

CAREER SUPPORT GUIDE

Welcome to your comprehensive career support guide. We understand that as a military spouse, your career journey might have unique challenges; that's why Recruit for Spouses is here to support you every step of the way.

STRONGER FAMILIES | STRONGER WORKFORCE | STRONGER DEFENCE



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WELCOME TO RECRUIT FOR SPOUSES

This guide is designed to be your companion throughout your job search journey. Whether you're looking to return to work, change careers, or take the next step in your professional life, we've got you covered.

In the following sections, we'll walk you through everything from crafting the perfect CV to building your confidence for that all-important interview.

Remember, you're not alone in this journey.

Recruit for Spouses is here to support you with personalised services tailored to your needs so let's begin this exciting journey together!

CRAFTING YOUR PERFECT CV

Your CV is more than just a document; it's your personal marketing tool, your chance to make a great first impression. At RFS, we understand how crucial a well-crafted CV is, which is why we offer a professional CV writing service as part of our support to you.

Whilst we're here to help you create a standout CV, it's always good to understand what makes a CV effective. Here are some key points to keep in mind:

- **Tailor your CV for each application:** One size doesn't fit all when it comes to CVs. Take the time to adjust your CV for each role you apply for, highlighting the skills and experiences most relevant to that specific position.
- **Use powerful action verbs:** Start your bullet points with strong action verbs like "Managed", "Developed", or "Implemented". This immediately gives the reader a sense of your capabilities and achievements.
- **Quantify your achievements:** Wherever possible, use numbers to illustrate your accomplishments. For example, instead of saying "Increased sales", say "Increased sales by 20% over six months".
- **Keep it concise:** Aim to keep your CV to two pages maximum. Recruiters often have limited time, so make sure every word counts.
- **Make it visually appealing:** Use a clean, professional font and consistent formatting throughout. White space is your friend - don't be tempted to cram too much information onto the page.

Remember, your CV is often your first chance to impress a potential employer so make it count!

forcesshorizon.com

This will be able to help you create several versions of your CV and structure the CV with ease.

CHEAT

Put all key words from the job description onto the bottom of your CV, change it to the smallest font, then turn it white.

This will ensure it will be picked up and pulled through digital systems to be seen!

UNDERSTANDING COMPANY VALUES

In today's job market, finding the right cultural fit is just as important as finding the right role. That's where understanding company values comes in.

Company values are the guiding principles that shape an organisation's culture, decision-making processes, and overall work environment.

When you're considering applying for a role, take some time to research the company's values. These can often be found on the company's website, usually in the 'About Us' or 'Careers' sections. But why is this important?

Let's break it down:

- **Cultural Fit:** When your personal values align with a company's values, you're more likely to feel satisfied and engaged in your work. This alignment can lead to greater job satisfaction and better performance.
- **Decision Making:** Company values often guide decision-making processes within the organisation. Understanding these values can give you insight into how the company operates and makes choices.
- **Work Environment:** Values shape the work environment. For example, a company that values innovation might have a more dynamic, fast-paced environment, while one that values tradition might have a more structured approach.
- **Employee Treatment:** How a company treats its employees is often reflected in its values. Look for values that suggest respect, growth, and work-life balance if these are important to you.
- **Future Direction:** A company's values can give you clues about its future direction and priorities. This can help you assess whether the company aligns with your long-term career goals.

MASTERING THE ART OF INTERVIEWING

Interviews can be nerve-wracking, but with the right preparation, you can turn them into opportunities to shine.

Do Your Research

Before the interview, thoroughly research the company and the role. Understand the company's products or services, recent news, and the industry they operate in. This knowledge will help you answer questions more effectively and ask insightful questions of your own.

Practice Common Questions:

While you can't predict every question, there are some that come up in most interviews. Practice answering questions like "Tell me about yourself", "Why do you want this job?", and "What are your strengths and weaknesses?". Remember, it's not about memorising answers, but about being comfortable discussing these topics.

Use the STAR Method:

For behavioural questions (those that ask about past experiences), use the STAR method: Situation, Task, Action, Result. This structure helps you give concise, relevant answers that showcase your skills.

Prepare Your Own Questions:

Having thoughtful questions ready shows your genuine interest in the role and the company. It's also your chance to find out if this is the right opportunity for you.

Dress Appropriately:

First impressions matter. Dress professionally and appropriately for the company culture. If you're unsure, it's better to be slightly overdressed than underdressed.

Be Punctual:

Aim to arrive about 10-15 minutes early. This gives you time to compose yourself and shows respect for the interviewer's time.

Body Language:

Remember to maintain good eye contact, sit up straight, and smile. These non-verbal cues can convey confidence and enthusiasm.

Follow Up:

After the interview, send a thank-you email within 24 hours. This is a chance to reiterate your interest in the role and briefly mention anything you forgot to say in the interview.

Notes:

It is absolutely ok to have notes in front of you and to even say: 'I am just going to refer to my notes it made'. It shows preparation and control of the meeting.

Remember, an interview is a two-way street. It's not just about impressing the employer; it's also your opportunity to assess if this role and company are right for you. With preparation and practice, you can approach your interviews with confidence and make the most of these opportunities.

WE OFFER MOCK INTERVIEW SESSIONS AS PART OF OUR SUPPORT. THESE SESSIONS GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO PRACTISE IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT AND GET CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

WRITING COMPELLING COVERING LETTERS

A well-crafted cover letter can be your ticket to securing an interview. It's your chance to make a personal connection with the employer and explain why you're the perfect fit for the role.

At Recruit for Spouses, we offer guidance on writing effective cover letters as part of our career support services. Here are some key points to keep in mind:

- **Personalise Each Letter:** Just like your CV, your cover letter should be tailored to each job application. Address it to a specific person if possible, and make sure you reference the exact job title you're applying for.
- **Start Strong:** Your opening paragraph should grab the reader's attention. Explain why you're excited about this particular role and company. This is your chance to show that you've done your research and have a genuine interest in the position.
- **Highlight Relevant Skills and Experiences:** In the body of your letter, focus on 2-3 key experiences or skills that make you an excellent fit for the role. Use specific examples to illustrate these points. Remember, don't just repeat what's in your CV – expand on it.
- **Show How You Can Add Value:** Employers want to know what you can do for them. Explain how your skills and experiences can help solve their problems or meet their needs. This shows that you understand the role and have thought about how you can contribute.
- **Address Any Potential Concerns:** If you have gaps in your employment history the cover letter is a good place to briefly address this. Focus on the positive aspects, such as skills you've developed during career breaks or transferable skills from your previous roles.
- **Keep It Concise:** Aim to keep your cover letter to one page. Be concise and make every word count.
- **End with a Call to Action:** In your closing paragraph, reiterate your interest in the role and the company. Express your enthusiasm for the opportunity to discuss your application further in an interview.
- **Proofread:** Always proofread your letter carefully for any spelling or grammatical errors. If possible, ask someone else to review it as well.

Writing about yourself can be challenging. That's why we offer one-on-one support to help you craft compelling cover letters that truly represent you and your capabilities. We can help you identify your unique selling points and articulate them effectively to potential employers.

HARNESSING AI IN YOUR JOB SEARCH

In today's digital age, Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools can be valuable allies in your job search. While they shouldn't replace your own efforts, they can certainly enhance them.

At Recruit for Spouses, we stay up-to-date with the latest technologies to help you in your job search. Here's how you can use AI effectively:

- **CV Optimisation:** AI-powered tools like Jobscan can help you optimise your CV for Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS). These systems are used by many companies to screen CVs, so ensuring your CV is ATS-friendly can increase your chances of getting past the initial screening.
- **Writing Assistance:** AI writing assistants like Claude AI which is a free app can aid and can help you polish your writing in your CV, cover letter, and professional communications. They can catch grammar and spelling errors, and even suggest improvements in style and tone just remember to ask it to use British spelling and grammar.
- **Job Matching:** Some job search platforms use AI to match your skills and experiences with relevant job openings. This can help you discover opportunities you might have otherwise missed.
- **Interview Preparation:** AI-powered interview practice tools like InterviewPrep.ai can help you prepare for interviews by simulating interview scenarios and providing feedback on your responses.
- **Skill Gap Analysis:** Some AI tools can analyse job descriptions and compare them to your CV, helping you identify any skill gaps you might need to address.
- **Networking:** AI algorithms on professional networking sites like LinkedIn can suggest connections and job opportunities based on your profile and interests.

While these tools can be incredibly helpful, it's important to use them wisely:

- **Don't Rely Solely on AI:** Use AI tools to supplement, not replace, your own efforts and judgment.
- **Maintain Your Authentic Voice:** When using AI writing assistants, ensure the final product still sounds like you.
- **Double-Check AI Suggestions:** Always review and verify any suggestions or information provided by AI tools.
- **Stay Human:** Remember that at the end of the day, you're connecting with human employers. Your unique experiences, personality, and human touch are what will set you apart.

BUILDING RAPPORT WITH INTERVIEWERS

Creating a connection with your interviewer can significantly impact the outcome of your interview. We understand the importance of this skill and include it in our interview preparation workshops.

Here's how you can build rapport effectively:

First Impressions Matter:

Start building rapport from the moment you enter the room (or join the video call). Greet the interviewer with a warm smile and a firm handshake (if in person). Make eye contact and show that you're glad to be there.

Use the Interviewer's Name:

If you know the interviewer's name, use it naturally in conversation. This personal touch can help create a connection.

Find Common Ground:

If you can find something in common with the interviewer - perhaps a shared interest or experience - it can help create a more personal connection. However, keep it professional and don't force it if nothing natural comes up.

Show Genuine Interest:

Demonstrate your enthusiasm for the role and the company through your questions and comments. This genuine interest can help you connect with the interviewer.

Active Listening:

Pay close attention to what the interviewer is saying. Respond thoughtfully to their questions and comments, and don't be afraid to ask for clarification if you need it.

Body Language:

Your non-verbal communication is just as important as what you say. Maintain good eye contact, sit up straight, and nod occasionally to show you're engaged in the conversation.

Mirror and Match:

Subtly mirroring the interviewer's communication style can help build rapport. If they speak slowly and calmly, try to match that pace. If they're more energetic, you can reflect some of that energy back.

BUILDING RAPPORT WITH INTERVIEWERS

Be Authentic:

While it's important to be professional, don't be afraid to let your personality shine through. Authenticity can help create a genuine connection.

Stay Positive:

Maintain a positive attitude throughout the interview, even when discussing challenges or difficult experiences from your past.

End on a High Note:

As the interview concludes, reaffirm your interest in the role and the company. Thank the interviewer for their time and express your enthusiasm for the next steps in the process.

At Recruit for Spouses, we offer mock interview sessions where you can practice these rapport-building techniques in a safe environment. We'll provide feedback and tips to help you refine your approach, ensuring you're well-prepared to connect with your interviewers and make a lasting positive impression.

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Asking thoughtful questions during an interview is not just about getting information - it's an opportunity to demonstrate your genuine interest in the role and the company. We can guide you on how to ask impactful questions that can set you apart.

Here are some suggestions:

- **About the Role:**

"Can you describe a typical day in this position?" "What are the biggest challenges someone in this role might face?" "How does this role contribute to the company's overall goals?"

- **About the Team:**

"Can you tell me about the team I'd be working with?" "How does this team fit into the larger organisation structure?" "What's the management style of the team leader?"

- **About the Company Culture:**

"How would you describe the company culture?" "What do you enjoy most about working here?" "How does the company support work-life balance?"

- **About Growth and Development:**

"What opportunities are there for professional development?" "How does the company support employee growth and learning?" "Where do you see this role evolving over the next couple of years?"

- **About Performance and Success:**

"How is success measured in this role?" "What qualities do your most successful employees share?" "Can you give an example of a project I'd be working on?"

Remember, your questions should demonstrate that you're thinking seriously about the position and how you could contribute to the company's success.

It's also perfectly acceptable to bring a small notebook with your prepared questions. This shows that you've put thought into the interview and helps ensure you don't forget anything important you wanted to ask.

By asking thoughtful questions, you're gathering the information you need to make an informed decision about your career.

THE ART OF REQUESTING FEEDBACK

Feedback is a valuable tool for personal and professional growth, especially in your job search journey. Whether you've had an interview or submitted an application, seeking constructive feedback can provide insights to improve your future performance. We encourage our candidates to master the art of requesting and utilising feedback effectively.

Here's how you can do it:

- **Timing is Key:** Wait a few days after an interview or application deadline before requesting feedback. This gives the employer time to make decisions and reflects your understanding of their process.
- **Be Specific:** When asking for feedback, be clear about what you're looking for. For example, you might ask about your interview performance, your application materials, or specific skills or qualifications.
- **Keep it Professional:** Regardless of the outcome, maintain a professional and courteous tone. Remember, you're leaving a lasting impression that could impact future opportunities.
- **Express Gratitude:** Always thank the person for their time and consideration, both when requesting feedback and after receiving it.
- **Use the Right Medium:** Email is often the most appropriate way to request feedback. It's professional and gives the recipient time to consider their response.

Here's a template you can use and adapt:

Subject: Request for Feedback - [Your Name], [Position] Interview

Dear [Interviewer's Name],

I hope this email finds you well. Thank you again for taking the time to interview me for the [Position] role at [Company Name] on [Date].

While I understand I was not selected for this position, I would greatly appreciate any feedback you could provide on my interview performance or qualifications. Your insights would be invaluable for my professional development as I continue my job search.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,
[Your Name]

THE ART OF REQUESTING FEEDBACK

Remember, not all employers will be able or willing to provide detailed feedback. If you don't receive a response, don't take it personally. Many companies have policies that limit the feedback they can give to candidates.

When you do receive feedback:

- **Listen Actively:** Whether it's via email or phone, pay close attention to the feedback without becoming defensive.
- **Ask for Clarification:** If something isn't clear, don't hesitate to ask for more details or examples.
- **Take Notes:** Write down the key points so you can refer back to them later.
- **Look for Patterns:** If you receive similar feedback from multiple sources, pay extra attention to these areas.
- **Create an Action Plan:** Use the feedback to create concrete steps for improvement.
- **Follow Up:** Consider sending a brief thank-you note after receiving feedback, showing that you value their input.

Our career coaches can work with you to develop strategies for improvement based on the feedback, turning it into a valuable tool for your professional growth.

Remember, seeking and utilising feedback demonstrates your commitment to personal growth and your ability to handle constructive criticism - both highly valued traits in the professional world.

ONLINE WORKSHOPS & MASTERCLASSES

Our online sessions are an integral part of our offerings, enhancing employability, soft skills and providing opportunities to learn industry insights. We create a platform for military spouses and veterans to access valuable workshops and resources, aimed at equipping them with the necessary tools to thrive both within and beyond the military environment.

Over the last 12 months, we ran 12 workshops around topics including:

- Confidence
- Interview Preparation
- Leadership Development
- Career Transition Strategies
- Securing Your Financial Future
- Industry Insights
- Personal Brand Awareness

The impact of these sessions extends far beyond just acquiring new skills; they foster a sense of support, empowering individuals to navigate their professional journeys with confidence and resilience. As we continue to adapt to an ever-changing landscape, our commitment to the military community remains unwavering and we strive towards providing meaningful opportunities for growth and development. To take a look at our coming sessions head over to the [RFS Portal](#).





THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

We look forward to continuing to support you on your career journey.

find out more on our website

www.recruitforspouses.co.uk