unsuccessful brushes up your technique in dealing with people. If you phone, the cost is usually rolled into your broadband bundle so it's free!

Keep your mind open . When you think of supermarket jobs you tend to think of shelf stacking or tills. Right?? Wrong!

What you are seeing is just the tip of the iceberg.

Below that are buyers, growers, planners, drivers, distribution specialists, architects, lawyers, accountants, admin people. In fact, if you can think of it they probably have it.

So think again about supermarkets and other large organisations.

They've got a whole unseen army of highly skilled people doing interesting, rewarding jobs.

The armed forces are the same. To put a soldier in the front line requires a large number of different skills from a huge number of personnel, many of whom never see or want to see a front line. Think of catering, admin, maintenance, procurement, personnel, housing

specialists, drivers, managers and so on and so on. The list is endless.

You could be one of them

### 3) Apprenticeships

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These are an ever more popular way forward and can be immensely useful for you as well as for employers.

Gone are the old days when apprenticeships were seen as being for manual or industrial jobs only.

They were excellent in teaching skills for life in a real working environment. Apprentices usually ended up with the employer in question taking them on at the end of the apprenticeship.

Those apprenticeships are still around but things have moved on and the scope has broadened. In National Apprenticeship Week some 14000 apprenticeships were pledged, as diverse as space engineering and book making. There's a lot out there of enormous interest for you to look at.

Bear in mind too that many of today's apprenticeships are regarded as being on a par with degrees, but with hands-on time included, which means that you can go straight into a job without further training needed.

Germany has had a strong apprenticeship model running for many decades which is currently the envy of Europe. The system here is now copying their success. It is so well worth doing, both for Britain and - most importantly - for you.

### 4) CVs

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They are such a vital area. To be clear:-  
**CVs ARE THE GATEWAY TO INTERVIEWS.** If you don't get them right you don't get interviews.

**TIME SPENT ON THEM IS AN INVESTMENT IN YOUR FUTURE**  
**.So spend as long as it takes and GET THEM RIGHT!**

Remember - somebody in the employer's office will have to go through probably 200 CVs and application forms for every job that's going. Can you imagine what that's like? Especially if they are busy with a lot of other work to do?

These are normal human beings. It's up to you to make it as easy as possible for them to read and appreciate your CV and to make it stand out from the pile.

If yours is difficult to read or understand it will probably end up in the bin. Sadly there's usually plenty of others left in the pile for them to choose from.

Right now, for employers, it's a buyer's, not a seller's market. Nowadays people are often treated as commodities so you HAVE to work very hard at selling yourself.

Your CV is the start.

We talked a lot today on the subject. Here are some reminders:-

A) Try to put yourself in the employer's shoes and work out what an employer needs to know and to see before he or she can put you in line for an interview.

B) Set your CV out in chronological order.

C) NO small print - make it as clear and easy to read as possible.

D) Use your imagination and initiative to make yours stand out. Just remember that if you stick to the proformas you've been taught to use, your CV will look just the same as most of the others.

E) Don't feel constrained to stick to the proforma one or two pages either. Be concise but, if you've something to say about yourself, then say it!

F) Larger employers often use computer scanning techniques to screen applications. These look for key words they've used in their advert, so read their ad. very carefully. Make sure you use those words in your CV and application letter.

Smaller firms may not do this but it's good practice to sort out the key words and use them anyway. They are the 'code' that the employer is using to let you know what their priorities are and what they are looking for.

G) A potential employer needs to get a sense of what you are like as well as what qualifications you have and what you've done since leaving education.

Never forget that they are taking on a person not just a set of exam results! They really do need to see what you have been doing in your life that will convince them the person they want to take on is YOU.

SO

CVs must give clear, concise, easily readable information and put across a clear impression of the person you are.

To do that:-

i) Don't go overboard with your personal profile. Play to your strengths and miss nothing out but please don't exaggerate. You will be found out if you get to interview.

On the other hand never understate your achievements.

ii) Clearly list your school / college/ uni / professional and technical qualifications and exam results plus details of any training you've had since.

iii) Jobs so far - list them all. Voluntary work and charity work must go on the list - they're a big plus .Work experience is great to have on there - if you can get it.

iv) List your interests past and present. Highlight those in which you participated. Scouts, Sea Cadets or other youth groups are seen as good training. Belonging to a football or other team shows that you are used to being a team player. Social activities show that you are good with people.

This may not seem important to you but it helps build a picture of you

and helps the employer decide whether you could fit into the company.

v) Make sure you draw attention to evidence of your leadership abilities and capacity to exercise responsibility.

This could have been at home or college, in the community, at work or all of these.

Don't forget to mention any awards you may have received.

vi) Set out your ambitions. If it's to find an employer who will give training that will eventually result in a rewarding job and a career then say so.

Remember that staff turnover costs an employer money . If they see that you are looking for the long term that's a plus to most of them.

Make sure you carefully tailor your CV specifically for the company and industry concerned each time you make an application.

When you've finished adapting your CV take a break. Then look at it again, as if you were the employer you are applying to. Are you happy with it? Is it authentic? Do you recognise your real self? Do you deserve an interview? If not , what needs to change? Then DO IT.

Remember too that the Job Centre is always there to help you - these people are professionals with a lot of experience. It's all there for you to use and they will always try to make time for you if you need it.

## 5) FOLLOW UP

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Inevitably there will be disappointment and annoyances along the way.

The first is the inevitability that you will receive few responses to your applications, often not even an acknowledgement.

DO NOT let this get you down.



Instead try to understand why this happens and view the process from an employer's perspective. It will help you if you do.

In the far-off days of full employment, job adverts received few applications and employers often had to re-advertise, sometimes more than once, to fill a vacancy. Every applicant was valuable.

Nowadays, with huge responses for every vacancy, everything has changed and it is a huge and daunting task for an employer to go through the hundreds of applications to find and hire the one successful candidate.

There is rarely thought given to the old-fashioned courtesy of contacting those unsuccessful. The time, money and the need to do so just are not there.

So don't be disappointed and deterred. But do understand and move on to the next one!

What you can very usefully do in this situation is to follow up by phone to the company concerned to ask how your application went. If the answer is a negative one you have the opportunity to ask what went wrong and what you need to do to be successful in the future. Feedback from that can only be a useful plus for you to help you get things right the next time.

The fact of you making the enquiry demonstrates your interest and positive attitude which helps you to stand out from the pack. It could also result in you getting on the waiting list for future vacancies.

If you get a rude or unhelpful response - yes it happens - be unfailingly polite. NEVER EVER 'lose your cool' - it gets you nowhere and does nothing for your self respect.

Believe us, there will be more situations like that as you get older.

Learning to deal with them is part of real life's education.

See it as honing your people skills, learn from the experience - and move on.

## 6) INTERVIEWS

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Before attending an interview it's useful to consider it carefully from an employer's perspective. They are looking for someone who is reliable and will be a valuable asset to their company.

It's not easy to get to know an applicant properly during one interview. It's up to YOU to help them by creating the right impressions - then you will hopefully progress through their recruitment system.

Very importantly, DO YOUR HOMEWORK about the company. All the information you could possibly need is usually all there on their website - so make good use of it!

Find out how long it's been going, what it makes, what it sells or whatever. What the names are of the senior people that run the company. Read about its history - and make notes.

Make sure you arrive on time. To be late implies you are unreliable. So - plan your route and get there early. That will give you time to settle down and go through your notes, refresh your memory and be ready for the interview. It will also give you time to talk to the receptionist or secretary to double-check what kind of interview it will be.

If you are delayed for any reason then phone and let them know. It saves wasting peoples time and may win you brownie points.

Make sure you take all the information requested.

Those of you who have had interviews will probably know what its like to feel nervous.

Do not worry about it . There are very few people who don't feel nervous at interviews so you are absolutely normal – and in good company!

There are ways to lessen nervousness at interview.

Firstly there is absolutely no substitute for knowing that you have done your homework and are fully prepared.

Next -address the unknowns.

Is the interview going to be one-to-one, a group interview, a telephone interview or even Skyped? If you don't know then pick up the phone and find out.

Similarly, what should you wear? – again, phone a secretary or receptionist to find out. People are nearly always willing to help – after all they have been in your position themselves.

When you meet the interviewer(s) greet them properly, shake hands, make eye contact and smile - in other words do what you would normally do when meeting someone for the first time.

Make an effort to remember their name(s) - ask them to repeat if you didn't quite catch them, then you can refer to them by name during the interview. Sounds obvious but names can be so easy to forget and remembering them creates a very good impression.

Answer all questions clearly and coherently.

If you don't know the answer to a question, DO NOT try to bluff your way through. Any experienced interviewer will spot it a mile away. It's far better to be honest and say so - much better than making a fool of yourself.

It's also an opportunity to engage with the interviewer, so ask them to tell you the answer so you know for another day.

The opportunity to engage them in conversation and get them onside is a plus for them as well as for you.

Ask questions yourself to show interest in the job. For example you could ask about training schemes, promotion prospects, company ambitions etc. Leave pay and conditions until last.

Take a crib sheet with you covering the information you've found on the company and the questions you want to ask. Don't forget to take a copy of your CV and the job advert but do ask the interviewer if they mind if you refer to these.

Just explain that you are a bit nervous and don't want to forget things as a result (very probably true!) Don't forget they are human beings and will mostly be sympathetic and understanding – it's in their interests to help overcome any nervousness you have so that they

can find out what you are really like.

Doing your homework really does put across the right message about you and demonstrates your interest in their company.

Never forget that the first interview process is a one-shot affair .There is no second chance - so put in the effort and go properly prepared.

After which it's good luck - properly prepared you probably won't need it!

## AND FINALLY

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The Job Centre will help you all they can. Their role, after all, is to get you off Job Seekers Allowance and into a job.

To do that they sometimes have a discretionary fund which they may be able to use to help pay travel costs to interviews, not just locally but anywhere within reason. Sorry but Malaga in the summer is probably out!

If you don't have the money for the proper clothing for an interview, or need working clothes then talk to them about it. They may be able to help.

Similarly, if you find you need further training then again they may be able to help either with their own courses or by helping with training fees to improve your employability.

They really want to see you on your feet just as we do! So don't be shy - talk to them.

When you do get that job - no matter that it may be at entry level - you're on the first rung of the ladder to independence and a full and proper life.

Its completely achievable. From talking with you today we know that, so all that remains now is for you to show yourself you can do it. You know you can - and so do we!

**GOOD LUCK!**



# Useful Information

Job Centre Plus Bexleyheath:- Lorraine Dobson  
020 8218 4806

Bexley Volunteer Centre:- Lynne Regan  
01322 524882

## WEBSITES

[twitjobsearch.com](http://twitjobsearch.com)

[indeed.co.uk](http://indeed.co.uk)

[getmeacooljob.com](http://getmeacooljob.com)

[universaljobsmatch](http://universaljobsmatch)

Look also for guardian jobs

NOTE - Companies often mention vacancies on Twitter  
so follow them there.

Linkedin is an excellent information source for vacancies -  
and so easy to use.

For apprenticeships look for Companies you are interested in, make a  
point of finding the websites of the different Industry Bodies as they are  
very informative, plus keep a carefull eye on [apprenticeships.gov.uk](http://apprenticeships.gov.uk)



[www.rotaryclubofsidcup.org](http://www.rotaryclubofsidcup.org)