

# How to write a successful CV

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# Looking at your Skills and Experience

Being aware of the skills, experience and personal qualities you have to offer a new employer is important.

Most of us take our skills and abilities for granted.

Think about things you can do and do well. We all have them.

You may do things away from work such as hobbies, voluntary work or running your home. What skills and abilities are you using in each of these?

They may also be relevant to a new employer.

## Transferrable Skills

Many of your skills could be used in different jobs and industries. These are called “transferrable skills”. This means they could just as well be used in a different job or company from where you have worked in the past.

For example customer service, operating powered machinery, being organised, computer literate – these are all things needed generally by many companies, across a whole range of different jobs.

## What if I can't think of anything?

Asking for feedback from other people is a big help. They will often notice and appreciate what you do well better than you do yourself. So go to trusted work colleagues, ex-bosses, friends and family and ask for their opinion.

To get you started take a look at the following exercise...

# Exercise – Looking at your Skills and Experience

**Skills** - ✓ the ones which apply most to you

## Manual and Practical

- Cleaning and maintenance of work area
- Intensive cleaning of estates, land and streets
- Clearing litter
- Diagnosing faults & testing equipment
- Handling materials or machinery with speed and accuracy
- Working with tools and machines
- Driving
- Fixing and repairing things
- Making things with your hands
- Being physically fit and doing hard, physical work
- Decorating
- Working outdoors
- Warehouse skills, order picking and storage
- Engineering skills, e.g. soldering, welding, grinding
- Meeting deadlines, e.g. processing 2k magazines per day
- Health and Safety at Work
- Stock taking – counting and recording using barcode scanner

Tick here

## Dealing with people

- Open, friendly and polite
- Communicating clearly
- Comfortable when meeting and dealing with the public and new people
- Has a professional approach to customer service
- Handling queries and complaints
- Team work – helping and supporting others
- Unafraid to tackle others
- Supervising others
- Training other team members
- Confident when using the phone
- Caring about community safety

Tick here

## Problem solving

- Dealing with situations where things have gone wrong
- Working out own answers to problems
- Assessing & reporting situations quickly & accurately
- Suggesting better ways of doing things
- Not afraid to make decisions
- Interested in new things and willing to learn new skills
- Patrolling & being alert to potential crime and environmental crime situations

Tick here

## Planning and organising

- Organised and efficient – has a good routine
- Managing own workload and meeting deadlines
- Organising other people and their tasks
- Prioritising work
- Following clear instructions
- Can be relied on to do what you're expected to do
- Prepared to take action without waiting to be told
- Getting the details right in your work
- Conscientious, taking pride in your work
- Works well under pressure
- Reacting quickly to change

Tick here

## Adaptability

- Learning about new things
- Flexible, can adapt plans if they are not working
- Making the best of a new situation

Tick here

## Information and data

- Working with figures
- Recording or inputting data
- Checking information for accuracy
- Computer skills
- Writing letters or reports
- Able to handle confidential information responsibly
- Dealing with money
- Following written instructions or diagrams

Tick here

**Experience - ✓** the statements below which apply most to you. Or you can write your own.

**What experience have you got?**

Experience of...

- ...working with the public
- ...working outdoors
- ...working for a Local Council
- ...waste or environmental management
- ...working as part of a team
- ...working to tight deadlines
- ...working in an office environment
- ...working without close supervision
- ...working with children
- ...managing a team

Tick here

**How much experience have you had?**

More than 6 months/1 year/2 years etc.

Almost 2/5/10 years etc.

Sound experience of...

Extensive experience of...

Wide variety of experience in...

Specialist knowledge and experience in...

Broad range of experience of...

A background in...

You can mix and match statements together from the 2 lists above and paint an accurate picture of your own experience. For example:

*"1 year experience of working with a Local Council"*

# Your Personal Advert

Start adding the information from page 4 & 5 and to the Skills and Experience boxes in your Personal Advert below.

You will use this later when pulling all your information together for your CV.

## Skills

List your Top 10 skills below;

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

## Experience

List 2/3 areas of experience below;

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Personality

List 6 of your chosen words from page 7;

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

## Brag Board

See page 10 & 11;

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# Personality

Describe yourself in 3 words. Keep them positive!

1.	2.	3.
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

How would others describe you?

<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>

If you are not sure, use the words below to help you.  
*But be sure to pick only words which really describe YOU.*

- |              |               |                  |
|--------------|---------------|------------------|
| Accurate     | Efficient     | Practical        |
| Adaptable    | Enthusiastic  | Productive       |
| Ambitious    | Flexible      | Professional     |
| Careful      | Focused       | Quick to learn   |
| Calm         | Friendly      | Reliable         |
| Caring       | Good listener | Responsible      |
| Challenging  | Hardworking   | Results focused  |
| Cheerful     | Helpful       | Risk taker       |
| Committed    | Honest        | Self disciplined |
| Confident    | Logical       | Service focused  |
| Co-operative | Methodical    | Straightforward  |
| Creative     | Motivated     | Supportive       |
| Decisive     | Open          | Team player      |
| Dependable   | Organised     | Thorough         |
| Determined   | Passionate    | Understanding    |
| Driven       | Patient       | Versatile        |
| Dynamic      | Persistent    | Willing          |

Now add the 6 words which describe you well to the Personality box on page 6 of your Personality Advert.

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## More Useful Personal Profile Phrases

- Good listener, caring and patient
- Strong analytical skills
- Decisive and not afraid to take responsibility
- Well organised with good planning and time management skills
- Excellent communication skills
- Uses initiative to solve problems
- A strong people manager with a supportive approach
- Works well as part of a team
- Always delivers work to a high standard

Well organised individual with extensive experience of working in a fast paced and demanding area. A strong team worker who is adaptable, hardworking and reliable. Able to use own initiative and is quick to learn new skills. Now looking for a new challenge working with the local community.

A trained painter and decorator with a wide variety of experience. Always delivers high quality work. Confident working without close supervision. Builds good relationships with customers and regularly comes up with good ideas to improve the job in hand. Keen to build a long term career in local council.

An experienced manager with a proven track record in leading and motivating her team. Strong focus on driving performance and achieving targets. Combines a caring, supportive approach with the ability to take a firm line when necessary. Sets high standards for herself and the team and communicates expectations clearly.



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## Looking at your Achievements

Now you have a clearer picture of your skills and experience, it is useful to remind yourself of the things you have achieved in life and at work. This will help build your confidence. And will make your CV more interesting to read.

This is your time to brag about yourself and the good things you have done in the past.

Think about your best times, in and out of work.

When have you been proudest or happiest?

Examples could include: learning something new, fixing something, solving a problem, saving time or money, having a great idea, helping someone out, organising something.

You might find it useful to talk about one or more of your greatest achievements with someone who knows you well, to help jog your memory and get all the best points written down. Think about:

- What was the situation?
- What did you do?
- What happened in the end?

### Examples of things to brag about

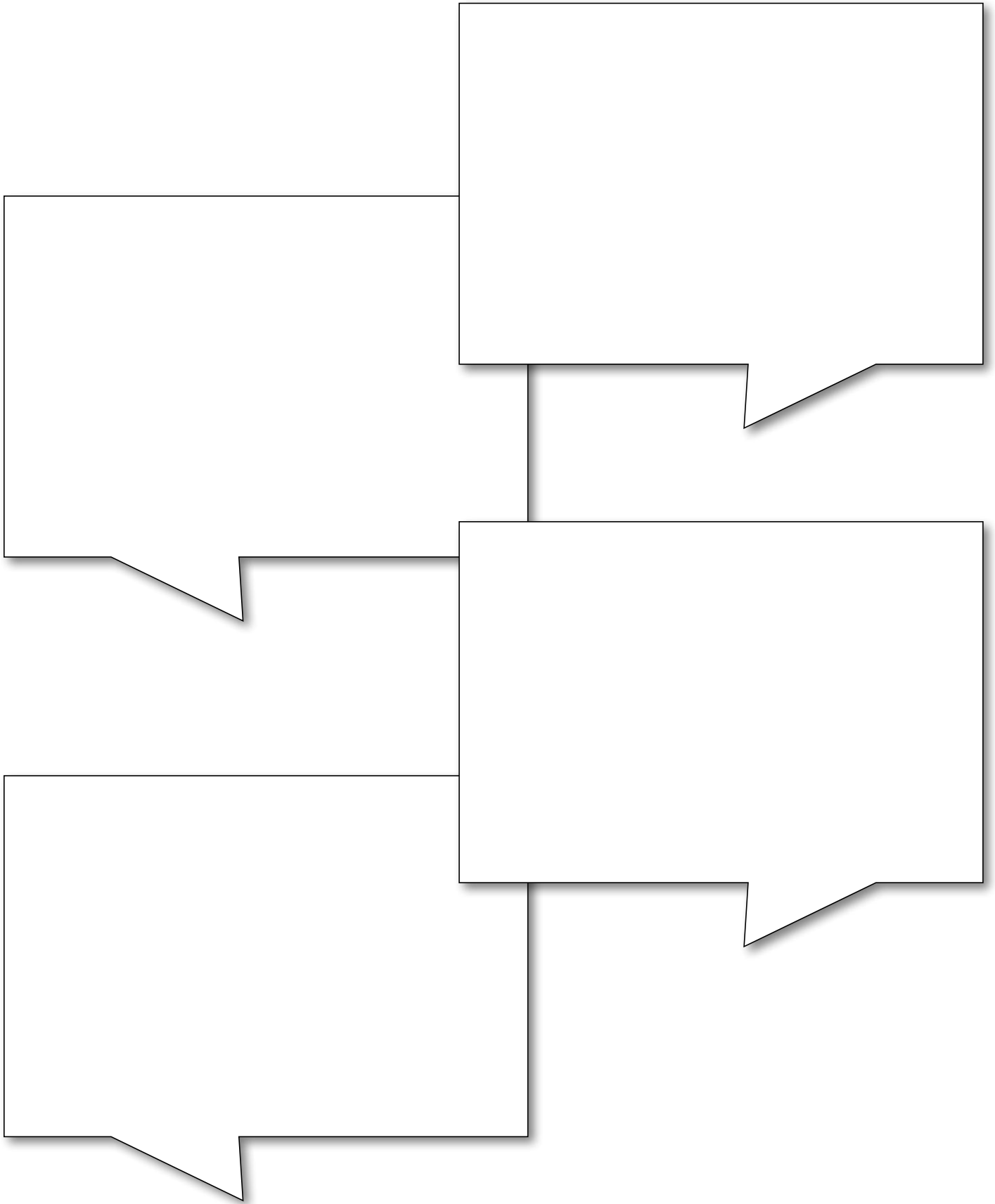
- Won Team Player of the Month for helping out a new member of the team with their training
- Planned and organised an event and got great feedback from everyone who came
- Delivered highest productivity rates with no errors
- Exceeded targets
- Achieved most customer compliments about quality of work
- Saved costs by suggesting a better way of working
- Never late for work or had a day off sick
- Qualifying in a new skill later in life
- School captain: sports, head boy/girl, debate team etc
- Volunteering abroad (VSO) or in your local area – how have you helped?
- Undertaken sponsored fundraising - charity runs; swimming the English Channel, running a marathon race – how much did you raise, what was the money used for?
- A community leader/champion – what have you done to help your local community – new playground facilities, ESOL support, tenant liaison
- Received an award or similar for recognition of your achievement or bravery – you did something heroic, saved someone's life, civic or good citizen award

Keep trying to build up more and more examples to add to your Brag Board on page 10 & 11.

This will really help you when it comes to talking about yourself at an interview.

# My Brag Board

The image shows a template for a 'My Brag Board'. It consists of six rectangular boxes arranged in two columns. The left column has three boxes, and the right column has three boxes. Each box has a small notch on its bottom edge, suggesting they are meant to be cut out and pinned to a board. The boxes are empty, providing space for students to write or draw their accomplishments.



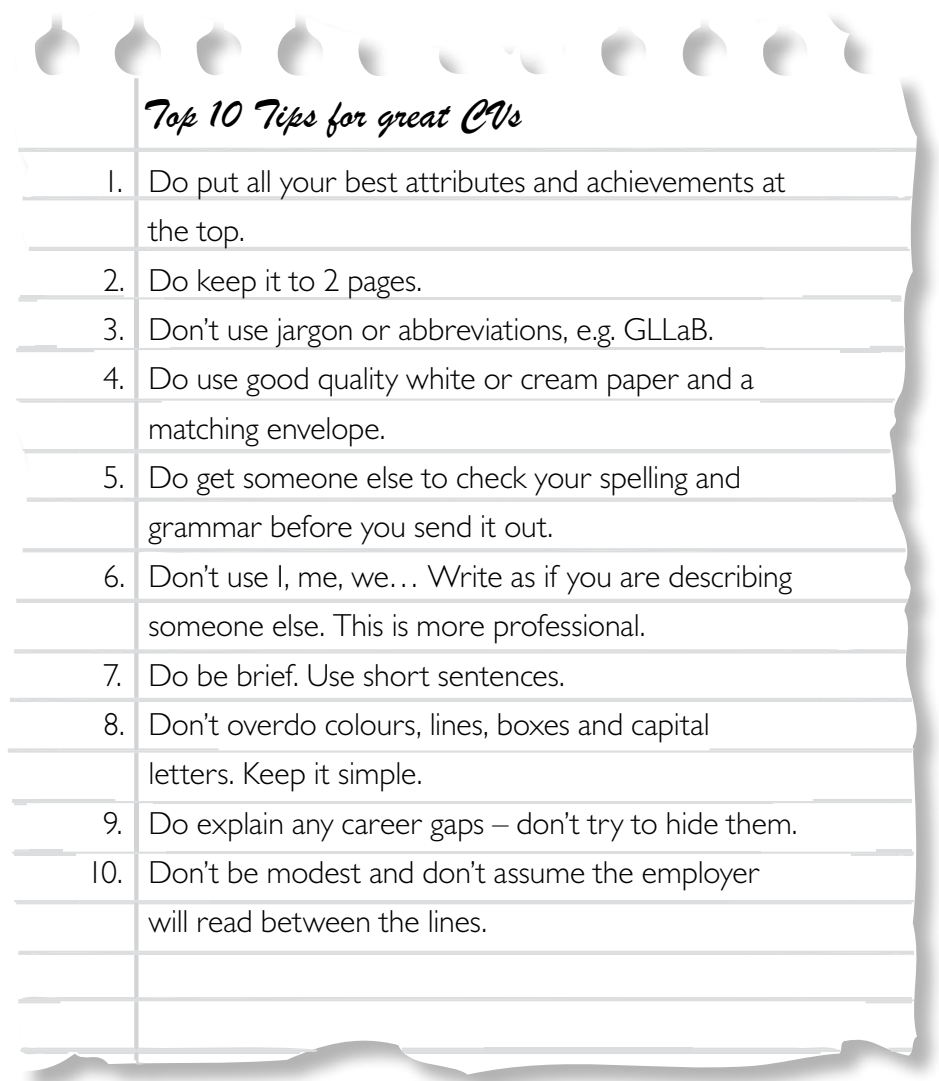
Now transfer all these great achievements to the Brag Box on your Personal Advert on page 6.

# Writing your CV

Now that you have your Personal Advert summed up on page 6, the next step is to make sure you use all this important information when writing your CV.

## Fact or Fiction?

- A CV creates interest in you and gets you an interview. It doesn't get you a job
- A recruiter or employer only spends about 60 seconds reading your CV
- You will be forgiven for making a few spelling mistakes
- Never lie. It will come back to haunt you
- Always match your CV to the job you are applying for



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## CV Action Words

Achieved	Devised	Monitored	Reviewed
Advised	Earned	Motivated	Secured
Analysed	Enabled	Obtained	Selected
Arranged	Encouraged	Operated	Serviced
Assessed	Exceeded	Organised	Set up
Built	Gained	Persuaded	Simplified
Challenged	Identified	Planned	Sold
Communicated	Improved	Prepared	Solved
Completed	Increased	Produced	Started
Controlled	Inspected	Provided	Succeeded
Co-ordinated	Installed	Realised	Supervised
Delivered	Introduced	Recommended	Supplied
Demonstrated	Investigated	Reduced	Tested
Designed	Led	Re-organised	Trained
Developed	Maintained	Researched	Undertook
Directed	Managed	Resolved	Won

### Correct spellings for most commonly misspelt words in CVs and applications

Acquire	Experience	License	Reference
Committed	Independent	Maintenance	Relevant
Conscientious	Judgement Knowledge	Occasional	Schedule
Equipment	Liaison	Receive	Separate
Exceed	Leisure	Recommend Referred	Success

# Putting your CV together

Here is an example of how to start putting your CV together. See page 15 for notes explaining each section.

Your Name	
Address	
Telephone	
Email	

## Personal Profile


## Key Skills


## Career History and Achievements

Job Title, Employer Name and Location	From	To
Job Title, Employer Name and Location	From	To
Job Title, Employer Name and Location	From	To

## Training, Education and Qualifications


## Interests


(There is advice on page 15 to help you fill out this form)

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(This information is to help fill out the form on page 14)



Your contact details, so that the employer can contact you for an interview etc.



This is a 4-5 line summary of your Experience and Personality. The aim is to gain the interest of the employer. Go back to your Personal Advert on page 6 for the words and phrases you came up with about yourself earlier. You could include a sentence about what you are looking to do next.



Include your top 4-5 skills from the Skills box you completed on page 6.



List jobs with the most recent first then work backwards.

- Give a short description of your responsibilities.
- Include items from your Brag Board on page 6.



Give details of all training courses attended. And your highest educational qualification achieved, if applicable. Don't worry if you haven't got exams – most employers are just as interested in what you have learned at work.



Include hobbies, membership of clubs/teams, etc.

# Example CVs - 1

## **Chris Dyne**

Curriculum Vitae

Telephone: 07868 301041  
Email: cdyne@googlemail.com

**Personal Profile:** A highly organised Works Operative with extensive experience in the manufacturing industry. A strong team worker who is adaptable, hardworking and reliable. Has a good understanding of health and safety regulations and a willingness to follow instructions and undertake practical and routine tasks. Now looking for a fresh challenge in customer service.

**Key Skills:** Working well as part of a team or alone using own initiative.  
Willingness to learn new skills and different ways of working.  
Ability to work well under pressure, paying attention to detail.  
Physically fit.

### **Career History and Achievements:**

Machine Operator,  
Smith and Jones Co. Ltd  
1998 to present

Responsible for operating powered equipment and handling materials with speed and care. Awarded Team Player of the Month for 0% Error Rates in production.  
Testing equipment, diagnosing faults and repairing.  
This resulted in cost savings of £10k in the last 2 years.  
Control of emergency keys and equipment.  
Following health and safety regulations at all times.  
Often asked to train new team workers.

Security Officer,  
Angelsea Security Co. Ltd  
1990 to 1998

Control entry in and out by checking badges and IDs and record on a computer.  
Control and operation CCTV rooms and electronic fire alarm panels in large building and stores.  
Controlling and delivering cash between shops and Banks.  
Internal and external patrolling of government offices and other buildings with normal or electronic fences.

**Education and Training:** Fire Safety Course.  
Security Industry Training board, SIA licence held.  
Educated at South Norwood School to GCSE standard.

**Interests:** Active member of Woolwich Mixed Hockey Team.



## Example CVs - 2

### **Frederick Knowles**

Curriculum Vitae

Telephone: 07883 167442  
Email: woodstock@hotmail.co.uk

Profile: Highly skilled and quality driven, practical worker with extensive experience in the commercial, industrial and domestic plumbing trade. Flexible, reliable and hardworking. Excellent planning and organisation skills and a good team player. Also has ability to work on his own. Always open, friendly and polite with others.

Key Skills: Over 10 years knowledge and expertise in plumbing.  
Health and safety aware regarding self, team mates and the public.  
Committed and focused to delivering work to a high standard.  
Managing own workload and meeting deadlines.  
Full clean driving licence held.

#### Career History and Achievements:

Plumber,  
Mayfield Hospital  
2006-2009

This was a specific major refurbishment project undertaken as a plumbing sub-contractor.  
Responsible for installation (from drawings) of new plumbing to wards and plant rooms.  
A high standard of work was delivered. Recognition received from his Foreman as the quality standard benchmark for other workers to meet.

Plumber,  
Monaco Builders  
2002-2006

Undertook both domestic and commercial work.  
Installed new plumbing systems. Work received good customer feedback.  
Control and operation CCTV rooms and electronic fire alarm panels.  
Work undertaken on loft conversions.

Plumber,  
Steel and Co Builders  
1999-2002

Domestic plumbing work as part of a team and alongside other tradesmen.  
Work involved the installation of new kitchens and bathrooms.  
for a substantial property letting portfolio.  
Regularly met tight deadlines set.

Education, Training  
and Qualifications:

CSCS Health and Safety Cardholder.  
2 years of apprenticeship – fitter and welder.

Interests:

Coaching local youth football team.  
Gym and running.  
Completed the London Marathon in 2004.

# Covering Letters

When applying for a job using your CV, it is usual to include a covering letter.

Your covering letter is a chance to make a positive first impression on the employer.

The letter supports your CV. It should encourage the employer to want to read your CV.

You don't need to repeat all the information contained in your CV. You do need to draw the reader's attention to the most relevant areas which match what they are looking for.

Remember this is what job searching is all about. You are matching your skills, achievements and experience to what the employer wants.

## *Top 10 Tips for great Covering Letters*

1. Do address your letter to a named contact. If you don't know the name, phone the company to find out first.
2. Do include a heading at the start of the letter stating the job you are applying for and any reference number quoted in the job advert.
3. Do keep it short. And to the point. No more than 1 page.
4. Firstly say WHY you are writing. Mention the job details and where you saw the advert.
5. Secondly tell them WHAT you offer. Match your strengths and experience to their needs. Use some of the language they have used to show you are on their wavelength.
6. Thirdly add a polite finish. Show your enthusiasm for the job and say you would welcome the opportunity for an interview.
7. Do try to include one of your achievements which links to the job requirement.
8. Do sign off your letter with "Yours sincerely" if you address it to a named person. If you write to "Sir/Madam", use "Yours faithfully".
9. Do use good quality paper which matches your CV.
10. Do check for spelling and grammar or ask a friend to do this for you.

## Example Covering Letter in Reply to an Advert

Mr Kevin Hackett  
26 Burr ridge Place  
Plumstead  
London SE18 7BG  
0208 331 0052

1st March 2010

Miss V Swain  
Neighbourhood Warden Co-ordinator  
The Glades  
Plumstead  
London SE18 5FH

Dear Miss Swain,

Re: Vacancy: Neighbourhood Warden, Job Reference W008.

I am writing to apply for the position of Neighbourhood Warden advertised in the NewShopper on 27th February 2010. This is of particular interest to me as a local resident with a genuine concern for my local community.

Please find enclosed a copy of my CV, the most relevant areas of which are:

1 year previous experience as a Street Warden for the Local Council.

Recently successfully set up a sponsored walk for a local charity, built good relationship with local youths, persuading 50 boys and girls to take part in the event.

Actively involved for the past 5 years as a Coach/Manager with Plumstead Under 15 Football Team.

I believe that my experience and skills are a close match to what you are looking for. I would be pleased to have the opportunity to discuss my CV further with you. I can be available at any time for an interview. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

*Kevin Hackett*

K Hackett

Enclosure: CV

**GLLaB**

Old Library  
Calderwood Street  
Woolwich  
London SE18 6QW

Tel: 020 8921 2440  
[www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/GLLaB](http://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/GLLaB)

