

Early Careers  
Employability Guide

The purpose of this guide is to support you through the application process for a new role at Places for People. This could be one of our apprenticeships, a traineeship, a graduate role or a new career.



## Contents

- 4 Who are Places for People?
- 6 Cover letters and CVs
- 14 Video interviews
- 18 Telephone interviews
- 20 Assessment centres
- 22 Competency-based interview
- 25 Things to consider
- 26 How we score interviews
- 28 The STAR method



➤ **We understand that embarking on a new career journey can be daunting, particularly at the outset. This guide is designed to offer comprehensive support throughout the process.**

It provides opportunities for learning and refining interview skills, starting from expressing initial interest to excelling at assessment centres. Our business consists of complementary companies that are market leaders in placemaking, regeneration and development, investment management, property management and leisure.

Working together, we have the expertise and reach to create and manage entire Communities at every stage of our Customers' lives - providing homes, services support and infrastructure that enable our Customers and their Communities to thrive.



**Who are  
Places for  
People?**

Our Early Careers options will give you exposure to different areas of the organisation, alongside opportunities to progress — in fact, we have a proven track record of developing our own talent and supporting People every step of the way.

You can find examples of our early careers roles by clicking the button below:

[Discover your career](#)

**Take the  
first step  
towards  
your career**



# Cover letters and CVs ↗

→ Whilst this can be a time-consuming process, it's important that you dedicate time to each job application and cover letter. By tailoring your CV and application form to a specific type of role it can demonstrate your interest in Places for People and the role we are advertising.

This section will provide a detailed insight into each step considering how you can utilise your CV, cover letter and application form to demonstrate your employability and create a great first impression.



## ➤ Cover letters and supporting statements

At Places for People you have the opportunity to add a supporting statement and a cover letter to your application. There is no word limit you need to consider but you should ensure that it is direct and holds relevant information.

### Things to consider

- Include why you are interested in the role, why you want to work at Places for People, why you are a suitable candidate and how it fits with your long-term ambitions.
- Consider your spelling and grammar. Utilise programmes like Grammarly
- Avoid copying chunks of text from employer websites
- Write in a professional style, using short sentences that are paragraphed.
- If you are going to refer to the job title, make sure you reference the right one.

### What we look for

- well-researched application and relevant to the role you've applied for
- personality and an opportunity to understand the person behind the CV

### Why we use cover letters

- understand interest
- support with CV sifting



Creating opportunities





Learn new skills

## ➤ Your CV

### Clarity and conciseness

Ensure your CV is clear, well-organised, and concise. Use a clean and professional format with clearly defined sections such as contact information, summary, work experience, education, skills and achievements. Avoid unnecessary details and focus on key information that highlights your qualifications.

### Tailor to the job

Customise your CV for each job application. Analyse the job description and requirements, then align your skills, experience, and achievements with what the employer is seeking. This demonstrates that you have taken the time to understand the role and are a good fit for the position.

### Quantify achievements

Provide concrete examples of your accomplishments and quantify them whenever possible. Use specific numbers, percentages, or timeframes to highlight the impact of your work. This adds credibility to your claims and helps employers understand the scope of your contributions.

### Showcase relevant skills

Highlight both hard and soft skills that are relevant to the job. Include technical skills, certifications, and any specialised training you possess. Additionally, emphasise soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, as these are often highly valued by employers.

### Include a compelling summary

Begin your CV with a brief and impactful summary that captures your professional identity and career goals. This section should provide a snapshot of your experience, skills, and what you bring to the table. A well-crafted summary can grab the employer's attention and encourage them to read the rest of your CV.

# Exercise

➤ Why are you interested in this role?

➤ What would you consider being your biggest achievement?



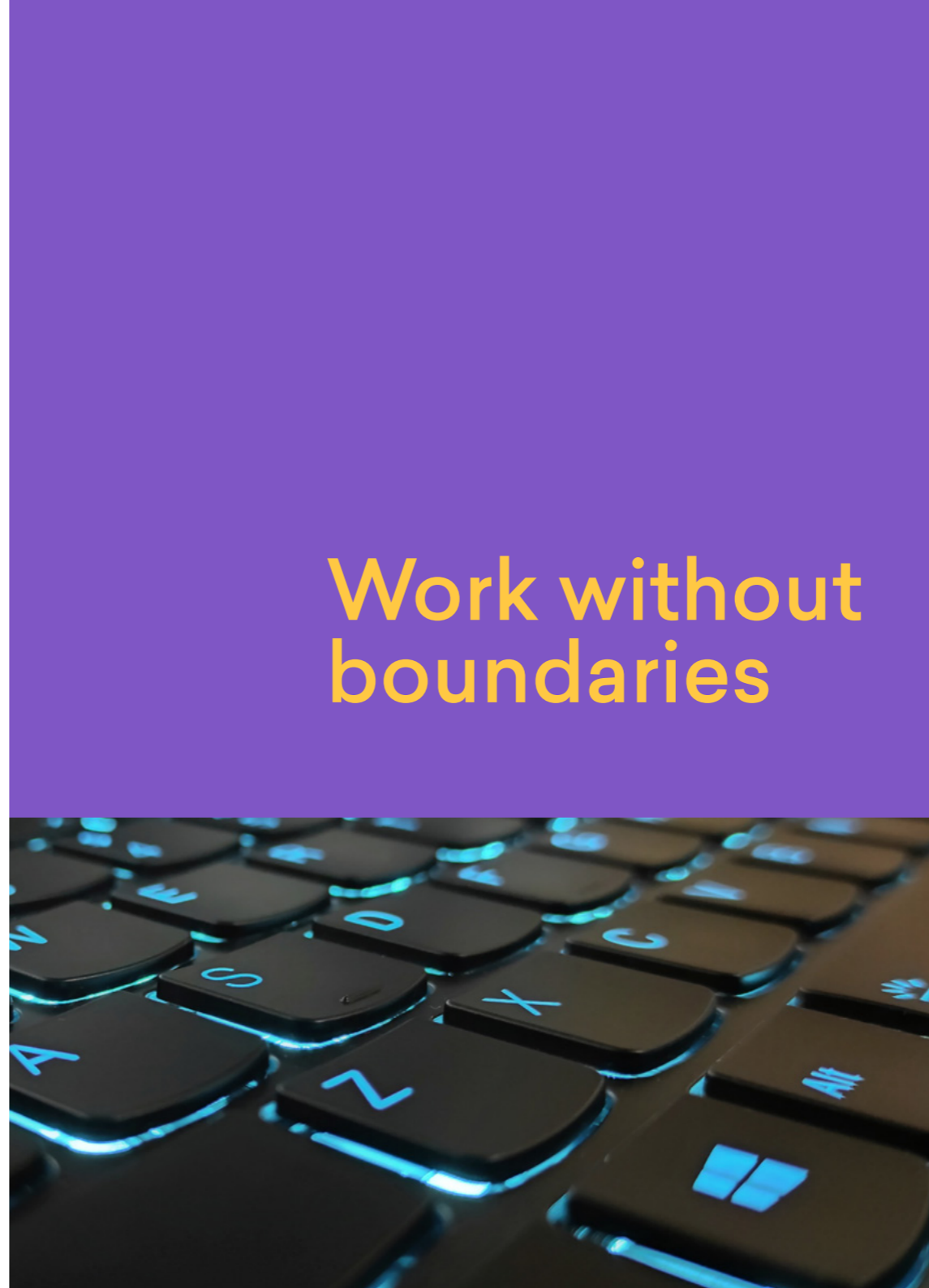
## ➤ Video interviews

At Places for People, we sometimes use a pre-recorded video interview to support our sifting. We see this as a valuable part of our selection process as it will allow you to bring your CV to life and explain your experience in more detail than you can on a CV alone.

The interview is sent out via our recruitment system and will give you the chance to record answers to a small number of simple questions. You will always receive the questions ahead of time and have the opportunity to re-record if you aren't happy with your response.

Remember, the goal of a pre-recorded video interview is to showcase your personality effectively, even without direct interaction. Following these tips can help you make a strong impression and increase your chances of moving forward in the hiring process.

# Work without boundaries







### Prepare and test technology

Ensure that your equipment, such as camera, microphone, and internet connection, is in good working order. Test the video platform beforehand to familiarise yourself with its features. Choose a quiet, well-lit space and position the camera at eye level to create a professional appearance.

### Dress professionally

Approach the pre-recorded video interview with professionalism in mind. Choose an outfit that makes you feel confident and reflects your personal style. While it's important to present yourself in a polished manner, there's no one-size-fits-all approach to dress. Consider the company culture and the expectations of the role when selecting your outfit. Ultimately, the goal is to make a positive impression while staying true to yourself.

### Practise responses but maintain authenticity

Anticipate common interview questions and rehearse your responses but maintain authenticity. Aim for a conversational tone and clarity in your delivery. Express enthusiasm for the position and the company in your answers.

### Mind your body language

Non-verbal cues are important, even in a pre-recorded setting. Sit upright, maintain good posture, and use gestures naturally. Direct your gaze at the camera to establish a connection with the viewer.

### Time management

Respect time limits by familiarising yourself with the allotted time for each question. Keep your responses focused and avoid going off on tangents. If the platform allows, take advantage of re-recording options to refine your answers.

**The future  
depends on  
what you do  
today**

## Exercise

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**Introduce yourself and tell us something you are passionate about**

## ➤ Telephone interviews

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At Places for People we may utilise a telephone interview as the final sifting stage before an assessment centre and video interview. These are relaxed informal conversations with a member of the Early Careers Team.

This would be a short 5-10 minute phone call relating to your CV and your motivations for applying. It also allows you to ask our team any questions you have relating to the process at Places for People.

### What we look for

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- continued enthusiasm for the role
- a natural flow to your answer

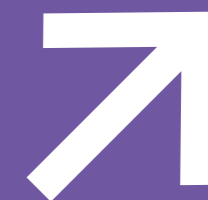
## Why we use telephone interviews

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- speak to you in person
- give you an opportunity to ask questions prior to the video/in-person interviews



World class training



## ➤ Assessment centres

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Assessment centres give you the opportunity to demonstrate a wide range of skills through various different activities. Each of our assessment centres are designed with you and the role you want in mind.

At our assessment centres, you will be given the opportunity to meet your potential line manager and the team you'll be a part of. Each assessment takes half a day and can be delivered in person or via Teams.

To ensure you have the best chance of success, here are our suggestions for how to approach the assessment centre.

**Research and understand the company**  
Demonstrate a solid understanding of the company's values, culture, and business operations. Incorporate this knowledge into your responses during group discussions and individual assessments. This not only showcases your interest but also aligns you with our goals.

**Effective communication and collaboration**  
Actively engage in group activities, discussions, and exercises. Showcase your ability to communicate clearly, listen actively, and contribute thoughtfully to team efforts. Employ good interpersonal skills and demonstrate your capacity to work collaboratively with others to achieve common goals.

**Problem-solving and critical thinking**  
Approach problem-solving tasks with a structured and logical mindset. Clearly articulate your thought process, considering various perspectives and potential solutions. Showcase your ability to think critically, analyse information, and make informed decisions under pressure.

**Adaptability and flexibility**  
Be prepared to adapt to unexpected changes or challenges presented during the assessment centre. Employ flexibility in your approach to tasks and demonstrate the ability to adjust to new information or situations. Employers often value candidates who can handle ambiguity and remain composed.

**Professionalism and networking**  
Present yourself professionally in terms of dress, demeanour, and communication style, while respecting diverse cultural norms and personal expressions. Be courteous to fellow candidates, assessors, and any company representatives you encounter.

Use networking opportunities during breaks or informal sessions to make a positive impression and express genuine interest in the company and its employees.

Remember, an assessment centre is designed to evaluate various competencies beyond technical skills. Showcase your ability to work well with others, solve problems, and contribute positively to a team environment.

The team will be looking to see who a great fit for Places for People will be and who demonstrates our People Promises.

# A step in the right direction





# Competency based interview

→ We will sometimes conduct standalone interviews as part of our selection process, and assessment centres will often have an interview element built into them.

We want each candidate to do well in an interview and recommend that everyone coming to meet us should use the **STAR** method to answer — which stands for: **Situation; Task; Action; and Result.**





## Learn new skills



### Things to consider

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- Research the company, role and interesting projects we are part of.
- Answer the question asked. Take a breath and don't be afraid to ask for clarity.
- Use positive body language and eye contact.
- Adopt a friendly approach.
- Use examples — think outside of your working and educational environments.
- Justify opinions.
- Avoid long-winded explanations, be concise and clear.
- Highlight the role you played to deliver success and take ownership of your examples.

### What we look for

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- structure
- enthusiasm
- drive / ambitions
- motivations
- opinions
- knowledge (both technical and research)
- our People Promises

### Why we use interviews

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- to identify the best person for the role
- to understand strengths and areas of development
- to get to know you, your experience and character

### Interview feedback

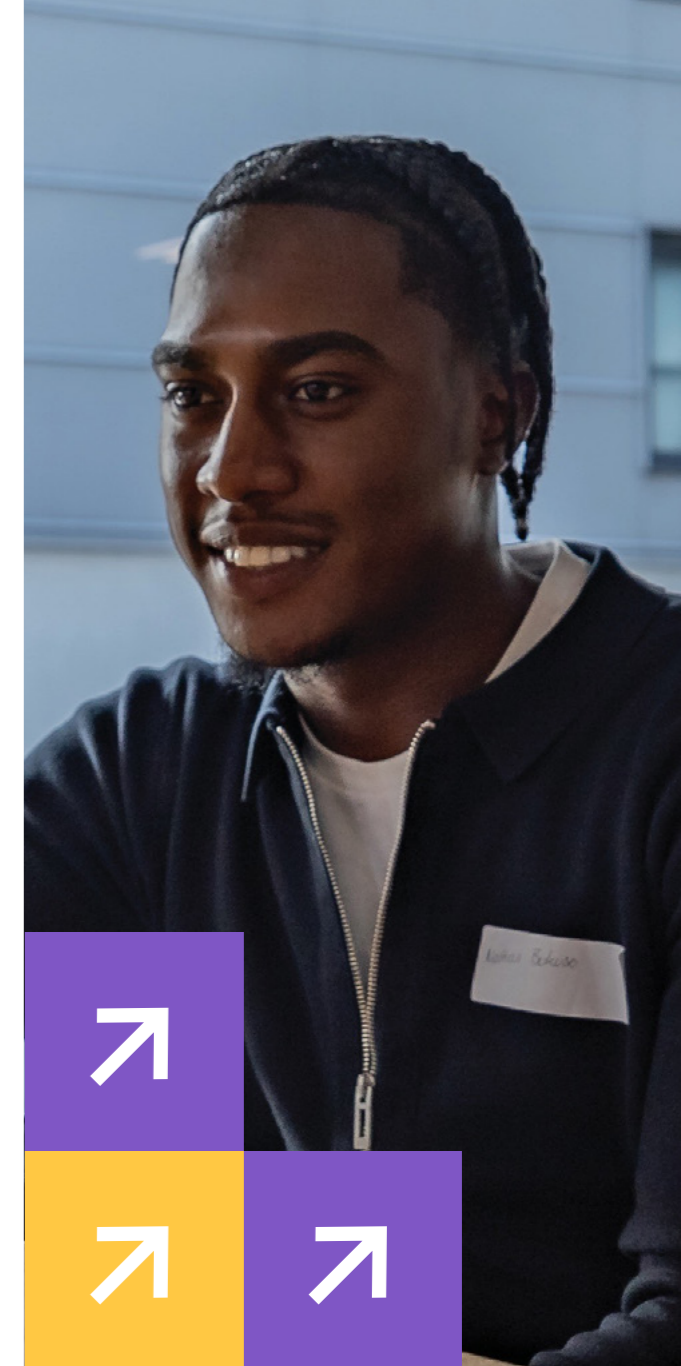
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If you are unsuccessful at the assessment centre we will guarantee interview feedback. This will come directly from the manager and provide guidance that you can put into practice at future interviews.

## ➤ How we score interviews

To ensure a constant approach across our interviews, all managers will be scoring candidates using the same method.

Rating	Level	Description	Evidence
5	Outstanding	Meets all the competency definition	Evidence of strength in this competency demonstrated across all the agreed behaviours.
4	Good	Meets more than half of the competency definition	Evidence of strength in this competency demonstrated across approximately more than half of all the agreed behaviours.
3	Acceptable	Meets half of the competency definition	Evidence of strength across some of the agreed behaviours with minor areas of weakness or inconsistency.
2	Marginal	Meets less than half of the competency definition	Evidence of weakness / less than acceptable performance across most of the agreed behaviours.
1	Poor	Meets none of the competency definition	Evidence of weakness / less than acceptable performance across all the agreed behaviours. No strengths demonstrated.





## ➤ The STAR method

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An easy way to ensure you are answering the question thoroughly is to use **STAR** which stands for: **S**ituation; **T**ask; **A**ction; and **R**esult.

Please create an answer to the following questions using the Star (+L) technique:

- Situation
- Task
- Action
- Result
- Learnings

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### Exercise

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Describe a time when you have had to overcome a setback in order to be successful.



Step into  
your career



# Exercise

- Give a specific example of something you did which helped build confidence in others. What were some of the outcomes?

- Give an example of a time when you went above and beyond in order to get the task done. Why did you feel it was necessary?

Early   
Careers

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