

CAREERS ADVICE SERVICE REVEALS THE TOP 10 CV MISTAKES

Advice on what not to do to get your dream job

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Getting your CV right can mean the difference between securing an interview for your ideal job or having your application quickly consigned to the bin. Understanding that first impressions really do count, the Careers Advice Service has identified the 10 most common mistakes made on CVs in order to help people avoid making them.

Research shows that as many as one in four CVs contain spelling errors, with candidates regularly mixing up 'their', 'they're' and 'there'. The research also reveals that job seekers are regularly criticised for using slang words such as 'ain't' and 'gonna' in CVs.

Mark O'Pray, a Careers Coach at the Careers Advice Service comments: "We review hundreds of CVs at the Careers Advice Service so we often see the common mistakes that people make. We want to help candidates avoid all the major CV no-no's in order to put them in the best possible light in the eyes of prospective employers. With the UK job market more competitive than ever, it's vital that your CV helps you stand out from the crowd - for all the right reasons!"

Below are the top 10 CV blunders identified by the Careers Advice Service which should be avoided at all costs:

1. Spelling and grammar errors

There is nothing more off-putting for an employer than a CV that is riddled with spelling mistakes or grammatical errors! Always use the spell-check function on your computer or double-check words you're not sure about with a dictionary. It's always worth asking a friend or relative to proof read your CV before you send it out.

2. Sloppy formatting

A CV which uses inconsistent fonts, a mix of headings and sizes or paragraphs and bullet points that do not align will look confusing and messy. Decide on the font and format you want to use and stick to it throughout the document.

3. Too long or too short

Get the length right. CVs are often too long with far too much information or too short with hardly any information at all. It should be two pages in length, maximum.

4. Poor structure

Your personal statement needs to be your biggest selling point. This is the first thing a prospective employer will see so it needs to be relevant to the job you are applying for.

5. Gaps in employment

If there are times when you were not working – for example because of maternity leave, travelling or sickness – these need to be explained. Never assume an employer will know your life history and gaps in information might be viewed with suspicion.

6. Being negative

You don't need to go into the reasons why you left your last job on your CV – it's irrelevant to your application. A prospective employer is unlikely to be too impressed by someone who complains about their old boss or the long hours they had to work. Stay positive and upbeat.

7. Poor quality

It's highly unlikely that a potential employer will take you seriously if you send out your CV on scrappy paper. Presentation is just as important as content, so invest in some high quality paper and also make sure there is enough ink in the printer first.

8. Full references

You don't need to include full references on your CV. If the employer is really interested in you, you can supply these after your interview. A line that simply says 'References available on request' at the bottom of your CV will suffice.

9. Irrelevant information

Simply sending through a standard CV or one that has been written for a different job role will not impress a potential new boss. Employers like to see a CV appropriate to their vacancy so check the job requirements and tailor accordingly.

10. Lying

You will be found out! Remember that your CV should always be a true representation of yourself and you should not need to resort to lying about your experience or qualifications. Instead, believe that your skills and talent are enough to help get you the job.

Mark adds: "Our CV Builder is a great online tool for helping people avoid the mistakes made far too frequently by job applicants. By steering clear of these common CV mistakes and using our step-by-step guide to creating a great CV from scratch, you are sure to maximise your chances of securing that all-important interview."

Check out the video of Mark with advice on how to write a CV that will stand out from the crowd on the Careers Advice Service media hub at: <http://newmediaroom.careers-advice.org/>

You will find the Careers Advice Service's CV Builder at www.direct.gov.uk/careersadvice. Advice includes:

1. [Build my Job Seeking Skills](#) - get tips on how to look for a job, prepare for an interview and get on at work
2. [Build my CV Confidence](#) - identify your own skills and qualities and see how other people have found success
3. [Build my CV Knowledge](#) - find out everything you need to know about CVs, covering letters and application forms
4. [Build my CV](#) - create your CV in just 12 easy-to-follow steps!

The Careers Advice Service provides free, impartial and confidential advice for those interested in learning a new skill; who want to find information on different courses or help with finding out about funding options and ways to get started in a new career.

The Careers Advice Service is open seven days a week from 8am to 10pm. To speak to a Careers Advice Service adviser call **0800 100 900** or visit www.direct.gov.uk/careersadvice.

Official Website: www.direct.gov.uk/careersadvice

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/careers_advice1](https://twitter.com/careers_advice1)

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Careers-Advice-Service/202088201941>

Media hub: <http://newmediaroom.careers-advice.org/>

For free face to face careers information and advice to adults, nextstep provides help and support in updating skills, training, learning and work. The service is available throughout England. The nextstep advisers are able to provide careers information and advice based

on detailed knowledge of the learning and work opportunities available locally. For more details visit: <http://nextstep.direct.gov.uk/>

-ENDS-

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Notes to Editors

¹ Source: Survey of 1,000 employers on behalf of the Department for Education and Skills by The Survey Shop (2007)

The Careers Advice Service was formerly known as Learndirect Careers Advice, and is now part of the Learning and Skills Council who are responsible for funding impartial information and advice services for adults in England.

About the Careers Advice Service

- The Careers Advice Service is open seven days a week from 8am to 10pm on freephone 0800 100 900.
- Information is also available online through the website at www.direct.gov.uk/careersadvice
- Careers advisers provide a free, impartial and confidential telephone advice service to people looking to choose a new career or get back into the workplace
- The Careers Advice Service offers information on almost 1 million courses from thousands of learning providers nationwide
- The Careers Advice Service has taken over 9.4 million calls since 1999 from people wanting careers information, advice and guidance

Careers Tools and Services

The Careers Advice Service offers a variety of tools to help you learn new skills, get back into the workforce or change jobs. The service also offers learning advice and assistance on a wide variety of issues, such as:

- Childcare issues
- People with disabilities
- Costs of learning
- Returning to work
- Redundancy
- Help with reading, writing and maths
- Decision-making

CV Builder

The Careers Advice Service website (www.direct.gov.uk/careersadvice) has an online CV-building tool that can help you make the most of your abilities and experience, and tailor your CV for the job you want. The CV-builder involves you answering a series of questions, filling in your details and talking about your interests, resulting in a bespoke CV based on your responses.

nextstep face-to-face services

The nextstep service offers free face to face careers information and advice to adults aged 20 plus. The service is also available to adults aged 18 and 19 who have been referred to nextstep by Jobcentre Plus. nextstep provides help and support in updating skills ,training, learning and work. The service is available throughout England. The nextstep advisers are able to provide careers information and advice based on detailed knowledge of the learning and work opportunities available locally. nextstep maintains close links with the Careers Advice Service, and there are referrals between the two organisations to ensure that the customer receives the best possible service. Details of your nearest nextstep centre can be found at <http://nextstep.direct.gov.uk/>

Learning and Skills Council:

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

The LSC offers a host of support services to help those who are already in the workforce, or are about to enter the workforce, to gain the skills they need to succeed, secure their future or grow their income. For example, you could receive the Adult Learning Grant (ALG) for your decided course, a grant designed as a helping hand for adults thinking about learning but worried about the financial barriers standing in their way. ALG provides low income adult learners with up to £30 a week to help with the extra costs of learning. Since the grant became available, over 43,000 people have received ALG. You could also access training at work through the LSC's flagship programme for employers, Train to Gain.

ⁱ Department for Education and Skills