



Tower Hamlets Careers Service

Interview Skills for Apprenticeships and Jobs

Interviews can be daunting so here a few tips to help you overcome your nerves and present yourself in the best possible light.

Before the interview

1.

Research – find out as much as you can about company. What do they make? What service do they provide? Who are their customers? Check out the website – it's amazing what you'll learn.

How does this help? One sure way to impress an interviewer is to show them you know something about their organisation.

2.

Plan your journey – If you're using public transport you'll find help including maps, directions, train, tube and bus information on the **Transport for London Journey Planner Website**: www.journeyplanner.tfl.gov.uk. If you're going by road, make sure you take account of the traffic conditions. Busy roads cause delays!

How does this help? It's easy to get delayed, or even lost, travelling to an unfamiliar location, planning your journey will help to reduce your stress and get you there on time.

3.

Make sure you understand the job – The best way to do this is to read the job description, but if you're still in doubt you could always check the National Careers Service website: www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk where you will find information on thousands of jobs.

How does this help? There are two main reasons for finding out more about the job

- I. Helps you to decide that this is really the job for you
- II. Helps you deal with tricky questions like "*Tell me why you would be good at this job*"

Making an Impression at the Interview

1.

Dressing for the occasion – Knowing the right thing to wear can be tricky. You know you need to dress smartly, but you also want to feel comfortable. In most cases "smart casual" clothes are acceptable. **Don't wear** jeans, trainers, hoodies or hats. Very short skirts and low cut tops are also not advisable.

How does this help? First impressions matter, so even before you say anything, the clothes you wear tell the employer something about you. *Make sure it's something positive.*

2.

Communication – is about listening as well as speaking. Make sure you listen to the questions you're being asked, this will help you to answer them clearly and logically. If you don't hear or understand a question then ask the interviewer (politely) to repeat it. It's better to ask than to get it wrong.

How does this help? Answering the questions you're asked and asking for clarification when you don't understand, avoids confusion and shows that you're interested in the job.

3.

Body language – is sometimes called non-verbal communication for the very good reason that it can send silent messages about you. *Make sure they're positive.*

Greet the interviewer with a smile and the offer of a handshake.

Sit with your legs crossed and your back resting against the back of the chair, with your hands folded on your knees. This will help you appear relaxed (*even if that's not how you feel*).

Eye contact– Try to look directly at the person you're speaking to, particularly when you're answering questions. This will reassure the interviewer that you're listening to them, you're confident about your answers and you're giving an honest reply.

Tone of voice– speak clearly and just loud enough for everyone to hear – never mumble and never shout.

How does this help? Taking charge of your body language will help you stay focused on the interview and send the interviewer the message that you are confident, trustworthy and reliable.

Closing the Interview

The interview is over, *phew!* But don't relax too quickly; remember you are still being assessed. Don't forget to:

- offer to shake hands with your interviewer(s)
- thank her/him/them for seeing you
- smile politely and say goodbye

How does this help? How you take your leave of the interviewing room can leave a lasting impression on the interviewer(s). *Make sure it's positive!*