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CV Writing in the Digital Age

A Simple Guide for Job Seekers



Cheshire East Council

Cheshire West and Chester

WARRINGTON Borough Council

HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

CONNECTING CHESHIRE

A Clear CV Helps You Stand Out

A well-presented CV helps employers find important information quickly. Many employers now use digital recruitment systems, so your CV needs to be clear, professional and easy to read.

Your CV may be:

- Read on a computer, tablet or mobile phone
- Scanned by recruitment software
- Viewed by hiring managers for only a short time

A well-formatted CV is easier to read and creates a positive first impression.

Use a Professional Font such as:

- Arial
- Calibri
- Aptos
- Verdana

Font size:

- Headings: 12 to 14 pt
- Main text: 10 to 12 pt

Avoid decorative or fancy fonts.

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Layout Tips

Use Clear Headings

- Organise your CV using headings such as:
- Personal Details
- Personal Profile
- Skills
- Employment History
- Education and Qualifications
- Training and Certifications
- References

Clear headings make it easier for employers to find information. Its advisable to only include information that is relevant to the role.

Keep the Layout Clean

Do:

- Use bullet points
- Leave space between sections
- Align text neatly
- Use consistent formatting throughout

Don't:

- Use multiple colours
- Add unnecessary graphics or images
- Use text boxes where possible
- Use complex page designs

Simple layouts work best with digital recruitment systems.

The recommended left is 1 to 2 pages for most people and up to 3 pages for those with extensive experience.

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Saving your CV

Use a professional file name such as:
- John_Smith_CV.pdf

Avoid names such as:
- CV Final New Version.pdf
- My CV Updated Again.pdf

When sending your CV electronically, save as a PDF. This helps ensure the formatting remains the same when opened on different devices. Only use another format type, like a word document, if the employer specifically asks for one.

Good CV vs Bad CV

Good CV
- Clear headings
- Easy-to-read font
- Consistent formatting
- Uses bullet points
- Focuses on achievements and outcomes
- Tailored to the role

Bad CV
- Different fonts and colours
- Large blocks of text
- Spelling mistakes
- Unexplained acronyms
- Includes irrelevant information
- Difficult to scan quickly

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Making It Easy for Recruitment Software

Many employers use Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) to scan CVs. To help your CV pass these checks use:

- Keywords from the job description
- Standard headings
- Simple formatting
- Spell job titles correctly

Avoid:

- Headers and footers for important information
- Images containing text
- Tables with critical information
- Unusual symbols or graphics

Writing Strong Bullet Points

Instead of writing that you are "responsible for filing", reword the statement to something like:

"Accountable for maintaining electronic and paper filing systems, ensuring records remained accurate and up to date.
Employers often prefer examples that demonstrate ownership and results rather than simply listing responsibilities."

Instead of "responsible for customer enquiries" try:

"Accountable for resolving customer enquiries and maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction."

You may want to start bullet points with verbs such as, managed, supported, organised, or delivered.

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Avoid Industry Jargon and Acronyms

If you are changing careers, industries or sectors, remember that recruiters may not understand terms that are common in your current role.

Instead of:
"Managed SLA compliance."
Try:
"Monitored and ensured agreed service standards were met."

If you need to use an acronym, spell out it out the first time you are use.

Where possible, use plain English and focus on skills that can transfer to different roles. This helps employers quickly understand your experience, regardless of their industry background.

Check Your Contact Details

Always include:

- Full name
- Telephone number
- Professional email address
- Town or city (full address is not usually required)

Avoid email addresses that seem unprofessional. See the below example:

- Firstname.Surname@email.com
- John.Smith@email.com

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Making a Positive First Impression

While many applications are submitted online, there may be opportunities to introduce yourself in person. Sometimes you may be able to visit local employers and ask about vacancies, and offer the potential employer a copy of your CV.

This gives you an opportunity to introduce yourself professionally. It's important that while doing so, you maintain good eye contact and are polite and confident.

For some roles, meeting a hiring manager in person can help you make a memorable first impression and demonstrate enthusiasm for the position.

Please note that some organisations use formal recruitment processes and may only accept applications through their online systems. Always follow the employer's application instructions.

Thinking About Digital First Impressions

Employers may search for candidates online. Before applying, you should ensure public information is professional and check that your CV matches up to any online work profiles.

It might be helpful to put your social medial profiles on private, as employers may view your public profiles and this could impact their first impression of you.

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Proofread Before Sending

Check for:

- Spelling mistakes
- Grammar mistakes
- Missing dates
- Inconsistent formatting
- Incorrect contact details

It's good to have another set of eyes look over your CV, so, if possible, ask a friend, family member or adviser to review it.

Top 5 CV Tips

- Use a simple, professional font.
- Focus on achievements and accountability, not just responsibilities.
- Avoid jargon and unexplained acronyms.
- Keep formatting consistent throughout.
- Save as a PDF and proofread carefully.

Need more CV help?

Please contact us if you need help

Website: www.digital-cheshire.co.uk

Email: digitalcheshire@cheshireeast.gov.uk

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