

RETHINKING WORK & RETIREMENT

A new look at working in later life and managing your transition into and through retirement

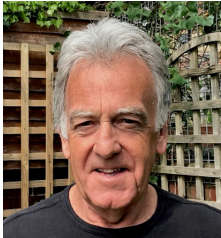
This programme has been produced by Work & Learning Opportunities, a not-for-profit community interest company formed ten years' ago, with funding from the National Lottery Community Fund.

Retirement is no longer a fixed point when people simply stop working. Demographic change means that, despite the Covid-19 crisis, older people make up a large proportion of the workforce and they do have skills that employers need. This can be a time of positive transition when you could:

- Change direction and try something new, full-time or part-time
- Reduce your commitment in your present job
- Combine paid and voluntary work
- Consider self-employment

www.workandlearning.co.uk

About us



Chris Baker – chrisbaker@workandlearning.co.uk – 07572 077340

Chris has been a director of WLO for five years. He is committed to the idea of lifelong learning which has been his primary motive for co-developing our programmes to enable older people to think differently about their lives. He has over 35 years' experience in higher education with a particular focus on adult learning.

Five years' ago he retired from full-time work at Brighton University where he was the Director of Economic and Social Engagement involved in developing ways to enable a deeper engagement with external communities at a local, national and international level. His in-depth knowledge of open and distance learning comes from working at The Open University for twenty years, latterly as the Director of Widening Participation. He continues to deliver programmes in entrepreneurial leadership for universities.

Chris is based in Hove, Sussex, where he combines his work as a Director of Work & Learning Opportunities with voluntary work, making time for exercise, learning new things and spending time with his family that now includes 7 grandchildren.

Maureen Haywood – maureenhaywood@workandlearning.co.uk – 07771 623973



Maureen is a founder director of Work & Learning Opportunities which was formed in 2010 after her retirement from full-time work at the University of Brighton where she had focused on lifelong learning and advice and guidance for both young people and adults.

As well as many years' experience as a College and University Lecturer, she has specialised in supporting people in their work, career and education decisions. Having worked for The Open University she has designed learning materials and delivered advice and support in different ways, both face-to-face and at a distance. Since creating Work & Learning Opportunities, Maureen has added to her knowledge by developing strategies that enable people to develop their employability skills as they move between education and employment throughout their working lives.

Maureen combines being a Director of WLO with voluntary work in her local community, indulging her interest in Art History, covering up her grey hairs, and spending time with her extended family and grandchildren.

WELCOME TO RETHINKING WORK & RETIREMENT

Introduction

Welcome to this unique new programme which has been created to support people who already have many years of work experience under their belts. It's been specifically designed with you in mind if you're:

- retired but now want to consider working or returning to work.
- approaching retirement and leaving mainstream work but want to do something different in the future.
- an older worker who has been displaced as a result of organisations downsizing or closing altogether.
- experiencing limited options in your area of work because Covid-19 has badly affected your sector and you want to try something different
- doing a job that is simply too physically demanding for you to do until state pension age.

We'll support your aspirations for work that is paid, voluntary, part time, fulltime, self-employment or any combination of these, including a complete change of direction.

We realise that a lot has changed this year and we've all read news reports of hundreds of applications for a single job. Despite Covid-19 and current predictions for unemployment, older workers are an increasingly important resource. Changes to the retirement age have pushed up the age range of the working population and there is already an increase in people working beyond pension age. Demographic change means that by 2029 people aged between 50 and 64 will make up 30 per cent of the working population.

In these six modules we will cover the steps you need to take to plan, prepare and practise the skills and approach you will need to successfully obtain work. We expect you to finish the programme with a clear idea of your personal needs, a plan of action and a toolkit of information, skills and ideas. As well as one to one coaching support from us, you'll have the opportunity to gain a new set of contacts and friends as a result of on-line contact with other members of the group.

How does the programme work?

Pre-Covid we could have delivered this programme face-to-face at a local venue but circumstances have forced us to think afresh. Our assumption is that you are the equivalent of a lighthouse keeper living in splendid isolation and you can simply work through the resources step-by-step. However, lighthouse keepers can access support and we will enable you to do the same on a one to one basis. This support may come by phone, email or video conferencing depending on your preferences. We know that lock down and working from

home means that many more people are now familiar with video calling via Zoom, Facetime, WhatsApp, Messenger and so on. We'll provide **20 minutes coaching per week and we'll agree the timing and mode of this on an individual basis. If you have questions from time to time, you can email us or ask them when we have our one to one contact time. In addition to this, we'll give you feedback on work that you email to us.**

How long will it take?

- The programme has been planned to run for **6 weeks. However, depending on your circumstances, you may take less or more time to complete it. It's not a race.**
- We've assumed that working through these materials over the 6 weeks will take you **15 to 20 hours** in total – so that's **around 3 hours a week**, much the same as a morning session at a local venue. This is just a guide though. It'll depend on your experience and aspirations so some modules will take longer than others.
- It's planned around a mixture of **activities** that you can complete by yourself, but we'll ask you to send some of them to us so that we can provide specific help.
- These activities are identified by the symbol . You'll benefit from doing them as they're your chance to think about important issues that impact on what you prioritise for your future.

One critical difference between you and younger people working through a programme of learning can be captured in a simple phrase, "life experience". That experience will be invaluable. Everything you have done to date is relevant and can be put to use in this programme.

What materials/equipment are needed?

Essential

- These programme materials which have been sent to you in hard copy. You can make notes on the materials but you'll probably also find a notebook useful.
- Access to the internet – it's the best place to find up to date information and is essential if you want to search and apply for jobs and access the websites we've included. We'll also ask you to send us some activities via email.

Optional

- We'll email you an electronic copy of the materials so that you can read them on your computer or tablet and use the hyperlinks that are included.
- We'll also email you a Word document containing all the activities so that you can word process them if you want to.

We've said above that from time to time we'll ask you to send us some notes so that we can help you with the next stage of your work quest. For example, we'll need to know about your past employment to help you with your future plans. It should be stressed that

everything you send to us will be treated in the strictest confidence and we'll only keep it as long as you are working on our programme.

So how do I get started?

Please get started as soon as you receive the materials. By then you will have received a welcome phone call/email from one of us. Either Chris or Maureen will contact you and we'll ensure you know which of us will be acting as your personal coach throughout the programme. Our contact details are on page 2. When you've completed everything, these materials, together with any notes you've made, will provide a useful reference point for the future.

Good luck – we hope you enjoy your time with us.

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MODULE ONE - THE NATURE OF WORK

On completion of this module you'll have:

- explored the value and benefits of working later in life for yourself, potential employers and society at large.
- identified any barriers that you might face when looking for work.
- shared your experience of work with us.
- decided what you want to get out of the programme.
- undertaken a quick audit of your use of digital technology.

1.1 Why is work important to you?

It may seem strange to pose this question to an audience who probably see themselves near the end of their working lives. If you're considering the option of continuing work in some form or other you need to address this question. For some of us the experience of work has not always been pleasant, fulfilling or rewarding. Indeed, we may want to put it well behind us. But even negative experiences can help us realise what we value most.

Here is the first example drawn from the Internet. It is clearly American and written as a blog that's intended to provoke a response.

<http://mattragland.com/the-value-of-work>

The second example is closer to home, so now read this research report from the Centre for Ageing Better.

<https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/sites/default/files/2017-12/What-do-older-workers-value.pdf>

Apart from the obvious connection between employment and income, 'work' comes in many shapes and sizes and it can be paid, voluntary, full-time, part-time, seasonal, done at home or in a specific work environment, day or night. It can provide a basis for friendships, a sense of identity and the personal fulfilment of a job well done. It can involve constant creativity or a regular routine and be a source of personal satisfaction or dis-satisfaction and frustration, depending on its nature and the working environment. What the Covid-19 crisis has shown is that some jobs have to be done on the front line in the workplace. Other jobs can be adapted and completed at home, raising questions about the importance of contact with others both in terms of aiding creativity and teamwork and providing social contact.



Activity 1

WHAT DO YOU VALUE ABOUT WORK? Now you've read the blog and research report above, make a list of five benefits of continuing to work in later life that are relevant to you. (Use the Activity Book in Word or your notebook if you prefer and need more space.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

We had a go at this activity ourselves and here's our list:

1. Keeps us connected with people.
2. Enables us to work flexibly and have other interests.
3. We get feedback from others that we need and value.
4. We feel the work we do is helpful to others.
5. We work in a very different way now when compared to what we've done in the past 45 years.

We're sure that our list would have been different had we still been in our 40s and raising a family. For us, now is the happiest part of our working lives. It could also be yours. Our current pattern of work is part-time and a mix of paid and voluntary. That leaves enough time for friends and family but also for exercise and hobbies because they're important for our physical and mental health and part of having happy and fulfilling lives as we get older.

This week's focus is mainly on **paid work**. In the Introduction above we touched on future projections for the age of the working population. Changes to the retirement age have pushed up the age of the working population and the number of people doing paid work beyond state pension age (often to supplement small personal pensions) has increased.

Paid employment right now has to be viewed in the current Covid-19 context which shows that as early as March/April 2020 the number of job vacancies had started to decrease (by 42% according to the Institute for Employment Studies) and unemployment is rising as the year progresses. Remember many people were on the furlough scheme at this stage. We're therefore going to start by addressing head on what you might see as barriers to work so that we can address the best ways to overcome them as we progress. We can then focus on what you do bring to the table rather than what you don't.

1.2 Barriers to work

In 2020 many of our lives were changed by the pandemic. We don't know whether these changes will be temporary or signal a longer lasting change to which we all have to adapt. One obvious impact is on jobs and employment. As yet we don't know what will happen to the economy. This, on the surface, can make life more challenging particularly for older workers. The latest report from the Centre for Ageing Better published in early July 2020 is entitled Back on Track.

<https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-07/back-on-track.pdf>

It looks at the impact of COVID-19 on the employment of older workers.

"As of April, 2020 there were 3.27 million people aged 50-64 out of work in the UK, of which 251,000 were 'unemployed' – meaning that they were actively seeking work (ONS 2020, a). These figures only take into account the very start of the COVID-19 lockdown and will now be substantially higher. In the period between March and May 2020 – when COVID-19 and the lockdown took hold – the number of people aged 50 and over in the UK claiming benefits more than doubled." (ONS 2020, b)

To put this in the local context, the number of people seeking work and on Universal Credit (UC) in Brighton and Hove increased by 158% between January and August 2020. For the over 50s the number seeking work and on UC increased from 1143 to 2621 or by 129%.

This research shows there is a need to address complex and inter-related barriers for this cohort of over 50s, which include but are not limited to the following:

- **A lack of confidence** both in their own ability and their perceived employability.
- **Changes to the way that jobseekers are expected to find and apply for jobs**, which require new skills – for which training is rarely provided.
- **Unsuitable training** that fails to consider and utilise an individual's experiences and existing skills.
- **Underdeveloped digital skills** that are commonly needed to complete work-based tasks – these are often particularly necessary for office-based roles.
- Lack of access to **flexible working**.

Reports like this tend to generalise and treat all older workers as basically the same when clearly we are not. None of you undertaking this programme will have an identical work experience or have the same skills, so some of the barriers referenced in the report may not be applicable.

You'll have your own experience of work as well as a particular set of skills that you've used at work. You'll also have a range of skills that you've used in your personal life but haven't necessarily used in the workplace. You might be thinking that your aspirations are all very

fine and good but surely, with high unemployment, employers will automatically be favouring younger people? Employers appreciate workers who are:

Punctual	Committed	Focused
Loyal	Approachable	Dependable
Experienced	Committed	Well organised
Have an eye for detail	Good communicators	Positive role models
Good problem solvers	... and so on	

We think some of these attributes might actually be a more difficult fit for younger workers. It's not helpful if all members of a work team are ultra-ambitious and looking for frequent job changes as they seek promotion and higher salaries. There's a lot to be said for being a dependable, committed and positive role model. (Later in the programme, we'll talk about voluntary work, that army of volunteers, often mature, that is so essential to everyday life. For example, school governors, charity trustees, parish councillors, charity shop workers, people running food banks, fundraisers, National Trust guides, museum workers, political campaigners – the list is endless as is the variety of high-level skills that they use.)



Activity 2

WHAT BARRIERS TO WORK DO I FACE?

Think about your own situation and list the barriers you think face you personally in continuing to work. Make your list in order of priority with the most difficult barrier first. (Don't forget, you can use the Activities Book, your notebook or write here.)

There aren't any right or wrong answers to the above activity and we'd like you to come back to your notes later on in the programme to see how far the barriers you've identified can be overcome.

We'll discuss your work background in our 1:1 meeting by phone or video call, so **Activity 3** is designed as preparation for that. Please write a summary of your work experience to date, nothing detailed, just an overview in 100-150 words and in chronological order. At this stage, don't worry too much about whether it's in bullet points, continuous prose or note form.



Activity 3

YOUR EXPERIENCE OF WORK

Summarise your experience of work in 100-150 words. It's important for us to know something of your back ground. Please email this to your coach. (Type it into an email, cut and paste it from the Activities Pack or use your phone to take and attach a photo of your notes to an email.)

1.2 What do you want from the programme?

As we come towards the end of the first module, what you would like to get out of the programme is important to you (and us). We've prepared the materials using our knowledge, skills, and understanding, but we'd like to know what you are hoping to gain from us! Thus far, we've talked about

- the value of work
- demographic change and work
- the current employment landscape
- attributes that employers value
- perceived barriers to employment
- your employment experience

We'd now like you to take time to think about what you want to get out of doing this programme and then make some notes below. Don't be nervous about committing yourself

at this stage - these resources are for you to use and we won't ask to see your completed booklet. What you write is the equivalent of your diary, a place to record your thoughts but also a resource that you can use flexibly and update as things change.



Activity 4

Why are you doing this programme?

What do you want to get out of the programme?

We'll all have different answers and priorities. This will depend on so many things. Whether paid work is essential to maintaining an income and therefore a necessity rather than an option. Whether you want to reduce your commitment to work but still remain involved. Whether you're attracted by the challenge of doing something new or different, it's important to have your priority in mind at all times. Be warned, this may change as we go through the programme and you consider your circumstances and the opportunities available to you.

1.3 Your use of digital technology

You'll already have seen that we're using references to the internet and providing links to publications. Using digital skills has become an increasing feature of all work, and indeed our daily lives, and it was identified as a possible barrier in the content above. Part of the role of future modules will be to focus on developing skills that support you in finding and getting work. Let's end this first module by inviting you to do a short audit of your use of digital technology in Activity 5.



Activity 5

YOUR USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

This is a quick survey of your use of a range of digital technology. This extends from the use of the internet, social media and other ways of transmitting and storing information.

Which heading describes your use of each category - often/sometimes/never? Tick the appropriate box.

Internet/Media	Often	Sometimes	Never
Internet searches			
Bank online			
Shop online			
YouTube			
Email			
Texting			
Twitter			
Facebook/Messenger			
Instagram			
Skype			
WhatsApp			
Zoom			
Take and store photos/videos			
Podcasts			
Excel			
Word			
Setting up files			

Which best describes how you rate your current understanding and use of the digital tools above. **Circle just one**

1. I am a daily user of digital technology and familiar with all its uses.
2. I use it when I need to and am comfortable trying out new things.
3. My experience is confined to a limited number of uses and I don't tend to try new things.
4. I am only comfortable with things I learned at work.
5. I don't trust it and so limit my use of most technology.

What devices do you use? Tick one of often/sometimes/never

Device	Often	Sometimes	Never
Smart phone			
Tablet/iPad			
Laptop computer			
Desktop computer			

What have you concluded from doing the survey? Are there gaps in your use or knowledge that you could usefully fill? At work access to technology, technical support and training is provided. When we leave work these things disappear and we have to rely on our own resources and knowledge or that of our friends and family. It's important to know that there's plenty of help available which we can discuss. Here's just one example if you live in Brighton and Hove - take a look and think how you might benefit from their services.

<https://digitalbrightonandhove.org.uk>

That brings week 1 to an end. We hope you've found it useful. There is one final activity to complete before you move on to Module 2.



Activity 6

PREPARING FOR MODULE 2

We'll be in touch in the forthcoming week to discuss four specific things: -

1. What did you gain from completing module 1?
2. What you want to get from the programme based on your response in Activity 4 above?
3. What work would you like to be doing in 6 months?
4. What uses you would like to make of digital technology to communicate with us and other participants?

MODULE 2 – SKILLS, EXPERIENCE AND WORK/LIFE BALANCE

On completion of this module you'll have:

- Estimated your preferred work/life balance
- Identified your employability skills
- Produced or updated your CV

2.1 Your work/life balance

In the last module we talked about the value of work to you and the kinds of attributes that employers are looking for that are often the result of experience gained at work. We also referred to demographic changes and forecasts about the rising age profile of the working population. In addition to this, a fair bit of newspaper column space these days is given over to encouraging the older generation to keep fit and active. The idea of 'Third Age' has been used to describe older people enjoying a happy, healthy and fulfilling retirement.

“Second Age: an era for independence, maturity, responsibility and working

Third Age: an era for personal achievement and fulfilment after retirement”

Laslett, P. (1987) *The emergence of the Third Age. Ageing and Society*, 7. 133-160

Nowadays, that “era for personal achievement and fulfilment” is just as likely to include any combination of paid work/voluntary work/self-employment. It could also include learning because, apart from being pleasurable, research shows links between learning new things and continued brain health. This module is therefore going to start by looking at your work/life balance.

At the end of the last module we asked you to identify what work you would like to be doing in six months' time so the next stage is to look at how it fits in with other things in your life. It's really important to maintain a good work/life balance because that's part of taking care of yourself and staying fit and healthy as you get older. We'll come back to this theme from time to time because it's the key to meeting your goals and making the most of your talents. Please now complete **Activity 7** below. This is difficult and your calculations will only be approximate but its purpose is to help you determine the kind of balance you want to work towards. You might find it easier to start by drafting some ideas with a pen and paper.



Activity 7

WORK/LIFE BALANCE – delete, add to or change the activities below as you wish. Allocate a percentage of your time to each. Adjust them so that they total 100%. (If you're confident with spreadsheets, you can use a pie chart to do this.) If you prefer, take a piece of paper, draw a circle and divide it into sections representing different activities. This chart is just for you, so do it in a way that makes sense to you and be prepared to tweak it as you work through the rest of the modules.

Activity	Time taken as a percentage of a week
Paid work	
Voluntary work	
Self-employment	
Hobbies and interests	
Friends and family	
Exercise	
Relaxation	
Learning new things (for work or pleasure)	
TOTAL	100%

On completion, you'll have established the way you want or need to work in future. It may be full-time or it may be part-time and it may combine different things.

2.2 Employability skills

Now that you've established that a sense of balance between work and other things is important, we can move on to look at what you have to offer in the workplace. Whether you're seeking paid or voluntary, full-time or part-time work, potential employers will expect to see your skills and attributes on your CV. If you already have a CV you can use the rest of this module to check that there's nothing missing and it fits what employers expect to see these days.

2.3 Identifying your employability skills

An internet search will reveal many lists of skills and attributes that employers look for - we covered some of them in Module 1. Attributes refer to a quality or characteristic of a person; skills are generally things that can be taught. They may overlap a bit, and we've introduced the concepts because they're sometimes used by employers. Often they are lumped together and called transferable skills (skills that you can transfer from job to job) or employability skills. We're going to refer to them from hereon as employability skills.

Below we've listed the employability skills that are most commonly sought. Whilst everyone isn't expected to be able to provide evidence of having all of these, employers would expect to see at least some of them on your CV together with evidence of where and when you've demonstrated them. These are really broad categories – for example, communication would cover things like listening skills, the ability to explain things, make presentations, speak persuasively, use social media, write clearly and accurately, and so on.

Communication

Planning and organising

Learning & development

Teamwork

Creativity & flexibility

Self-management

Problem solving

Critical thinking

Computer skills

Activity 8 on the next page will help you identify your employability skills, especially if it's something you haven't thought about or done for a long time.



Activity 8

IDENTIFYING YOUR EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS. Use these headings to list your skills. List them all, whether gained at work, at home or via voluntary activities. List as many as you can and be specific – e.g. coached Anytown Wanderers junior football team for 10 years.

Working with information (e.g. manage budgets, follow instructions)	Using ideas and initiative (e.g. create a display, organise an activity, design something)
Working with people (e.g. lead a group or club activity, resolve a conflict, join a discussion)	Working with things (e.g. Use a computer, operate equipment, repair something)

Now see if you can identify which of the employability skills above they relate to. Don't worry if you don't use all of these employability skills and don't worry at this stage if you seem to have overlaps. Save these notes as they will form of basis of a good CV and your ability to tailor your job applications to specific jobs. They'll also be helpful for job applications and interview preparation when you are looking for examples of your skills.

2.4 Producing a good CV

First impressions are everything with your CV. Employers will just skim and scan through them looking for things that stand out, especially if they have a lot of applications. If your CV isn't well laid out, easy to read and engaging from the outset, it will go on the reject pile.

2.5 Writing a personal profile

Your CV should start with a personal profile. If you haven't written a CV for a while you might not have done one of these before. This is your opportunity to write a brief introduction about you, your skills, experience and ambitions and it's something that potential employers will expect to see on your CV these days. It is the first thing the employer will read. It only needs to be a few lines long but it should summarise your skills, attributes and experience. Here are 3 examples of personal profiles to demonstrate the difference between **poor**, **fine** and **good**. It's not hard to see which one is which!

Example personal profile 1 I am a dynamic individual with excellent teamworking and communication skills. I would like a job in retail.

Example personal profile 2 I am a highly motivated, conscientious and hard-working restaurant manager with experience ranging from fast food venues to hotel dining. I have excellent customer service skills and I am calm, patient and able to work under pressure.

Example personal profile 3 A qualified administrator seeking a position that will use my organisational, communication and technical skills. I am self-motivated and capable of working under pressure. I have a clear, logical mind with a practical approach to problem solving and a drive to see things through to completion. I enjoy working on my own initiative or as part of a team. I have exceptional IT skills and am equally comfortable with preparing presentations, producing complex spreadsheets and managing CRM systems.

Getting started on your personal profile can be the most difficult part so here are some examples of how people might get started depending on their experience – we found these on FISH4JOBS at fish4.co.uk and there are many other examples to be found by googling if you want some ideas to get you started.

Personal profile – examples of writing your first sentence.

- An outgoing, sociable and well-presented retail assistant with a passion for first class customer service and extensive experience in a busy high street outlet.
- An education professional with 20 years' experience of working in a primary school.
- A skilled and adaptable construction worker who specialises in bricklaying and has expertise in roofing, plastering, plumbing, timber work and demolition.

- An articulate and self-motivated customer service professional with 25 years' experience in the banking and financial services sectors.



Activity 9

WRITING YOUR PERSONAL PROFILE

Write your own personal profile using these questions as prompts: How would you describe yourself in terms of your job? What are your key areas of expertise? What are your key work achievements? How experienced are you? What are your aspirations? Be concise, don't exaggerate and don't be vague. Be prepared to draft and re-draft this several times! Your personal profile can be tweaked when you are applying for particular jobs to make sure you focus on how you and your skills fit what they are looking for.

You've now done one of the most difficult parts of writing a CV! We've prepared an example CV below, underneath **Activity 10**. There will be lots of other examples if you search online for CV templates. Whilst there are some variations in layout, they all contain the same sort of information. If you're confident with IT, by all means look for a style and font that you like. For example, Monster has templates for particular job areas.

<https://www.monster.co.uk/career-advice/article/monster-cv-template>

There is no absolute gold standard way of doing it and sometimes it depends on your experience. For example, if you have large gaps in your employment, let us know and we can help you prepare a skills-based CV rather than a chronological CV.

Before you start **Activity 10**, make sure that you have the dates and details of your employment history and education/training to hand and remember these basic rules:

- No more than 2 sides of A4
- There's no need to add referees unless the job ad specifically asks for them
- Check and double check it for errors
- No fancy fonts - keep it simple and readable, *not like this!*



Activity 10

PRODUCING YOUR CV

Produce your own CV using the headings below and email it to us. If you haven't used a Word Processor for a CV before, use our example CV (overleaf) to help you with the layout. We would like the opportunity to read your CV from the perspective of an employer and provide you with feedback. If you haven't done a CV for a long time, treat this as a first draft and remember that the first draft is always the most difficult. We'll help you to refine it.

Name and contact details

Personal profile Add what you produced in **Activity 9**

Skills Use bullet points to list them.

Employment history Put them in reverse order with the most recent first – position, employer, date, main duties and achievements. Use your discretion about how far to go back as it may be appropriate to summarise the early part of your work history.

Education and training Put them in reverse order with the most recent first. Again, use your discretion about what to include. For example, at this stage of your life your professional qualifications are more important than your secondary education.

Hobbies and interests Include things like sports activities, community work.

EXAMPLE CV

Anyname, Flat 1, Anyflat Court, The Drive, Anytown AA41 DT0

007721 123456.

anyname@myemail.co.uk

PERSONAL PROFILE

A qualified administrator seeking a position that will use my organisational, communication and technical skills. I am self-motivated and capable of working under pressure. I have a clear, logical mind with a practical approach to problem solving and a drive to see things through to completion. I enjoy working on my own initiative or as part of a team and have experience of supervising a small team. I have exceptional IT skills and am equally comfortable with preparing presentations, producing complex spreadsheets and managing CRM systems.

SKILLS

- Good team-worker evidenced by my recent experience of working with colleagues to devise a new cloud-based filing system to be accessed from multiple locations.
- Able to communicate confidently and clearly whether by email, on social media, at face-to-face meetings or via the preparation of client-focused letters.
- Well organised and able to manage time effectively by prioritising tasks appropriately and completing work to time.
- Accurate worker with good attention to detail when completing complex tasks involving spreadsheets, data entry and CRM systems.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Senior Administrator, Bedenhams Limited, Anytown

2010 - present

Working in a large team at a major outlet of this chain, I manage 6 assistant administrators undertaking work for 4 senior managers. I take responsibility for distributing work, devising and operating workable office systems including diary maintenance, booking staff training, ensuring that all office systems, hardware and software are up to date and organising internal and external events. In 2017 I received an award for National Administrator of the year.

Senior Administrator, Anytown District Council

1998 – 2010

I provided support for the Housing Officer which included setting up information management systems, organising and managing the minuting of meetings, dealing tactfully with enquiries from the public and ensuring that all paperwork was processed accurately and in a timely manner. During my time at the Council I was promoted from Administrative Support Assistant to Administrator and then Senior Administrator.

Admin Assistant/Receptionist, MainRoad Surgery, Anytown	1984 – 1998
I worked as part of a small team providing admin support for 3 doctors and associated staff. Much of my work was patient-centred and included dealing with telephone enquiries as well as impeccable record keeping. As well as working accurately, at all times I was required to exercise tact and diplomacy and maintain confidentiality.	
Earlier experience	1978 – 1984
After leaving college, I undertook office work for a local builder and then worked as a school secretary. I took a short break to look after my children and during this time I organised a singing and music group for pre-school children and became a primary school governor.	
EDUCATION AND TRAINING	
Such and Such College	
City and Guilds Cyber Security Course - merit	2017
IT Administrator Diploma - distinction	2013
The Open University	
BA (Open) studying a mix of science and technology: 2.1	1995 - 2001
Such and such a Further Education College, Mytown	1976 - 1977
City and Guilds 11111 Certificate in Administration, Distinction	
English Language A level	
Hobbies and interests	
I am a keen member of my local tennis club where I compete in local tournaments and help to organise social events. I have been a volunteer at the Oxfam Charity Shop for six years.	



Activity 11

PREPARATION FOR MODULE 3

1. What did you get out of Module 2?
2. Have you considered discussing your work/life balance with friends and family and tweaking your plan if you need to?
3. Email your CV to us for feedback.

MODULE 3: FINDING AND APPLYING FOR NEW OPPORTUNITIES

In **Module 2** you looked at your skills and experience and how they might be a basis for future work. You also produced an up to date CV. You now have a sense of what you can offer so the next step is to find out what opportunities exist that you can apply for.

As you work through this module you will have:

- Identified possible sources of information about local work opportunities.
- Matched your employability skills to a range of current job specifications for paid and/or voluntary work.
- Considered what employers look for in a job application.
- Written a covering letter.

3.1 The importance of networks

We all remember a time when the local newspaper was packed full of job opportunities, usually towards the end of the week, and was the main way of finding out work in your locality. Those days have gone. Opportunities are now found in many different settings and knowing where to look is critical. But that's not where we are going to start. We're beginning with the networks that are most familiar to you.

3.2 Who you know

It might be that the phrase "who you know" smacks of favouritism or unfair advantage. It needn't. Letting people know that you're looking for work and the type of thing you want is a really good starting point, but identifying your own network of established contacts probably isn't something that you've done before.

Your approach here is quite simple. Having identified your network, look at who you think can be most helpful and approach them first. Some of the people in your network may have direct access to or knowledge of what you are looking for and be able to offer helpful advice. With other contacts, you may be just asking them to bear you in mind. Don't worry if they can't help immediately.

It could be that you don't feel comfortable approaching people in this way. You might feel this is simply too pushy or you might be reticent to let people know about your situation, but all you're doing is getting other people to help you in the search. Social contacts are a good example of this. For example, you've been a long-time member of a club and known your fellow members for years, but never thought about the contacts they have. It goes back to the earlier point that there are many ways in which work opportunities are advertised. Word of mouth is just one example of this. A recent survey suggested that 1 in 4 jobs is secured through networking.



Activity 12

MY NETWORK

Make a list of all the people you know who might help you to find work opportunities. Organise them under headings – add to change or delete headings to suit your network.

Family	Friends	Current colleagues	Former colleagues	Neighbours	Social contacts

3.3 Networking online

The people you already know are only part of your network. Increasingly we are using the online world to make new contacts. Many of these can be used to help the search for work. Some sites like LinkedIn – <http://uk.linkedin.com> - have a dual purpose. They link people together in an online community and are also a platform for job opportunities. As well as being able to showcase your profile, you can look for job opportunities.

3.4 Job searching online

Many of the opportunities that previously appeared in your local or national newspaper have now moved online.

- Jobs are advertised on company websites so that's a good place to start if there's an organisation you'd particularly like to work for.
- If you have a Facebook account, jobs are also advertised there – just search for 'jobs' for access to an index of job categories and links to company Facebook pages.
- Job sites and recruitment agencies generally ask you to register your basic details and upload your CV. These sites will email you 'alerts' when jobs come up in your chosen category.

It is frustrating, but a fact of life, that not all job applicants are always notified if they haven't been successful in being called for interview. If you have contact details, you can phone or email to ask, but otherwise there is really little you can do except make sure that all your applications fit the criteria asked for so you have the best chance of success.

3.5 The right opportunity for you

At the end of Module 1 we asked you what sort of work you'd like to be doing in six months' time so we're now going to ask you to search, identify and match your skills and experience against live job opportunities.

Don't be put off by the very long lists of requirements that many job ads seem to require, or indeed the complexity of the language that is sometimes used to describe straightforward tasks. For example, we've just looked at an administrative job ad that says, "The role will also provide logistical and responsive coordination of complex weekly student fixtures ...". That just means they want someone to co-ordinate the weekly sports fixtures so that accommodation doesn't get double-booked! The key thing is to see whether the ad distinguishes between skills, experience and qualifications that are essential as against those that are desirable. If the latter, you can show a willingness to undertake staff development and training.

We've selected two sites for you to look at, one is for paid employment, the other for volunteering. Whilst many people use volunteering as a bridge from work to a fuller retirement, it can also work the other way around. Volunteering, especially if it involves the acquisition of updated skills and experience, can lead to paid work. This is why we don't differentiate between the two and see them as part of a continuum of opportunities.



Activity 13

FINDING AN OPPORTUNITY

Brighton and Hove Jobs is a local organisation created and run in Brighton - <https://www.brightonandhovejobs.com>

Community Works is an umbrella organisation for the local voluntary sector offering volunteering roles - <https://volunteer.bhcommunityworks.org.uk>

- Search one or both sites for an opportunity that you think will suit you.
- Take a look at the detail provided about the opportunity.
- Identify those aspects of the role that you think you meet. Pay particular attention to any essential requirements.

Don't be put off by the very long lists of requirements that many job ads seem to require based on your experience, skills and sometimes qualifications. You can't hide gaps but you can express a willingness to undertake training. Focus on what you bring to the role.

Copy and save the job on your computer or print it out – we'll refer back to it again in Activity 14 and Module 5 when we talk about interviews. (This activity is intended to be realistic. If the opportunity looks like the right one, you should go for it once you've completed **Activity 14 – Writing a covering letter**. You have nothing to lose.)

3.6 Covering letters

We've discussed above the different ways of finding opportunities, including simply uploading your CV to a job recruitment site. Some of these sites are quite specific about not wanting a covering letter, others simply don't provide you with an opportunity to upload one. Unless that is the case, you should always include one because, although your CV is a factual summary of your work history, the covering letter enables you to state your case in a different way and be very specific about why you would be the best person for the job. It's also another opportunity to mention the key words we referred to.

3.7 So what should a good covering letter contain?

There are lots of approaches but the following checklist will help you review what you've written when you're applying for an advertised job.

1. Don't just rehash your CV.
2. Tailor your covering letter to a specific job.
3. Be proud of your past accomplishments.
4. Keep it brief - 250 to 400 words
5. Where the name of the hiring person is given, address them personally.
6. Use keywords from the job description.
7. Use the same font and style as your CV.
8. Proofread your cover letter! Typos are a real let down.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER	
Jo Bloggs, Flat 1, Anyflat Court, The Drive, Anytown AA41 DT0 007721 123456 jobloggs@myemail.co.uk	
1 December 2020 Ann Clarke Manager Doctor's Surgery Anytown ATO 000 Dear Ms Clarke PART/TIME RECEPTIONIST/ADMINISTRATOR	Your contact details Address the person whose name is on the job advert Why they should choose you is explained in the first two para-graphs. This is about what you can do for them - show that you have the skills and experience for THIS job. Also show enthusiasm. What you are applying for. I am writing to apply for the above position. As you can see from my CV, I have 35 years' experience in an office environment, latterly as a Senior Human Resources Assistant in a large department store. This has enabled me to learn a great deal about administrative processes and technology and I have taken the initiative to set up new procedures. I have been working with and advising other members of staff on a daily basis and have thus developed good communication and team-working skills. My managers have frequently commented on the fact that I am approachable, well-organised and able to work under pressure. My role demands confidentiality, sensitivity and understanding when dealing with HR issues and this would transfer well to working in a patient-facing environment. My experience includes using all aspects of Microsoft Office packages and I am very comfortable with technology. I am seeking to move from full-time to part-time work nearer home and this post would combine my highly developed people, technical and admin skills with my ability to work speedily and accurately. I note from your website that you wish to encourage more patients to register online and I would like the opportunity to support that aspiration. I also note that over the next two years you will be expanding the surgery and I'm excited by the prospect of working in a large, busy practice. Thank you for taking the time to consider my application. I am available for interview at any time and look forward to hearing from you. Your sincerely Jo Bloggs
Don't forget to sign your letter.	End with a thank you and an invitation for the reader to contact you. Why you want to work for them is explained, and you've researched their future plans.



Activity 14

WRITING YOUR COVERING LETTER

Now you've identified an opportunity, we want you to write a covering letter. No more than a side of A4 or 400 words saying why you think you are suited to this role. Use our example as a guide. When you've finished, email the job advert (or a link to it) and your covering letter to us and we'll provide some helpful feedback.

3.8 Online application forms

If you need to complete an online application form, have your CV to hand as much of the information will be similar.

3.9 Tailoring your applications

You should tweak each application (CV, covering letter, application form) to include key words regarding skills and experience they have specifically asked for (provided of course you have them!). This is particularly useful where computer scanning software is often used to search applications. Make sure you save copies of your CVs, covering letters or application forms. These will come in useful and mean you can draw on them in subsequent applications.

3.10 Speculative applications

If you've identified an organisation you would like to work for, you can send a speculative letter and CV just to see if there are any vacancies (rather than waiting to respond to a job ad). This is where your networking can be useful as someone might suggest organisations that often recruit people to do the kind of work you're interested in. Your letter will be similar to the one above but you will need to outline what sort of job you could do as well as showing that you know something about the organisation you are applying to.

3.11 What do employers want?

There are two obvious points to make here. The number of opportunities available will depend on the state of the economy. Higher unemployment means more people will be chasing fewer opportunities. Moreover, any government incentives offered to employers to hire staff are likely to be directed at the young. Secondly, there is still bias against employing older people. It is difficult to prove but it exists. This may also lead to employers seeing older people as suited to working in low wage and less secure work that is often part-

time. They may be less willing to invest in training. This means that you will have to work hard to get your foot in the door.

There is a counter argument to this and one that many employers will have to consider. At present we are undoubtedly looking at a bleak picture dominated by the pandemic. That is going to change and the likely driver of change is the shift in the age of the working population.

 **Activity 15**
WORKING IN RETIREMENT

Take a look at this short video on You Tube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sEObzVwrxFY>

Make a note of the points Pam Frith is making that employers would do well to consider when employing older people. What does your list look like? We think the one thing that came across was how flexible older people can be.

3.12 Reasons for optimism

The example in **Activity 15** shows many advantages of employing older people. Despite the bleak picture dominated by the pandemic.

“By 2025, people aged under 30 in the workforce will fall by 300,000, while those aged 50 and over will increase by over 1 million according to Office for National Statistics UK Labour Market Statistics (March 2018)

“We’re experiencing a labour market where job vacancies and the number of people in work have hit record highs, but by 2027 it is estimated that there will be 13.5 million jobs and only 7 million younger workers to fill them, leading to a shortfall of 6.5 million workers.”

<https://www.renegadegeneration.com/for-employers>

The quote above is taken from an organisation that is grasping the challenge of the missing workers and championing employers who are listed as being “age friendly”. There are other more local examples that offer grounds for optimism. The case study below is one such. Have a read of it now.

Case Study: Seniors Helping Seniors (Brighton and Hove)

Mike Dooley used to run a large care business in Yorkshire employing 100 staff. Now, aged 59, he has set his sights on doing something related but very different.

In August 2020 he launched the Brighton and Hove franchise of Seniors Helping Seniors (SHS). This is a business that has its roots in the South East of England.

Brighton is the fifth SHS in England.

<https://brightonhove.seniorshelpingseniors.co.uk>

Mike says he has seen nothing else like it and describes it as, “the nice side of caring”. Basically it involves matching paid older helpers to support older people in their own home. It doesn’t involve help with personal care or meeting medical needs. It spans a great many other things that might range from shopping, doing the garden through to regular companionship and includes trips out. One of the advantages of the service is its flexibility. The client pays for the service and the helper is paid a flat hourly rate regardless of the task. SHS champions the Living Wage Foundation.

In these early stages Mike has been looking to recruit both helpers and clients. In terms of the helpers he is happy to have an informal chat before going through a formal application and interview process. There is an enhanced DBS check. Mike says that to date many of the people coming forward only want to do a limited amount each week. This suits SHS, as any helper is only likely to support 1 or 2 clients at a time. So it is not a big commitment for any individual. People wanting to be helpers do so for a variety of reasons including maintaining their own physical and mental health. Mike also stressed that what makes a good helper and client relationship isn’t just based on past work experience, sometimes it is a shared hobby or interest. They may have cared for an elderly relative of their own and been prompted to come forward as a result. But this isn’t a requirement in the job description. He makes sure that the fit is the right one.

It is early days and Mike is still making his contacts with local organisations that may be able to refer people. However a year from now he envisages having 25 to 30 helpers and 35+ regular clients.

Mike himself is a good example of someone choosing to do things differently in later life. Opting for a franchise means he doesn’t have to build everything from scratch. He has been able to see the service operating elsewhere and get advice and guidance in setting up his service. He is offering employment opportunities specifically for older people and enabling other older people to maintain a sense of independence that is vital to their wellbeing.

This is a really good example of somebody using his past experience to create a new opportunity for himself in an area with which he is familiar. In so doing Mike is creating new opportunities for other people like himself. He and SHS are valuing the life experience that older people share.

Another example is Restless UK, an organisation dedicated to providing opportunities for the over 50s. In addition to advertising jobs they offer advice and information relevant to you and ideas for part-time jobs. <https://restless.co.uk/career-advice/job-ideas/top-15-part-time-jobs-for-the-over-50s/>

Finding and using the right sources is key to unlocking new opportunities. This module has shown you how there are a number of ways of going about that.

3.13 Being realistic – handling rejection

We obviously want you to succeed in meeting your goals in terms of finding employment and we're giving you strategies to give you the best possible chance. But it is likely that finding the job you want will require more than one attempt. In fact, it may require many attempts, particularly in the current climate of more people chasing fewer jobs. So you shouldn't be surprised by any of the following:

- You receive no acknowledgement of your application and hear nothing from the employer. Sadly, this is not unusual.
- You get rejected without any explanation.
- You don't get any feedback after an interview.

There are a number of things you can do:

- Don't wait to hear the outcome from one job application before applying for another. Having more than one iron in the fire is to your advantage.
- Don't blame yourself. It may be that it wasn't a perfect match or there were simply better candidates. It is not your fault.
- Re-visit your application and see if you think it could have been improved. Make a note of anything you might do differently next time.
- Is there anything you're not including in your application that you should? For example, that you have a clean driving licence.

There's no need to abandon all hope at the first sign of rejection. Expect the long haul and you may be pleasantly surprised. You could vary your plans and start doing some volunteering as a means of keeping working and acquiring or brushing up on your skills. You could do a short course to give you a focus for activity. We're all urged to become more resilient and discover an inner strength. This can be undermined by a constant sense of

rejection that erodes our confidence. The important thing is to recognise that you are not alone in feeling this and it is something that you can and should talk about with others.



Activity 16

PREPARING FOR MODULE 4

1. What did you gain from completing module 3?
2. Make sure you complete **Activity 14** and email your covering letter - so that we can provide some constructive feedback. Include a copy of the job opportunity you're applying for, or a link to it.
3. Does the job you've selected fit with your work/life balance plans? Would you need to adjust them to fit this job?

MODULE 4: SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWS

At this point in the programme you'll have organised your CV, decided what form and pattern of work you want to do in future, looked at available jobs and drafted a covering letter. The focus of this module is preparation for interview and the final activity is the offer of a mock interview with us. You'll be:

- reviewing your last interview experience
- practising interview questions
- thinking about practicalities for the day
- taking part in a mock interview

We want to ensure that the preparation you do now will be useful for the future so, for the rest of this module, please have to hand the person/job specification/details for the job you used to draft your covering letter. If you've since seen another job that you're particularly interested in, you can use that.

4.1 How do you feel about interviews?

When was the last time you attended an interview? Maybe it was a long time ago? Complete [Activity 17](#) now.



Activity 17

INTERVIEW EXPERIENCE

1. When was your last interview?
2. What type of interview was it? One to one? Interview panel? Face to face? Telephone/video?
3. How did you feel before the interview?
4. How did you feel after the interview?
5. What went well?
6. Were there things you could/should have done better?

If the interview was successful then clearly you performed well. Many people leave an interview worrying that they didn't answer questions well, they left important things out, answered wrongly or lost track of what they were saying. Even if you usually feel confident, preparation will give you your best chance of success. If your last interview was a long time ago, there's good reason to make full use of the guidance we are offering.

4.2 Preparing for interview

4.2.1 Research the organisation

We talked about doing this when preparing your CV and covering letter and these days it's relatively straightforward on the internet. Also look for national or local news items they've been mentioned in. This will help you prepare for questions about why you want to work for them and how you would fit into the organisation.

4.2.2 Check the details of your interview

You may be asked to prepare something, for example, a presentation – it all depends on the job you're applying for. In the current Covid-19 situation, with so many interviews taking place on Zoom, Skype and the like, if some sort of skills test is required, you're more likely to be asked to undertake and submit it electronically before the interview.

4.2.3 Check that you fit the criteria

Have another look at the job/person specification and your application. Be absolutely clear about what is required and how you fit each of the criteria.

4.2.4 Learn about the tried and tested STAR technique.

Don't rack your brain when asked one of these questions: "Tell me about a time when ..." "What do you do when ..." "Give me an example of how you ...". Use the STAR technique to prepare several scenarios before your interview and use it again to assemble your thoughts as you structure your answer. You'll then answer concisely rather than ramble on with a long, hesitant story.

- The **S**ituation sets the scene with brief details
- The **T**ask explains what your responsibility was
- The **A**ction outlines the steps you took
- The **R**esult says what the outcomes were

STAR technique example:

QUESTION Tell us about a time when you've managed to solve a difficult work problem.

RESPONSE: I've been working as Office Manager for a building company with multiple customers and suppliers and when I started there were always issues with sorting paperwork, keeping up to date with payments in and out, chasing late invoices and worrying about cash flow. I've successfully introduced an electronic accounts process that has saved time and ensured that the partners can keep track of payments and invoicing. This improved cash flow considerably and reduced the firm's bank and accountancy charges by 20% in the first year. It also freed up some of my time so I could work on promotional activities.

The above example was, of course, a question about problem solving skills. It could be tweaked to answer a number of questions – for example, questions about using your initiative, using your judgement, improving efficiency, managing a tight deadline, showing good team skills, creativity and so on. If you think back to Module 2, we provided a list of employability skills – the skills that employers look for that are transferable from job role to job role. We then asked you to identify your own employability skills, whether gained at work, in the home or via hobbies and interests. Finally, we asked you to relate your list back to our list of employability skills. The STAR technique works well for questions about particular employability skills and how you’ve used them.



Activity 18

MASTER THE STAR TECHNIQUE

- Think back over your own experience and use the STAR technique to write a few notes in response to the following question: *Tell me about a time when you used your judgement to solve a problem.*
 - **Situation**
 - **Task**
 - **Action**
 - **Result**
- Now try answering the question aloud without your notes – it’s really good practice.

How did that feel? Jotting down a few notes should have helped you to gather your thoughts together. Whilst you won’t be writing copious notes during an interview, this sort of pre-interview preparation will ensure that you aren’t fazed by these sorts of questions.

You’ll be able to use the work you did to identify your employability skills in **Module 2** to create a number of scenarios like the one above to demonstrate your skills.

4.3 Practise, practise, practise!

If you’re asked to make a presentation, it goes without saying that you will have practised it so that it’s word perfect and absolutely to time. For the rest of the interview, the internet will have hundreds of possible interview questions and you can make more up based on the details of the job you’re interest in. Don’t just think through your answers, say them aloud to check that you really can express yourself clearly. If you’re wondering how you come across, use your mobile phone to make a video of yourself. We know that it’s helpful to do

this with another person who can give you feedback and that's why we're offering you a virtual mock interview.

If you've practised, you won't be fazed by any of the questions, you'll look more relaxed and it'll be easier to maintain eye contact. Below are some questions to get you started. Please use the internet to add more questions. (This is the first site that came up when we googled - <https://www.themuse.com/advice/interview-questions-and-answers> - just bear in mind that some of the questions might not be appropriate to your area of work.) Don't forget the point we made above, that the same example can be tweaked to answer different questions. We're obviously not suggesting you use the same example twice in your interview, but we are saying that preparing half a dozen scenarios will enable you to answer many different questions.



Activity 19

PRACTISE ANSWERING QUESTIONS - Have your Job details/person spec to hand and imagine you are being interviewed for that job. Keep practising until you can answer these questions comfortably, aloud and without notes.

Question	Strategy
Why do you want to work for us?	<i>What do you know about them, their values etc. that makes you keen to work for them?</i>
What interests you about this job?	<i>Show that you've read the job description and have skills to bring to the table?</i>
What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?	<i>Two sides of the same coin. Show that you've learned from experience, e.g. you've developed strategies to regularly review your workload and prioritise items so that you always meet deadlines.</i>
Why are you looking to change direction?	<i>Use the STAR technique</i>
Tell me about a time when you successfully used your listening skills.	<i>Use the STAR technique</i>
Tell me about a time when you used your judgement to solve a problem.	<i>Use the STAR technique</i>
Tell me about a difficult work situation and how you overcame it.	<i>Use the STAR technique</i>
Describe a time when you dealt with an angry customer.	<i>Use the STAR technique</i>
What sort of team player are you?	<i>Use the STAR technique</i>
How do you handle criticism?	<i>They want to know you are flexible, don't see yourself as always right and would be willing to undertake staff training.</i>
<i>You can add some more questions here ...</i>	

At this point, you should feel more comfortable about answering standard interview questions with good examples of your skills and how you use them.

4.4 Questions to ask the interviewer

Towards the end of the interview you're likely to be asked if you have any questions. You might want to ask more about the role or the organisation itself. Other suggestions are:

- What the timelines/next steps are for the interview process.
- Whether any on-the-job training will be required, especially if there is specialist equipment involved.
- What a typical day in the role looks like.
- What your priorities would be in the first month.

4.5 Where will you be interviewed?

If it's a face-to-face interview be absolutely clear that you know where you're going, how you're going to get there and how long it will take. In the current climate it is more likely to be via phone or video interview. Set yourself up somewhere where it's comfortable, you won't be interrupted and there's nothing distracting in the background.

- Make sure you can plug your equipment in so you don't run out of battery.
- If it's a telephone interview, try to organise it hands free.

4.6 Decide what to wear

It might be appropriate to wear a suit or just be smart casual. You'll need to make a judgement on that depending on the job but don't leave it to the last moment. If you're doing a video interview it's only your top half in view, but keep things simple and uncluttered. We do know people who like to pop a smart jacket on for a telephone interview because it makes them feel the part!

4.7 On the day of the interview

- Have copy of your CV and covering letter to hand.
- Put your mobile phone on silent.
- Maintain eye contact when listening or talking.
- Don't forget to smile - (even on the phone!) as you'll sound friendly and approachable.
- Don't be afraid to ask for clarification of a question if you're not sure what they mean.

4.8 After the interview

Analyse how you think you did in the same way to look back at your last interview at the start of this module.

4.9 Do Interviewers get nervous?

If you do a google search, you might be surprised to see advice to make the process less stressful for interviewers! Your interview might be with a panel or a single person. Either way, they will have had to prepare as well.

They will have to have read thoroughly each interviewee's application so that they can refer to it in the interview, and they will have had to prepare the questions and devise a method for recording and grading responses fairly. They will be trying to ensure that they keep things fair by asking everyone the same key questions so that they can compare candidates. If it's 2 or 3 interviewers on a panel, they also have to agree about going off-script for follow-up questions. At the same time, they're probably trying to put candidates at ease by smiling and maintaining eye contact. Listening skills are key for them so they have to keep absolutely focused because they are asking the same questions over and over again, albeit to different candidates. So, it's all a bit hectic from their point of view as well! If you're feeling nervous, bear in mind that it might not be nearly as obvious as you think to your very busy interviewer.

One final thing to remember is that sometimes those doing the interviewing are inexperienced or untrained when it comes to asking questions. Often they will ask three or four questions at one go! Don't be afraid to ask them to repeat the question or check what they are looking for. It shows confidence. You could also have a pen and paper with you to quickly note down key words in the question. If you can turn an interview into an exchange rather than a trial then you are likely to make those asking the questions feel more comfortable and that's never a bad thing.



Activity 20

THE MOCK INTERVIEW

We will contact you to arrange a time to interview you by video call or phone call. You should prepare for a short, 20-minute interview conducted under normal, formal interview conditions using the agreed Job/Person Spec that you've sent us and used in this module. We'll then email you some feedback. Whilst we want to create the conditions of a formal interview, our intention is that the process should be supportive.

4.10 After the 'real' interview

Each time you're interviewed for a job, It's well worth spending a few minutes noting down what you think went well and what didn't. This will help you with your interview preparation the next time round. If it turns out that you haven't been successful, don't take it personally. Often employers will contact interviewees by phone to let them know the outcome and this gives you the chance to ask for feedback on why you weren't successful. Even if the news comes by email or letter, there's no reason at all why you shouldn't still ask for feedback.



Activity 21

PREPARATION FOR MODULE 5

1. What did you gain from completing Module 4

2. Now you've had the experience of looking for job opportunities and preparing an application it's a good time to go back to your work/life balance activity in Module 2. Is there anything you'd like to change? Have you left enough time for leisure activities – hobbies, exercise and so on? As we get older, it's really important to make time for these things. Leisure activities might be more difficult with so many venues closed and fewer group gatherings because of Covid-19 but there are still options.

- If you don't exercise regularly, now could be a good time to start.
- If you haven't had much time for leisure activities, now could be the time to learn something new.
- If you've ever thought you'd like to be working for yourself, now is the time to start thinking about ideas to generate income.

We will discuss some of these with you in our next contact.

MODULE 5: CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Thus far we have primarily focussed on the idea that you might seek to use your past experience of work to guide your next steps. That might be in a paid or voluntary or a combination of both. But what if:

- your options are limited in your previous area of work?
- you want to try something completely different?
- in the longer term, the job you've been doing is simply too physically demanding for you to do it until state pension age?

This module is about being your own boss - even if you feel that this isn't for you, we'd encourage you to read on - it's actually less daunting than you think and it could be a possibility. It's an alternative that can be low key and eminently doable.

This module is about doing something different and managing any risks involved. In completing it you will have:

- Explored the challenge of working for yourself.
- Considered whether now is the time for you to take on an exciting new challenge
- Thought about how you can manage any risks associated with significant change at this stage in your life.

5.1 Working for yourself

This might seem, on the surface, to be something most of us might not even contemplate, particularly if we've spent years working for someone else. It may surprise you to know that self-employment is not uncommon amongst older workers. This trend is certainly one that is growing as Rachel Muller-Heyndyk writes:

"The number of over-50s working for themselves has risen dramatically, but research warns this is partly down to a lack of support in traditional employment.

"Almost half (46%) of the self-employed workforce is now aged 50 or older, according to research from Rest Less, a job and volunteering site for older people.

"Its analysis of Office for National Statistics (ONS) data for the first three months of 2019 found that there are now 2.27 million over-50s who are self-employed. This is up from 1.45 million 10 years ago, an increase of 57% in a decade.

"Additionally nearly one in five (19%) self-employed individuals are aged 60 or older. The research found that the number of over-60s who are self-employed increased from 579,000 in 2009 to 949,000 in 2019, an increase of 64% in the last 10 years."

Source: <https://www.hrmagazine.co.uk/article-details/age-discrimination-driving-over-50s-to-self-employment-1>

5.2 What is the attraction of being your own boss?

Being your own boss has enormous appeal:

- a better work/life balance
- independence and freedom
- being in control
- flexible working
- potential for growth and learning
- immense personal satisfaction

Set against this are possible disadvantages to consider. They include:

- a lack of employee benefits you may have enjoyed previously
- long hours at the start-up stage
- having to be responsible for your own financial planning
- social isolation if you're used to working with other people
- an irregular income

Despite this there is one company formed every minute in this country.

There are a number of options from freelancing to establishing a business for yourself or with others. There are more than 29,000 self-employed people in Brighton. It has a reputation as an entrepreneurial city and the UK city most suited to starting a business. A lot of this has been driven by the growth of digital industries and tourism. This means that you won't be alone and there are plenty of places to turn to for advice. We'll get to that later!

5.3 So what could you do?

All of this takes us back to [Module 1](#) where we asked what do you want to be doing in six months' time and [Module 2](#) where you worked out your preferred work/life balance. If you are interested in building up a portfolio of activities then ask yourself whether self-employment fits into that.

Here are a couple of real-life examples. In recent courses we ran for people planning their retirement, participants were asked to come up with an idea to make money. Three people immediately offered answers based on their current experience. One said that for many years she had rented out a room to foreign students. Other participants who wanted to do the same thing immediately asked her for advice. Another talked about how his hobby of attending car boot sales had turned into a way of making extra money. A former teacher talked about how she was coaching individual students. All were using their existing resources, interests or expertise to add to their income. For them this was a very good place to start.

The following case studies illustrate how the road to self-employment is something that can emerge quite naturally from particular circumstances or opportunities. Both illustrate that self-employment can be a way of continuing activity rather than starting anew.

Activity 22

COMPARING CASE STUDIES

Read the two case studies below and list 3 things they share in common and 3 differences.

Similarities

-
-
-

Differences

-
-
-

Case Study 1: Work and Learning Opportunities c.i.c

WLO is a small social enterprise that employs three people, two of which you were introduced to at the start of the programme! It was created over 10 years ago, initially as a way of carrying on some work that had been part of a project at the University of Brighton. It has since expanded and moved into different areas of work that are all related to employment and education.

It was set up as a Community Interest Company and that opened up funding opportunities and grants. We are a social enterprise which means that we have a clear social mission and we commit to putting any profits back into the business. Because we had been employed by Brighton University we already had a network of established contacts so were able to source new opportunities.

As a social enterprise, we accessed a start-up grant from the National Lottery Community Fund so there was none of the financial risk that often accompanies starting a new business. The risk has revolved around whether there would always be enough work, where the next contract was coming from and so on and this perceived lack of security led to staff/director resignations in the first year.

With experience of having run various projects within universities, we had the skills to manage the day-to-day running of the business even though operating our own technology (no one to fix things!), getting our heads around the legal and accounting aspects of running a business and marketing ourselves continue to be challenge.

We have evolved from being office based to home working and have been able to be flexible enough to provide for a combination of full and part-time working to help us navigate times when money was tight. This has particularly suited two of us who are 70+ and don't want full-time work. We've particularly enjoyed that we are still moving into new areas of work and developing new areas of expertise.

For more about us: <http://www.workandlearning.co.uk>

Case Study 2: Fiona Goffe

Fiona has lived in Brighton for over 30 years. She has worked in housing and for the local authority. Over the years, she has been a carer for her mother and had to cope with her own disability and health issues. In the midst of this she discovered what she described as “my one little island of hope”, Tai Chi.

A friend of her mother first introduced Fiona to Tai Chi classes, run by Age UK in Brighton. For her, then reliant on benefits, the fact that they were free was incredible. After a break for a hip operation she returned to Tai Chi and took over leading the group as a volunteer following the death of a much-loved instructor. She trained and now leads the group, some of whom meet outside in the local park.

Recently Fiona, who is now 66 and living on her state pension, decided to make a significant change and use her passion and commitment to Tai Chi as a means of earning an income. Three Trees Tai Chi was born. What brought about this change?

Fiona points to the following: -

- The encouragement from Rowan a project worker at Age UK.
- The support of the manager at the Exeter Street Hall where she runs her classes - https://exeterstreethall.org/event/three-trees-tai-chi-2/?instance_id=88004
- The need to supplement her income in retirement
- The interest shown by people in a variety of settings who said they were happy to pay, and friends who were encouraging.

Fiona admits that it isn't easy and she had to find out about a range of things from public liability insurance to complex Covid-19 regulations. She still finds it hard to price her work and deal with money. At the outset she felt that the challenges were about increased responsibility and whether her own health would hold up. She also points to some of the positives that this change has brought about. Her self-esteem and pride have increased, she is no longer isolated but meeting people and it has enabled her to challenge what it means to be "old" in our community.

There is no long-term business plan and Fiona is taking it day by day. She admits that, although not large, the income still makes a difference to her. She feels a sense of achievement even at this early stage of her new venture. Of course, it also helps her to continue to practice the Tai Chi that has helped her overcome many difficulties in her own life.

We don't know what your list looked like but here is one we have drawn up

Similarities

- Both built on established interests and knowledge.
- Both had to find out about how to become self-managed.
- Both received support from a network of contacts.

Differences

- One was the initiative of a single person while the other involved a group who had worked together before.
- One relied on individual clients while the other worked with organisations as their primary source of income.
- One lived day to day while the other had to plan longer term.

What they both show is that starting out on your own is a real option for older people and can take a variety of forms. Here's a really simple example. A talented Facebook friend started to put up pictures of teddy bears she had knitted. They all had names and different clothes and she explained their unique personalities and likes and dislikes. More recently they have reappeared with price tags in time for Christmas shopping! It's something she enjoys doing and whilst it takes a lot of time on her part, the financial outlay is small.

5.4 Where do you start?

Ideas about what to do may not necessarily flow from work you've done previously. It could be a hobby or interest that you have long wanted to spend time doing but never been able to develop. Whatever it is there needs to be a basic idea about what you want to do with your time. To make a start, have a go at activity 1 below.



Activity 23

COMING UP WITH AN IDEA

Any decision to set up on your own has to start with an idea. This has to be something that not only inspires you but has a chance of succeeding. Make some notes about what you would do and how you think it would work. Most people initially think about what they can do from home.

In case you need inspiration here are 50 ideas to think about. They are simple, relatively low risk and may therefore appeal. Whilst a few of these are now problematic because of Covid-19, most can be done from home.

<https://www.theguardian.com/money/2010/sep/04/50-side-businesses-from-home>

My idea



Share your idea with friends/family and see how they react!

5.5 The skills you need

Whatever type of business set-up you're interested in, you'll still need employability skills like those we identified in **Module 2** – the transferable skills that you can take from job to job and indeed into running your own business.

- Creativity to devise and market your products/services.
- Problem solving for day to day issues.
- Resilience for set-backs.
- Self-discipline to keep up with the admin.
- Organisation skills to keep track of things.
- Numeracy skills to manage the numbers.

5.6 Keys to success

How often have you looked at your local area and seen another new shop opening doing the same as many others in the vicinity? For example, in Brighton you might wonder if we really need another coffee shop. Can't these people see how much competition there is and how

many cups of coffee you have to sell each day to make a living and pay the rent? But then the new owner will turn around and point you in the direction of Small Batch Coffee a successful family run business that has expanded. “If they can do it, so can I”. Enthusiasm and a willingness to succeed are important but not enough in themselves – here are some key ways to make sure you don’t fail.

5.6.1 Produce a business plan

Having a great new idea and the enthusiasm to run with it is just the start. It’s vital to have a thought-through business plan that maps out your objectives, how you’ll achieve them and how long it will take. It doesn’t have to be complicated. Think of it as road map – if you don’t know where you’re going, how will you ever get there? What will you do? Have you got all the skills needed? Have you researched demand? Do the figures add up? How much will you need to invest? How will you market it? Can you manage the admin? How much income can you expect?

5.6.2 Keep track of your cash flow

Starting out on the entrepreneurial path generally involves some financial risk, and we don’t just mean potentially leaving paid employment. There are set up costs, and cash flow – the speed that money is coming in versus how quickly it’s going out. You must make sure you keep on top of your income and expenditure even if numbers and spreadsheets aren’t your favourite thing.

5.6.3 Understand the marketplace

Marketing is a key aspect of any business plan and that includes understanding and adapting to competition as well as identifying your USP (unique selling point) – i.e. what makes your product or service better than that of competitors.

5.7 Managing risk

When you looked at the case studies in 5.3 above you’ll have seen that, although a lot of time input was necessary, the financial risks were low. Here are some questions you might want to ask on managing risk when it comes to self-employment.

Ask yourself the following: -

1. Does my idea have a reasonable chance of success and what would success look like?
2. How much time, effort and energy am I prepared to devote to this initiative?
3. Does my business plan look viable?
4. Am I clear about the support I need and where to get it?
5. What are the risks of it failing?
6. How would I go about reducing the risk of failure?
7. How easy would it be to walk away without any impact on my finances?
8. How does this fit in with other aspects of my work/life balance?

Finally, it is worth bearing in mind that, whatever you plan to do, it is for a limited time only. It is not the start of a 45-year career! Treating it as a short-term project with a limited timeframe is not a bad way of going about it. One of the benefits of experimentation at this stage in our lives is that we can exercise choice. Choosing whether or not to start along this path, determining the limits of what we are prepared to commit to any initiative, and deciding when to stop.

5.8 What type of organisation should you go for and where can you get help?

You can work full-time or part-time, from home or outside the home and as a sole trader, company or in partnership with someone else. If you have social objectives, you can operate as a social enterprise (part of the third sector) whereby you draw an income but commit to reinvesting any profits back into your business so they benefit the local community.

Advice about different types of business

<https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/thinking-of-starting-up-in-business>

Rules and regulations

<https://www.gov.uk/set-up-business>

<https://www.gov.uk/set-up-a-social-enterprise>

Local organisations with links to local sources of support include:

Age UK

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/work-learning/looking-for-work/be-your-own-boss/>

Brighton and Hove Council support for small businesses

<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/news/2020/supporting-small-businesses>



Activity 24

PREPARATION FOR MODULE 6

1. What did you gain from completing module 5?
2. Who have you discussed your ideas with? Can they add to your ideas? Could you combine your skills with someone else's to come up with a different/better idea for starting a business?
3. What's your next step going to be?

MODULE 6 – WHERE NEXT?

In this final module we want to briefly review what you've done in past weeks and enable you to use it to help shape your future plans. It may seem shorter in length but it involves a good deal of thinking time and it's critical that you don't rush the process. At the end of this module you will have: -

- Completed a review of the main priorities you identified.
- Summarised these in your personal action plan.
- Agreed a process for reviewing your own progress.

6.1 Step 1: Setting your goal(s)

At the end of **Module 1** we asked you to say what you would like to be doing in six months' time. In the weeks that followed we explored different areas that might help you test out your early intentions. Now is the time for you to re-visit your ambition as it may have changed or been modified. But it is really important that you have a goal. Something concrete you are aiming for. You can have more than one goal but it is best to keep it simple. For example, I will have secured a job as a care worker, I want to volunteer at my local school, I'm going to set up a business. Write your goal in the box below

Activity 25

Step 1: My work goal:

6.2 Step 2: My skills

In **Module 2 (Activity 8)** you were encouraged to identify what you thought were your current employability skills. In **Module 5** we looked at skills for self-employment. These weren't restricted to skills acquired at work but could include those developed outside work. The important point was to identify what you saw as your strengths. Now you have had time to reflect further on those, you can review your list and write them in the box below.

Activity 26

Step 2: My work skills

6.3 Step 3: Skills I can work on

In **Module 3** you were asked to look at various job opportunities and match your skills and experience against specific vacancies. In doing this you may have gained a sense of areas where you thought your skills may be missing or need refreshing. In **Module 5** we introduced the idea of working for yourself. We pointed to a number of skills and attributes for people striking out in their own.

Opportunities to learn have multiplied beyond all recognition with the advent of on-line resources. For example, if you want to do a simple DIY task then you'll find an explanatory video on YouTube. Some are provided by businesses encouraging you to buy their products for your DIY. As well as these, there are many free learning resources from reputable organisation that you can access. The Open University's Future Learn offers free, online, short courses you can do at a time to suit you. We have picked out two.

Suppose you wanted to brush up on project management?

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/project-management>

Alternatively, what if you need a quick and basic grasp of accounts?

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/money-business/fundamentals-accounting/content-section-overview>

The important point to bear in mind is that the learning you do in later life is very different from that you undertook growing up.

- It is less likely to be about getting qualifications or doing exams.
- It is likely to be shorter.
- It can have benefits that improve your health and wellbeing.
- It is more likely to be informal than formal.
- It needn't be about success or failure.

For a prospective employer, showing evidence of learning and a willingness to continue learning is important. So, if you think you have gaps in your knowledge, take a look at what's out there. There may be help coming as a result of the pandemic. The Lifetime Skills Guarantee will be introduced from April 2020 giving adults without an A level (or equivalent) access to free college courses that help them improve their employability skills. Keep an eye out for more detail on this. In the meantime, use the box below to identify skills you can work on.

Activity 27

Step 3: Skills I can work on

6.4 Step 4: My resources

You needn't be alone in developing your ideas or acting upon them. In **Module 2** we introduced the idea of networks both real and virtual as a resource you could call on. We've also signposted various sources of information and organisations whose job it is to support you. Being resourceful in thinking about new opportunities is about making the most of the support you can draw on to help you achieve your goals. You know what comes next! In the box below list the resources that you think can help you achieve your goal.

Activity 28

Step 4: My resources

6.5 Step 5: My action plan

Planning helps you prepare for the obstacles ahead and keep you on track. And with an effective action plan, you can keep yourself focused. This might seem like a tall order but if you've completed Steps 1 to 4, you're the best part of the way there. In this fifth stage you are going to complete some of the detail. This involves breaking down your goal into a series of manageable tasks with a deadline for each task. It also involves identifying any resources you need for each task.

Here are some benefits of an action plan:

- Breaking your goal into steps makes it less daunting.
- Listing all the steps will help you work out what to prioritise.
- You'll then be clear on what steps to take and when.
- Tracking your progress regularly will keep you motivated.

Use the boxes below to set out your tasks and remember to keep it simple. This might be easier if you're able to use Word rather than draft and re-draft your plan by hand.

 Activity 29			
Task	Deadline	Resources	Progress

6.6 Step 6 Bringing it together

Thus far, we've broken the action plan down into five stages. The final stage is to bring these together into one document. If you've been using Word this should be a simple cut and paste job. It may be easier to re-type your response to Step 5! This isn't designed to tie you to one route or pathway. For example, there might be a different way to achieving your goal or it might turn out to be unrealistic. If so, you need to be prepared to think again. If you have multiple goals (for example, a mix of paid and voluntary work) you might need an action plan for each option.

 Activity 30 MY WORK ACTION PLAN			
Step 1 My goal			
Step 2 My work skills			
Step 3 Skills to work on			
Step 4 My resources			
Step 5 Action Plan			
Task	Deadline	Resources	Progress

6.7 The final stage

Yes, you have almost finished but before you do we suggest to re-visit two themes we introduced in earlier modules.

The first is about the barriers you might face in finding work. This was raised in [Activity 2 in Module 1](#). Go back and have a look at it. Can you remove any of them as a result of this programme? What might you do to tackle the ones that remain? How important are they? You probably can't remove them all and you might have put your age as one! We sadly can't turn the clock back but we have tried to show you that age, of itself, needn't be a barrier.

Secondly, we have discussed the issue of a work/life balance and how important it is to see the role that work might play in this context. [Activity 7 in Module 2](#) introduced this issue. You might want to think about changes you can make to create a new balance that means you invest time in looking after yourself. Take another look at Activity 7 would you adjust the balance having thought more about the role you want work to play?

If it would be helpful to you, we'd be happy to review your action plan at a point that suits you after the end of this programme. This will enable you to take stock, share any success, frustration or disappointment but also amend your plans based on your experience to date. So, this isn't goodbye. If you wish, we'll arrange speak to you again. In the meantime, we wish you every success in making the most of this stage of your life. It is a stage where you can continue to change, adapt and learn new things.