

HR GUIDANCE FOR
INTERNAL APPLICANTS

CVs, Cover Letters & Interviews

Purpose

This guidance is intended to support internal applicants seeking new roles within the organisation. Whether you are pursuing a lateral move or aiming for a promotion, this document is designed to provide guidance on key aspects of the recruitment process.

As an internal candidate when you apply for a new role you will be asked to submit a CV and/or cover letter. Then, if you are successful at this first stage, you will be invited to attend a formal interview. This document provides helpful information on how to best present yourself in a CV or cover letter, interview guidance and how to approach competency-based questions.

CVs

As an internal candidate, it is essential that your CV is current and tailored to the specific role for which you are applying.

If you are writing a CV from scratch and not sure where to start, you can find lots of free templates online. [CV Builder | My World of Work](#)

[How to write a CV | National Careers Service](#)

[How to develop a great CV | Career Hub | myjobscotland](#)

Key recommendations:

- **Begin with a brief personal profile** (3–4 lines) summarising your professional background, experience within the company, and career aspirations.
- **Emphasise your internal experience:** Highlight your current role, key achievements, and any additional responsibilities or projects you have undertaken.
- **Demonstrate your impact:** Where possible, use data and measurable outcomes (e.g., “Increased sales by 20%,” “Improved customer satisfaction score by 15%”).
- **Include relevant skills:** Align these with the requirements in the job description. Avoid assuming the hiring panel is already familiar with the full scope of your responsibilities.
- **Use a professional, easy-to-read font** such as Arial or Times New Roman.
- **Keep body text between 10–12 points** for readability.
- **Use larger font sizes** (14–16) for headings.
- **Maintain consistency** in font style and size throughout your CV for a polished look.

Cover Letters

A cover letter (sometimes called a supporting statement) provides an opportunity to explain your motivation for applying and why you are a strong fit for the role. Again, if you are not sure where to start, you'll find lots of example cover letters online.

[Write an impactful cover letter | My World of Work](#)

[How to write a cover letter | National Careers Service](#)

Suggested structure:

1. **Introduction** – State the position you are applying for and express your interest.
2. **Why you?** – Relate your experience, strengths and internal knowledge to the key requirements of the role.
3. **Why this role?** – Demonstrate a genuine interest in the role, team, or department and explain how it aligns with your professional goals.
4. **Conclusion** – Reaffirm your interest, thank the reader, and express your willingness to discuss your application further.

Tip: Keep your letter concise and well-structured—three to four short paragraphs is sufficient.

Interviews

Although internal interviews may feel more informal, they are no less important. Ensure you approach them with the same level of preparation as you would for an external opportunity.

Before

If you are invited to attend an interview, this should be in writing (by letter or email) and should include key details such as:

- Time, place and duration
- Selection panel (names and roles)
- Interview format e.g. presentation, skills test, competency-based questions

You should have an idea of what to expect going into the interview and if not, it is perfectly reasonable to ask for further information to help you prepare.

Preparing for the interview:

- **Understand the role thoroughly:** Review the job description and if you have questions about the role, contact the hiring manager or the recruitment team before the interview. This will both help you to self-assess your suitability for the role and serve as good preparation for the interview.
- **Know your achievements:** Be prepared to discuss your contributions and how you've added value in your current position.
- **Recall relevant experience:** Think about your experience relevant to the job description in preparation for any competency-based questions.

During

- **Be honest yet professional:** Clearly explain why you're interested in a new role, focusing on your development and growth.
- **Ask insightful questions:** Demonstrate curiosity and engagement by asking about team goals, upcoming projects, or future opportunities.
- **Be aware of communication:** Think about how you are communicating with the panel, both in the words you are using but also your body language and facial expressions.

- **Take a moment to think:** You'll be asked to answer questions on the spot, so don't worry if you need to take a moment to gather your thoughts. Equally if you don't fully understand the question, feel confident to ask the panel to repeat or reword it.

After

The panel should tell you when you can expect to hear the outcome, which can vary depending on other candidates' availability to interview. If there is a further stage in the selection process, this should also be explained to you at the interview.

Regardless of the outcome, seek feedback. Feedback can provide a valuable insight into your strengths and areas of improvement for your continued development.

Competency-Based Questions

Competency-based interview questions will vary depending on the role, department, and level of responsibility.

These questions ask you to provide examples of past experiences to demonstrate your skills and behaviours. They are used to assess your suitability for the role by understanding how you have applied your abilities in real-life situations.

When asked these types of questions, a couple of answers might come to mind. Take a few moments to choose the most relevant and to think about how you will construct your answer. Before the interview you might find it useful to reflect on your experience to date, so you can quickly recall them in the interview.

Effective answering:

Use the **STAR** technique to structure your responses:

- **Situation** – Provide context and background to your example.
- **Task** – Explain the specific challenge or objective.
- **Action** – Describe the steps you took and your reasoning.
- **Result** – Share the outcome and any impact your actions had.

Important: whenever you are referring to real-life situations always protect the privacy of other people involved. Never disclose names but also consider that a person could be easily identifiable by their job title or department. Wherever possible omit specific, non-essential details from your answer and this will also highlight your skills in discretion and confidentiality, which may be a requirement of the role.

And finally:

Be confident: Your understanding of Lothian's history, values and culture is a strength. Use it to your advantage.

The HR team is available to provide support with CV and cover letter writing, interview preparation, and general career development advice. For assistance, please contact hr@lothianbuses.co.uk.