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Be the easiest person to say yes to: CV, NVQ, licence, experience, and how many to send

Anybody applying for sponsored work in the UK, in any sector. Most useful if you are applying and hearing nothing back.

This document is free. We did not ask for your email to give it to you and there is nothing to buy at the end of it. Share it with anybody. Checking whether a company holds a Home Office sponsor licence is also free on our site, with no account.

The idea, in one paragraph

A manager with forty applications and one vacancy is not looking for the best person in the world. They are looking for the person who is easiest to say yes to. Easiest means: I can see what you have done, I can see you are allowed to do it, I can see your certificate, I can reach your referees, and nothing in your application creates work for me.

Almost everything below is about removing work from their desk. You cannot control whether they like you. You can control whether you are the least trouble in the pile.

1. The CV that survives thirty seconds

Your CV gets about thirty seconds on the first pass. It is not read, it is scanned, and the scan is looking for four things: what you did, where, how long, and what you are qualified to do.

1. Two pages. Not one, not five. A one page CV in care looks like no experience; a five page CV does not get read.
2. Your name, city, phone and email at the top. A UK mobile if you have one. An email that is your name, not a nickname from ten years ago.
3. One line under your name that says what you are: Care Assistant, three years, dementia and end of life, NVQ Level 3, full UK driving licence. That line does more work than the rest of the page.
4. Jobs in reverse order with real dates, month and year. Gaps are fine and unexplained gaps are not. One line is enough: studying, caring for family, visa processing.
5. Under each job, four or five bullet points that say what you did, not what the job was. Supported fourteen residents on a dementia unit is worth more than duties included personal care.

6. A qualifications block with your NVQ or RQF level, the Care Certificate, moving and handling, safeguarding, medication, first aid, and the year for each.
7. Right to work, in one honest line. Either what you hold, or that you are seeking sponsorship. Hiding it wastes everyone's time including yours.
8. References available on request is fine on the CV, but have the two real ones ready the moment they ask.
9. Save it as a PDF and put your own name in the file name. A file called Document1.docx tells them something before they open it.

2. Write what you did, not what the job was

This is the single biggest difference between CVs that get calls and CVs that do not, and it costs nothing to fix.

A job description is what anybody in that post does. What you did is yours. Put numbers on it wherever you honestly can: how many people you supported, how big the home was, how many on a shift, what you were trusted with.

1. Weak: Responsible for personal care. Strong: Supported 14 residents on a 28 bed dementia unit with personal care, meals and mobility, working as one of three carers on the late shift.
2. Weak: Administered medication. Strong: Administered medication from MAR charts for 20 residents after completing in house competency, with no medication errors recorded.
3. Weak: Worked with challenging behaviour. Strong: Supported two residents with distressed behaviour using their behaviour support plans, and logged triggers that led the team to move one resident's personal care to the afternoon.
4. Weak: Good team worker. Delete it. Every CV says it and no manager has ever shortlisted anyone for it.

3. What NVQ Level 2, 3 and 4 actually buy you

In England these are now RQF Diplomas in Adult Care, but everybody still says NVQ, so both words are used below.

Level 2 (Diploma in Care)

The working carer's qualification. It says you have been assessed doing the job, not just taught about it. For most care assistant posts it moves you from maybe to interview. If you are new, the Care Certificate comes first and usually within your first twelve weeks; it is not a qualification but it is the thing managers expect to see started.

Level 3 (Diploma in Adult Care)

The one that changes your pay and your options. Senior carer, team leader and most supervisory posts expect it or expect you to be working towards it. It is also what makes a sponsored senior role credible, because a senior post with no Level 3 is exactly the kind of thing a compliance officer asks questions about. If you have started it, put working towards Level 3 on the CV with the date you started. That counts.

Level 4 and Level 5

Lead practitioner and management. Level 5 is the registered manager qualification. You do not need these to get a care job and you should not wait for them. But if you have one, it belongs on the first line of your CV, not on page two.

I am still studying. Does it count?

Yes, and say so specifically. Enrolled on Level 3 Diploma in Adult Care, started March 2026, expected completion early 2027 tells a manager you are staying and that they will not have to push you. Working towards a qualification with no dates tells them nothing.

4. The driving licence

In domiciliary care, a full UK driving licence and access to a car roughly doubles the number of jobs you can apply for, and it is often worth more on the CV than a qualification. Home care runs on people who can get between calls.

If you hold a licence from another country, find out now whether and for how long you can drive on it, and whether you can exchange it. Do not leave this to the week you get a job offer.

If you do not drive, say what you can do instead: public transport, a specific area you can cover, a willingness to work in a care home rather than in the community. Silence on this point reads as no.

1. Put it on the top line: Full UK driving licence, own car.
2. Get your DVLA check code before the interview. It takes two minutes and it makes you look organised.
3. If you are learning, say the test date. A date is a fact; hoping to learn is not.

5. The paperwork that delays a start date

Almost every delayed start in care comes from the same four things, and all four can be done before you are even offered anything.

1. DBS. If you can, join the update service when you get your certificate. It costs a small annual fee and it means your next employer can check the same certificate instead of waiting weeks for a new one.
2. Two referees, told in advance, with correct phone numbers and email addresses. One should be a manager if you can manage it. A referee who does not answer is the most common cause of a start date slipping.
3. Right to work documents in one place: passport, BRP or eVisa share code, share code generated fresh when asked because they expire.
4. Certificates as scans, in one folder, named clearly. Every application asks for the same six files, and most applicants go looking for them every time.

6. Then apply properly, and apply a lot

This is the part nobody likes hearing and it is the part that decides most outcomes.

Even a strong, prepared applicant hears nothing from most employers. Not because of them, and usually not because of you: the post was filled internally, the rota changed, the manager left, the advert was old. The only defence is volume, and volume is only possible when everything above is already done, because then each application costs you ten minutes instead of two hours.

1. Set a number per week you can actually keep, and keep it. Ten real applications a week beats forty in one Sunday and nothing for a fortnight.
2. Apply to licensed employers. Checking takes seconds and is free, and an application to a company that cannot sponsor was decided before you pressed send.
3. Apply to fresh adverts. An advert over a fortnight old is usually gone. On this site nothing older than fifteen days is shown, which is why the list is shorter than other sites and worth more.
4. Keep a simple list: company, role, date applied, outcome. Not to be organised for its own sake, but because in week six you will not remember who you have already contacted, and applying twice looks careless.
5. Follow up once, politely, after a week. Once.
6. Do not pay anybody. Not for a job, not for a certificate of sponsorship, not for being put forward. In the UK that is a crime and the person asking knows it.

What this looks like when it works

A prepared applicant has the plastic wallet, the two page PDF, the certificate scans in one folder, two warned referees, a DVLA check code, and a list of the ten companies they applied to this week, all of which hold a licence.

They do not get every job. They get shortlisted far more often than the person with the same experience and none of the above, and when they do get an offer nothing delays the start date.

That is the whole of it. It is not clever and it is not quick, and it is the part you control.

This is interview practice, not legal or immigration advice. For your own case speak to a regulated adviser or a support organisation. We are a job alert service and we do not charge for any of this.