

TOP 10 TIPS

Checklist for filling in the job application form

When you apply for a job with Pendle Council / Liberata, the decision as to whether to invite you for an interview is based solely on the information contained on your completed application form. It is very important that your application form contains all the information we need on which to make a decision. If you have any difficulties in understanding or completing the form, please contact Human Resources who will be happy to help and give advice.

1. Look carefully at the job description and the advertisement. Check that you are able to carry out the duties described and explain how in your application. Refer to actual experience, or your potential to learn.
2. Look at the essential and desirable criteria for the post. These describe the skills, experience, qualifications and abilities which are needed to do the job and both are used to shortlist. However, if some of the skills or experience are essential you must be able to show clearly in your application form how you meet those requirements. It is not enough to say that you meet the criteria – you must explain how you meet the criteria by providing evidence from your previous experience. You may find it more useful to organise your information under the headings used in the essential and desirable section rather than repeating details of your employment history.
3. Always fill in the application form. Do not send a CV unless it is asked for, or as supplementary information to the application form.
4. Read the application form through carefully before you begin to write anything and make a photocopy of the blank form which you can use for practice. It is a good idea to make a draft of what you want to say so that you avoid making a mess of the form. Crossings-out, spelling mistakes and liquid paper do not give a good impression.
5. Fill in all sections of the form, which apply to you as fully as possible. Remember that skills and experience gained outside work such as running a home, organising local community activities or involvement in sports can be valuable examples of skills such as team-working, organisation and communication.
6. Write your answers on the form in a concise, well-organised and positive way and try not to use abbreviations or jargon.
7. If you gained your qualification in another country indicate what level of British qualification they are equivalent to.
8. Always ask referees if they are willing to give a reference for you and make sure that at least one of your referees can comment on your skills at work, home, school or college as well as commenting on your character.
9. You must state on your application form that you can meet and carry out any Special Conditions of Service detailed in the job description or advertisement such as a willingness to work on Bank Holidays or to take part in an out-of-hours rota.
10. When you have completed your form, read it through and check it carefully. Keep a copy of your form and remember to return the form by the closing date. Forms that are returned late will not be eligible for consideration.

If you get an interview

Preparing for the interview

- Find out as much as you can about the work area and organisation you've applied to.
- Try to imagine the sort of questions you might be asked. Practice your possible answer out loud - ask a friend to help.
- The interview is a chance for you to ask questions as well. Write down the questions that you want to ask on a piece of paper so that you don't forget them.
- Don't arrive late - or too early (10 minutes early is OK).
- Do a trial run to the interview building, to time your journey.
- Wear clothes you feel comfortable in and which you think will create a good impression

At the interview

- Expect to be interviewed by more than one person. You may also meet other candidates for the same job.
- Be aware of your body language. Even if you're nervous try not to fidget. Speak clearly and try to keep to good eye contact with the people who are interviewing you.
- Ask for clarification if you're not sure what the question is about.
- Remember that the interviewers are looking for specific knowledge, skills or experience, so give straight answers to the questions. Offer evidence such as documents, newspaper clippings etc.
- Try not to waffle. If you do not know the answer to a question, say so, or ask if the question could be re-phrased. This will make a better impression than pretending you know something when you don't.
- When answering questions, mention everything you feel is relevant such as voluntary work, or hobbies.
- Don't be put off by interviewers taking notes. They are only doing this to keep a record of your interview so that details aren't overlooked.
- Remember that the law protects you from discriminatory questions. For example, questions about domestic responsibilities such as your child care arrangements can be unfair and unlawful. If you think you have been treated unfairly, contact the Equal Opportunities Officer for advice. The Council follows a grievance procedure for candidates who feel they have not been considered fairly.
- Remember that interviewers don't want to catch you out. They just want to find out if you're suitable for the job. **ABOVE ALL** - stay calm, be specific and **THINK POSITIVE!**