

# Applying for your first Social Work role: What works and the pitfalls to avoid

**Andrew Reece**

Professional Officer, BASW England

[andrew.reece@basw.co.uk](mailto:andrew.reece@basw.co.uk)

[england@basw.co.uk](mailto:england@basw.co.uk)

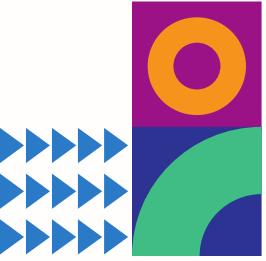
[www.basw.co.uk](http://www.basw.co.uk)

[BASW-UK on LinkedIn](#)

**BASW**  
**England**

The professional association for  
social work and social workers





# This workshop aims to:



Help you understand the different contexts of social work & how to tailor your application

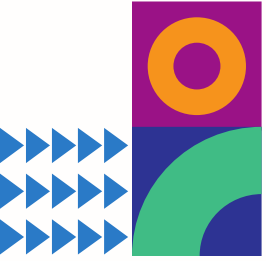


Think about what works and the pitfalls of job applications to avoid



Get you 'application ready' and enable you to create a successful job application





# Tip: Understand the work context



## Type of Employer:



Voluntary or private sector, Local Authority, NHS or Social Work agency



## Type of Contract



Permanent, temporary or locum

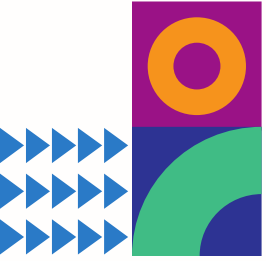


## Method of Application



CV and/or apply directly





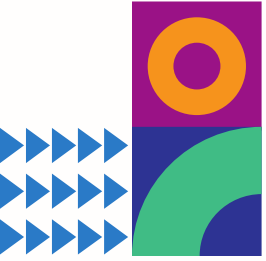
# Tip: Read the Person Specification

Job Descriptions (JD) describe the **scope** of the role

Person Specifications (PS) describe the **qualities, skills, experience and knowledge** required to do the job

To get an interview your application must **evidence** that you meet **all** elements of the Person Specification





## Tip: Brush up on the basics of Social Work practice

Make sure you understand:

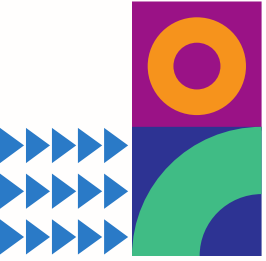
- legislation

- models of intervention

- statutory guidance

Needed for both application and interview.

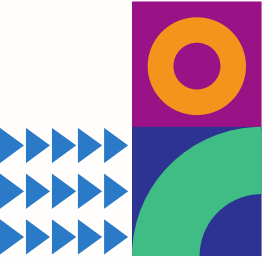




# Tips: NHS or Local Authority applications

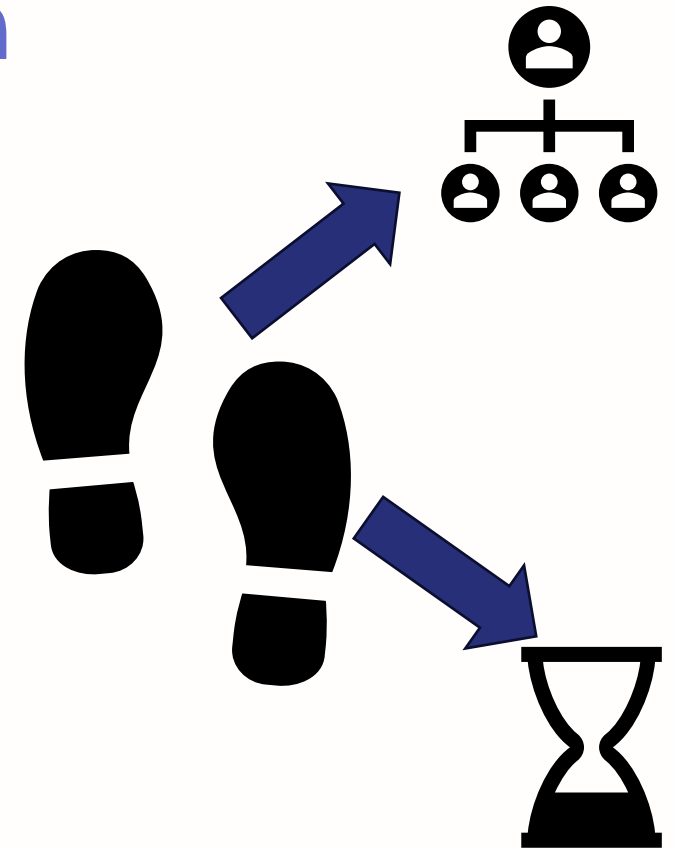
- Is the LA is using a recruitment platform: **register for alerts**
- Create an NHS account and profile: **register for alerts**
- NHS jobs may use different terminology for job titles
- Filter down to **Band 5** on NHS jobs (entry level Social Work)
- Are you looking in the correct place?
  - Models vary by area, the same job might have an NHS, LA or VCS employer.

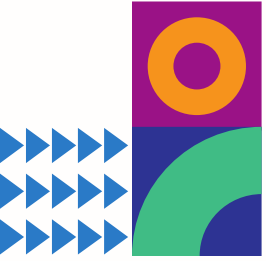




# Tips: Writing your application

- Who is reading your application?
- What are they looking for?
- How do you stand out?
- What might put them off?



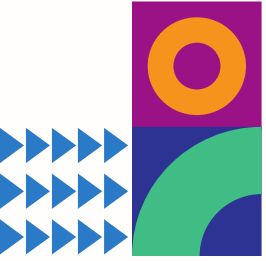


# Tips: Writing your application

- Copy and pasting from previous applications?
  - ensure it speaks specifically to this application (check carefully!!)
- Provide clear evidence for every area in the Person Spec
  - Keep it relevant and succinct
  - Use examples
  - Be creative in evidencing how you meet criteria
    - reference transferrable skills
    - maximise your placement experience
- Spell and grammar check (**twice!**)



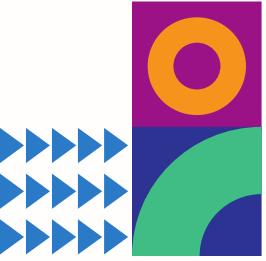




# Tips: Update your CV

- Stick to the same font and format throughout.
- **Bullet points** are perfect.
- Logical and **chronological** (reverse chronology/most recent first).
- Make the information **succinct** and accessible.
- **Relevant** Qualifications
- Include relevant and **transferable** experience.
- Celebrate **relevant** achievements
- Keep it **short**: no waffle





# Pitfalls: Myth busting CVs

**Myth: A CV shouldn't be longer than 1 page**

**Busted – Not necessarily , but don't overdo it: valuable information only- 2 pages is perfect**

**Myth: Include everything you have ever done**

**Busted – Only Relevance is key!**

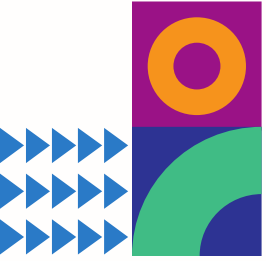
**Myth: Only paid and formal employment on your CV**

**Busted – You can include projects, summer jobs, volunteer work, any valuable work**

**Myth: Fancy styling and fonts make you stand out**

**Busted - Keep it professional**





# Tips: Interview technique

Before

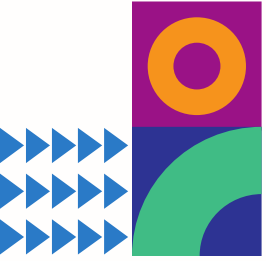
- **Pen and paper:** write down the questions (thinking time)
- **Bottle of water** (dry throat/thinking time)
- **Dress for success** (smart but not CEO)

(Online) Choose your background and test your tech

During

- 5 key things about you
- Have prepared examples for scenario questions
- Intelligent follow up question





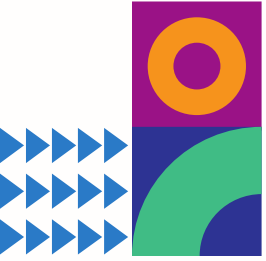
# Tips: Interview technique.

## Prepare for Scenario Questions

- Tell us about a time when ....
- Give an example of .....

Professional or technical expertise	People skills	Resilience	Values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of law</li> <li>• Models of intervention</li> <li>• Conflict (with citizens)</li> <li>• Use of professional power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict (in team)</li> <li>• Team-work</li> <li>• Working with partners</li> <li>• Empathy: 'in my shoes'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overcoming a challenge</li> <li>• Using initiative</li> <li>• Self-care/safety</li> <li>• Stress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-production</li> <li>• Empowering</li> <li>• Anti-racism</li> <li>• Disproportionality</li> </ul>
<b>STAR</b> (structuring your answer)			
Situation	Task	Action	Result





# Useful links

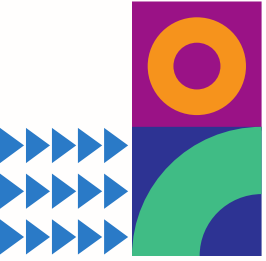
## Preparing your applications and interview

- [Five top tips for acing online interviews - BBC Bitesize](#)
- <https://www.basw.co.uk/resources/how-get-your-first-job-social-work>
- <https://www.basw.co.uk/session-1-workshop-getting-your-first-job-social-work>
- <https://www.basw.co.uk/one-foot-door-getting-your-first-job-social-work>
- [How To Use the STAR Interview Technique in Competency-Based Interviews | Indeed.com UK](#)

## Updating your CV

- <https://www.charityjob.co.uk/careeradvice/is-your-cv-in-job-winning-shape/>





# Useful links

## Time Management

- [The Eisenhower Matrix: Introduction & 3-Minute Video Tutorial](#)
- [What Is Eat the Frog? A Dead Simple System for Productivity Minimalists \(todoist.com\)](#)

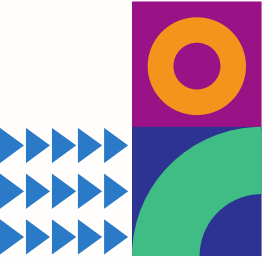
## Sources of information on current legislation/practice

- [Social work learning and development | www.basw.co.uk](#) (most content is members only)
- [Social Care Institute for Excellence \(SCIE\)](#)
- [Learning resources & events on assessment \(researchinpractice.org.uk\)](#)
- [Public Law Information Hub | 39 Essex Chambers](#) (search by key word)

## Your ASYE

- [Starting out in Social Work | Community Care 2025](#)





# Websites for job hunting

London Local Authorities:

- [London Social Work for Children](#)
- [Local Gov Jobs](#)

Greater Manchester Local Authorities:

[Greater - Jobs](#)

West Midlands Local Authorities:

[WM Jobs](#)

North-East Local Authorities:

[North East Jobs](#)

NHS Jobs:

[Apply on NHS Jobs](#)

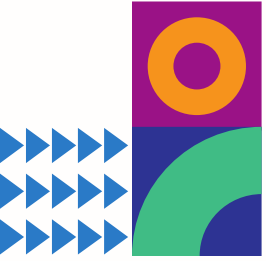
Public Sector Jobs:

[Jobs Go Public](#)

Charities:

[CharityJob](#)





# Websites for job hunting

## Scotland

<https://myjobscotland.gov.uk/> - all Local Authority Jobs

<https://goodmoves.org/> - Voluntary and Community Sector

## Wales

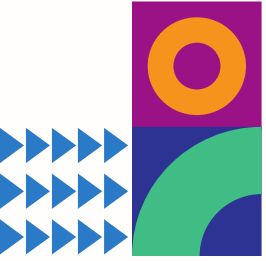
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# Questions?

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