

## Guidance for candidates

We want everyone to have a fair opportunity to show us what they can do. This guide aims to help you understand what we're looking for and how to put together a strong application that shows off your strengths.

### **Start with the role**

Before applying, take time to read the job description and person specification carefully.

This will help you decide if the role is right for you and give you a clear sense of what we're looking for and what will be assessed during shortlisting.

Our shortlisting is based entirely on what you include in your CV and your answers to any application questions. We won't make assumptions about your experience, so it's important that you clearly show how you meet the criteria.

### **How to answer the application question**

For each point in the person specification, explain how you meet it using examples from your experience. This could include paid work, volunteering, education, or life experience.

Stronger applications:

- Give specific examples
- Show what you did
- Explain the outcome or impact

For example:

Instead of saying "*I have strong project management skills*", tell us:

- what the project was
- what your role was
- what you achieved

This helps us understand your capability in a meaningful way.

### **Drawing on all your experience**

You don't need to have done the role before to demonstrate the skills.

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Think broadly about your experience, including:

- Education or training
- Volunteering or community involvement
- Caring responsibilities or home life
- Hobbies, clubs or group activities

For example:

- Managing a household can demonstrate organisation and budgeting
- Being part of a group can demonstrate teamwork and communication
- Supervising volunteers can demonstrate leadership

### Using AI in your application

AI tools like ChatGPT can be really useful during your job search. They can help you write applications, enhance your CV, and even prepare for interviews.

We think it's a great way of helping people at any stage of their career to find inspiration and refine their language. We also recognise how valuable this support can be for candidates who might find the job search difficult, or who face additional barriers during recruitment processes.

Even though it has some great benefits, it can also get in the way of your application being successful.

So, if you do choose to use AI in your application, we have highlighted some of the common pitfalls that could impact your success, as well as some important things to think about relating to intellectual property and bias, so that you can use AI effectively while making sure your strengths can shine.

### Tips for Using AI in your application

1. Personalise  
While AI can help you create a good 'first draft', plan or structure, it's essential to personalise your application. Tailor the content to reflect your experiences, skills, and personality. It's an opportunity to tell us how your values align with ours, and what you bring that's unique.
2. Proofread  
AI-generated text can sometimes include irrelevant phrases, random emojis, or even inaccurate information. Always proofread and edit the content to make sure it's saying what you want it to. If you can, ask someone else to proofread it for you too.
3. Avoid copy and paste  
Do not copy and paste AI-generated answers directly into your application. Use the content as a starting point or for inspiration, but make it your own.

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### 4. Check for repetition

Imagine that several candidates for the same role are all uploading the same job description into the same AI tool. It's highly unlikely that you'll get a unique response. This can result in several candidates submitting the exact same answers. Avoid direct copying and try to make sure that your answers are unique to you.

### 5. Delete extra text

Sometimes, AI responses include extra text like "Sure, here is an answer you can use." Make sure to remove any prompts that might accidentally get included.

## Watch out for...

- **Intellectual property:** AI tools generate content based on vast amounts of data, which can sometimes include copyrighted material. Ensure your application content is original and does not infringe on any intellectual property rights. You should also be careful about what you share with AI tools, as it could be used to generate responses for others.
- **Bias in AI:** AI systems can reflect biases present in the data they were trained on, and are therefore known to reflect biases in society. Be critical of generated content, especially when it relates to lived experience. Take the time to carry out extra research to 'test' any responses.
- **Authenticity:** Your application is your 'shop window'. It's the first impression a recruiter will have of you, and an important opportunity to demonstrate your uniqueness and your personality. Relying too much on AI can make your application feel impersonal. Help us get to know you, not just your prompt-writing skills!

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We look forward to reading your application and learning about the unique strengths you'll bring to our team!

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