



**Guide to
applying
for jobs**



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The application form

We understand our application forms can appear to be quite complex. We are committed to fairness and we have very clear criteria on which we base our recruitment of people. Therefore, we need to allow people the opportunity to provide as much information relating to the selection criteria as possible. This way, everyone's application is treated fairly and we can make the best and most informed decision.

- The application form is often the only information we have on a candidate when short listing for interview. It is very important that you take the opportunity to complete your form as fully and concisely as possible, based on the information you have been given about the vacancy.
- Ideally, you should complete your application electronically. This will make it easier for you to check and amend if necessary.
- You must complete the full job title and the vacancy reference for the job you are applying for, taken from the job advertisement or the front of the application pack.
- You should not ignore any part of the form

Disclosing information

Failure to disclose information on a criminal record which is not considered 'spent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 may disqualify an applicant from appointment or result in summary dismissal if this discrepancy comes to light.

The Job Profile will state if a Disclosure is required. This will check criminal records for information on any convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings held on the Police National Computer and on local Police records. The Disclosure will also include information from lists held by the Department of Health and the Department for Education and Skills of those considered unsuitable for working with children or vulnerable adults.

All information on criminal records provided both by the applicant and within the Disclosure will be used, stored and disposed of in confidence and in line with Criminal Records Bureau Code of Practice on Disclosure Information.

Relevant skills, knowledge and experience

In your application pack you will have a Job Profile. You should read this document carefully as the information will help you to decide if you want to apply for the job.

This is the most important part of your application form as it gives you the opportunity to give examples of why you think you can do the job. Use only relevant examples and explain how these meet each requirement in the Job Profile. Your selection for interview will depend on this.

- Please give examples for each competency using each competency as a heading.
- Your examples should show how you meet, or what you have done to meet the criteria. Provide evidence of past performance (i.e. how you have carried out tasks/achieved results) which will provide evidence of your ability to succeed in the new job. Be specific about your skills and specify your own responsibilities and not those of others.
- Be aware of the wording of the criteria. It will help you assess what to write on your application form as well as what will be required of you in the role.
- If you cannot meet the required criteria, then you should reconsider applying for the role. The Job Profile will put into context the required skills and knowledge by

listing the duties of the role. You can assess from this whether it is the right job for you.

How to demonstrate you meet the criteria

Technical competencies / specific skills and knowledge

The Job Profile will include criteria that will ask applicants to demonstrate that they are able to carry out duties specific to the role. For example:

- The ability to receive, sort and distribute mail
- The ability to maintain accurate records and produce simple reports
- The ability to prepare and photocopy documents

Ensure you address each part of the criteria i.e. *receiving mail* AND *sorting mail* AND *distributing mail*. (This leaves nothing to the managers' imagination – if you do not state it than the manager will have to assume that you are not able to do it!)

Example

Communication Skills

This will be assessed through the examples given but also the presentation of the form itself.

Remember to check your spelling, grammar and wording before handing in the application form.

Examples could include:

- Writing letters
- Writing emails
- Communicating with customers
- Resolving a dispute
- Negotiating
- Communicating with a variety of people

Communication is important to most roles and therefore, attention should be paid to the Job Profile in terms of which communication skills will be required in the role.

Examples

Criteria: 'Ability to communicate clearly both orally and in writing.'

Answer 1: 'I have good communication skills and relate well to others.'

- * **This answer does not address exactly what is required and there are no examples.**

Answer 2: 'Whilst working at X it was part of my role to cover some hours on reception. Here, I gained a lot of experience of communicating verbally with colleagues and customers. I would always be polite and professional.

Once I had a caller who was verbally abusive to me. I remained polite to him throughout and asked him to calm down. I explained to him that it was our company policy to terminate all abusive calls. The caller calmed down and then I attempted to resolve his problem.

I have also been required to send letters, emails and faxes as part of my role at X. When using such forms of communication I would always check my spelling and grammar was accurate and that the items were addressed properly.

- ✓ **This answer illustrates that the applicant understands what the requirements of the job will be and shows that they will be able to meet those requirements.**

Final checks

- Every section of the application form has been completed.
- Check for spelling, punctuation, grammar and wording.
- The Fairness in Employment Monitoring form has been completed.
- Sign and date the form if you are submitting a paper copy

Return your completed application to hello@boltonathome.org.uk or by hand delivery to:

HR Hub
Bolton at Home
98 Waters Meeting Road
The Valley
Bolton
BL1 8SW

What happens next?

Once the closing date has passed, all the applications will be sorted and then assessed by the recruitment panel. The application forms are assessed to see how closely the applicants meet the criteria of the Job Profile.

Those applicants, who meet the desired competencies within the Job Profile and have the most relevant experience, will be invited for interview. Successful applicants will be notified by post or email that they have been invited for an interview and we aim to give at least 7 days' notice. The invitation will include: the date, time, venue, directions and the interviewers' names. You will also be notified if there will be an assessment and if so, what this will entail. You should confirm your intention to attend the interview as soon as possible.

Interviews / assessment

Preparation

Preparation is vital but needn't be difficult. There should be no real surprises when it comes to the questions you will be asked during the interview.

When preparing for answering questions at the interview, you should refer back to the criteria within the Job Profile. The questions asked will be based on these and how they will apply in the role.

These are a few sample questions that you could use to prepare and practice. It is unlikely that you will get the same questions in the interview, but these questions are worded as Bolton at Home interview questions would be.

Work Related

- Can you please give the panel a brief outline of your work background?
- Can you briefly explain your experiences / knowledge of.....?
- Is there a particular project / initiative you would like to expand on?

I.T Related

- Briefly explain your experience of using I.T application software.
- Could you outline your experiences of using Information Technology?
- Can you tell us about instances where you have used Information Technology to input and retrieve information?

Communication Related

- In your role, you will be required to work in a team. What do you think enables a team of people to work together successfully?
- In your role you will be required to effectively communicate with people both internal and external of the department. What do you think makes good communication?
- Can you give us an example of when you communicated effectively?

Customer Focus Related

- Bolton at Home has a 'Customer Focus Policy' that describes how are customers (including internal customers and colleagues) should expect to be treated. How would you deal with a less than patient colleague from another section who wants information urgently for a report? Unfortunately you may not be able to meet this person's deadline because of other work commitments.
- Can you give the panel an example of when you have gone 'above and beyond' to help a customer?
- How do you feel that the Customer Focus Policy will apply to you in this role?

Valuing Diversity Related

- Bolton at Home is committed to equality and diversity of its customers and communities. What do you understand by the term 'equality and diversity'?

Training and Development Related

- Bolton at Home is committed to the development of its employees. If you were successful in your application for this post, what would you see as your immediate development needs?
- How would you meet your developmental needs if formal training wasn't available?

A good answer

- Outline your understanding
- Provide at least one example which is relevant and demonstrates your skills
- Talk about what you learnt from the process
- Think about what you're saying with your body language
- Where appropriate, try to include information which demonstrates customer focus and valuing diversity
- Ask the panel if they would like more information

Things to think about before the interview

First impressions

Think about what you are intending to wear. A good general guideline is to look smart and coordinated. You should avoid any bold statements with your dress. Presentation is important to our customers and therefore, to us. Other tips are to be well groomed, not to wear too much make-up and to wear items in which you will be comfortable.

Asking questions

You will be given time at the end of the interview to ask the panel questions. These could include questions about the role or training provided. The purpose is to allow you to gather further information which will help you decide if the role is right for you.

Assessment

You may be required to complete an assessment as part of the interview process. If this is the case, this will usually occur just before or after the interview. When you receive the letter inviting you for interview, it will identify if there is to be an assessment and if so, what this will entail. Examples of assessment include: group exercise, role play, presentation, report writing, personality questionnaire, typing tests and software tests such as Word or Excel.

Key points

Remember to:

- Analyse the job – what are they looking for?
- Gather all the relevant information
- Try to think of possible questions
- Review the application form and answers
- Prepare for any tests
- Confirm attendance
- Know where to go and when
- Be 5-10 minutes early
- Be enthusiastic
- Be positive – even if things go a bit wrong
- Be conscious of what you say and how you say it
- Examples, examples, examples!
- Be conscious of your non-verbal communication
- Talk to everyone on the panel; don't direct all your answers at one interviewer.
- Don't interrupt the panel (they may interrupt you)
- Prepare questions to ask at the end

After the interview

At Bolton at Home we will offer feedback regarding the interview to any candidate who asks.

When preparing for the next interview, you should incorporate your previous responses and feedback into your preparation time. Often there are only one or two points separating the successful candidate from the runner up and what is learnt from the process can make all the difference.