

Study Guide Transcript



Spring 2025

*This study guide transcript has been provided to support learners in following the **Way2Learn Job Finder** course.*

*While the guide serves as a useful resource, we highly recommend that learners watch the course episodes on the **Way2Learn channel** or via the **Video-on-Demand** service to gain a full understanding before completing the answer book.*

*For your convenience, episode times are listed on **page 4 of the answer book**, within the **Way2Learn prospectus** in your library, and in the **quick-glance guide**.*

Episode 1: Path to Employment



Welcome to *Job Finder*. In this episode, we will explore how **resilience, mindset, and self-motivation** play a crucial role in your journey to employment.

Leaving prison and looking for work can feel overwhelming, but with the right mental approach, you can build a foundation for long-term success. This is not just about finding a job; it is about preparing yourself for a stable future.

By the end of this episode, you will:

- Understand how **resilience and adaptability** support employment goals.
- Recognise the difference between a **growth mindset** and a **fixed mindset**.
- Apply **self-motivation techniques and goal setting** to stay on track.

Resilience and Adaptability – The Cornerstones

Life throws challenges at us. Resilience is the ability to recover from setbacks, while adaptability is about adjusting to new situations. These two qualities are essential when searching for a job after release.

Resilience is not about avoiding difficulties—it is about how you respond to them. If you are determined to move forward despite setbacks, you are more likely to find success.

Example:

You apply for a job but do not get an interview. Someone with low resilience might think, *“I will never get hired.”* Someone with high resilience might think, *“That role was not right for me. I will improve my CV and try again.”*

Adaptability is just as important. The job market changes constantly, and being open to different roles or industries can help you build experience.

Example:

You want a construction job but get offered a role in a warehouse. Instead of rejecting it, you recognise that both jobs require teamwork, physical work, and time management—skills that will help you move towards your long-term goal.

Growth vs. Fixed Mindset – Which One Are You?

Your **mindset**—the way you think about your abilities—affects your chances of success.

- **Fixed Mindset:** Believes that skills and intelligence are fixed. Someone with this mindset might think, *“I am just bad at interviews.”*
- **Growth Mindset:** Believes that skills can be developed with effort. Someone with this mindset would think, *“I can improve my interview skills with practice.”*

People with a growth mindset are more likely to keep trying, learn from their mistakes, and improve. This is crucial when applying for jobs.

How to Develop a Growth Mindset

- **Embrace challenges** – View obstacles as opportunities to grow.
- **Persist through setbacks** – See failure as a learning experience.
- **Use feedback constructively** – Instead of taking criticism personally, use it to improve.

Example:

Instead of thinking, *“I cannot work with customers,”* reframe it as, *“I have not worked in customer service before, but I can develop these skills over time.”*

Self-Motivation Techniques and Goal Setting

Job searching requires **self-motivation**. You will face setbacks, and staying focused on your goals is key.

A good way to stay motivated is to set **SMART Goals**—goals that are:

- **Specific** – Clearly define what you want to achieve.
- **Measurable** – Track your progress.
- **Achievable** – Set realistic goals.
- **Relevant** – Focus on what will help your job search.
- **Time-bound** – Set a deadline to keep yourself accountable.

Example:

Instead of saying, “I want a job,” say, “I will apply for two warehouse jobs this week.”

Here are some other ways to stay motivated:

- **Break tasks into small steps** – Completing smaller goals builds momentum.
 - **Celebrate small wins** – Acknowledge your progress to stay encouraged.
 - **Visualise success** – Imagine yourself in a job you enjoy to boost confidence.
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Resilience in Action

Job searching is tough, and rejection is part of the process. However, persistence and a **positive mindset** will help you push through challenges.

Example:

A successful job seeker does not dwell on one rejection. Instead, they learn from the experience, adjust their approach, and keep going.

Final Takeaways

- **Resilience** helps you recover from setbacks.
- A **growth mindset** allows you to develop new skills.
- **Self-motivation** and **SMART goals** keep you on track.

With these tools, you are ready to take charge of your employment journey. The next step is applying them in real life.

Episode 2: Flexibility and Soft Skills



In this episode, we will explore how flexibility and soft skills can help you succeed in your first job after release. The first role you take might not be your dream job, but it can be a stepping stone towards a stable career.

By the end of this episode, you will:

- Understand why flexibility is important in early employment.
- Identify transferable skills you already have.
- Learn how to articulate your skills to employers.

The Importance of Flexibility

Your first job after release might not be ideal, but that does not mean it is not valuable. Being flexible about job type, shift patterns, and responsibilities allows you to gain experience and prove your reliability.

Example:

You may want a construction job but are offered a role in a warehouse. Although they are different, both involve teamwork, following instructions, and time management. Taking this opportunity can help you work towards your long-term goals.

Being flexible also means showing willingness to learn and adapt, which employers value highly.

Identifying and Articulating Transferable Skills

Everyone has transferable skills—abilities that can be used in different jobs and industries. You may not realise it, but your time in prison may have developed several of these.

Examples of Transferable Skills:

- Teamwork – Working in a kitchen, workshop, or on prison jobs.
- Time Management – Following daily routines and schedules.
- Problem-Solving – Finding solutions to challenges in day-to-day life.
- Communication – Interacting with staff, peers, or mentors.
- Resilience – Overcoming difficulties and staying motivated.

Employers want to know how these skills make you a valuable employee.

How to Articulate Your Skills to Employers

It is not just about having skills—it is about explaining them well. Instead of making vague statements, be specific.

Example:

Instead of saying, "I worked in a prison kitchen," say, "I worked as part of a team in a fast-paced kitchen environment, managing my time efficiently and following strict hygiene standards."

This version highlights teamwork, time management, and attention to detail—qualities employers look for.

Building Momentum and Future Opportunities

Your first job is a stepping stone. It allows you to gain experience, develop new skills, and prove reliability. Employers are more likely to hire someone with consistent work experience, even if the jobs are not related to their ideal career.

Being flexible, using transferable skills, and articulating them effectively will help you secure opportunities and progress towards a more fulfilling career.

Final Takeaways

- Your first job may not be your ideal role, but it is a chance to build experience.
- Flexibility in job type, shifts, and responsibilities will help you gain opportunities.
- Transferable skills, such as teamwork and time management, are valuable in any job.
- Employers want to hear how your skills make you a strong candidate—be specific.

Episode 3: Landing the Interview



Now that you have identified your skills and considered different job roles, it is time to focus on the job search process. This episode will guide you through where to look for jobs, how to tailor your applications, and how to create a strong CV and cover letter.

By the end of this episode, you will:

- Learn different job search methods.
- Understand how to read and analyse job descriptions.
- Know how to tailor a CV and write a compelling cover letter.

Where to Search – Diverse Avenues

There are multiple ways to find job opportunities, and using a combination of approaches will increase your chances of success.

Key job search methods include:

- Online Job Boards – Websites such as Indeed, Reed, Totaljobs, and CV-Library list a wide range of vacancies.
- Company Websites – Many businesses post jobs on their own career pages. If you have a specific company in mind, check their website regularly.
- Recruitment Agencies – Agencies can connect you with jobs that match your skills and experience.
- Government Resources – Universal Credit's job search tools and Jobcentre Plus provide additional support.
- Networking – Speaking with friends, family, and support workers may lead to job opportunities that are not advertised publicly.

By using more than one of these methods, you will increase your exposure to different job openings.

Understanding Job Descriptions

A job description outlines what an employer is looking for. Reading it carefully will help you determine whether you are a good fit for the role.

Look for key details such as:

- Job Title – Indicates the type and level of the role.
- Responsibilities – Describes the day-to-day tasks involved.
- Required Skills and Qualifications – Lists the essential abilities and experience needed.
- Desirable Skills – Additional skills that would be beneficial but are not essential.

Example:

If a job description asks for customer service experience, think about any situation where you have:

- Helped people.
- Resolved issues.
- Worked as part of a team.

Even if it was not in a formal job, these experiences can still be relevant.

CV Writing and Tailoring

A CV (curriculum vitae) is your first impression on an employer. It should be clear, concise, and tailored to each job you apply for.

Key CV Guidelines

- Keep it brief – Ideally one or two pages.
- Use clear headings – Make it easy to read.
- Highlight relevant skills and experience – Focus on what matches the job description.
- Tailor your CV for each role – Do not send a generic CV for every application.

Example:

If you are applying for a construction job, highlight:

- Manual labour experience.
- Ability to follow safety regulations.
- Experience using tools or machinery.

If applying for a warehouse role, focus on:

- Stock control and organisation.
- Teamwork and efficiency.
- Attention to detail and reliability.

A well-structured CV makes it easier for employers to see your suitability for the role.

Writing an Effective Cover Letter

A cover letter expands on your CV and allows you to explain why you are the right fit for the job. It should be professional, structured, and tailored to the employer.

How to Structure a Cover Letter

1. Address it to a named person if possible – Look for the hiring manager's name.
2. State why you are interested in the role – Show that you have researched the company.
3. Highlight your relevant skills and experience – Connect them directly to the job description.
4. Keep it concise – One page is ideal.
5. Proofread carefully – Avoid spelling or grammar mistakes.

Example:

Instead of saying, "I worked in a prison kitchen," say: "I worked as part of a team in a fast-paced kitchen, ensuring food safety and hygiene standards were met. This experience developed my teamwork, time management, and ability to work under pressure."

This version demonstrates key skills that employers value.

Application Checklist

Before submitting your application, make sure you:

- Read the job description carefully and match your skills to the role.
- Tailor your CV to highlight relevant experience.
- Write a cover letter that explains why you are a strong candidate.
- Check for errors in spelling and grammar.
- Follow the application instructions (e.g. submitting via email or an online form).

Taking the time to prepare a strong application will help you stand out from other candidates.

Final Takeaways

- Use multiple job search methods to increase your chances of finding the right role.
- Read job descriptions carefully and match your skills to the role.
- Tailor your CV and cover letter for each application.
- Keep your application professional, clear, and error-free.

A well-prepared application increases your chances of landing an interview.

Episode 4: Ace the Interview



This episode focuses on interview skills—how to present yourself confidently and make a strong impression on employers. Whether it has been a long time since your last interview or you are new to video interviews, this guide will help you prepare effectively.

By the end of this episode, you will:

- Understand the importance of research and planning.
- Learn how to present yourself professionally in person and online.
- Recognise effective body language and how it influences communication.
- Prepare answers to common and difficult interview questions.

Preparing for Success – Research and Planning

The more prepared you are, the more confident you will feel. Successful preparation includes two key steps:

1. Researching the Company

Understanding the employer’s mission, values, products, and services shows genuine interest and allows you to tailor your answers. Research their website, social media, and recent news articles before the interview.

2. Planning Your Answers

Think about common interview questions and prepare examples from your past experiences that demonstrate relevant skills. The STAR method is a useful structure for answering competency-based questions.

Example – STAR Method

- **Situation:** "In the prison workshop, we had a tight deadline to complete a large order."
- **Task:** "My task was to ensure my part of the production was finished on time and to the required standard."
- **Action:** "I organised my workload effectively, communicated regularly with my colleagues, and proactively addressed any potential issues."
- **Result:** "As a result, we successfully completed the order on time and within budget."

Using the STAR method keeps your answers structured, clear, and focused.

Professional Presentation – Making a Positive Impression

First impressions matter, both in-person and online. How you present yourself can influence an employer's decision.

In-Person Interviews:

- Wear clean, smart attire appropriate for the role.
- Arrive on time and be polite to everyone you meet.
- Maintain eye contact and give a firm handshake when appropriate.

Video Interviews:

- Choose a quiet, well-lit space with a neutral background.
 - Dress professionally as you would for an in-person interview.
 - Ensure your camera and microphone work properly before the interview.
 - Look at the camera, not the screen, to maintain eye contact.
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Body Language – Communicating Without Words

Your body language can say just as much as your words. It is important to appear confident and engaged.

In-Person Interviews:

- Sit up straight and maintain good posture.
- Make eye contact but do not stare.
- Avoid fidgeting or crossing your arms, as this can seem defensive.

Video Interviews:

- Sit comfortably but upright.
- Look directly at the camera to simulate eye contact.
- Be mindful of facial expressions and hand movements, keeping them natural.

Non-verbal communication can make a big difference in how you are perceived.

Answering Common Interview Questions

Employers often ask predictable questions. Preparing your answers in advance helps you stay calm and confident.

Typical Interview Questions:

1. **“Tell me about yourself.”** – Keep it professional and focus on relevant skills and experience.
2. **“Why are you interested in this role?”** – Show that you understand the job and company.
3. **“What are your strengths and weaknesses?”** – Highlight strengths and discuss weaknesses in a way that shows growth.
4. **“Where do you see yourself in five years?”** – Show ambition and a desire to progress.

Your answers should be concise, structured, and tailored to the role you are applying for.

Handling Difficult Questions

If asked about your past convictions, it is important to be honest but concise. Employers value honesty, but there is no need to go into unnecessary detail.

Key Points for Answering Conviction-Related Questions:

- Be factual and to the point – Do not dwell on past mistakes.
- Highlight positive changes – Talk about skills and qualifications gained.
- Emphasise your future goals – Show your motivation to move forward.
- Practice your response – Rehearsing will help you feel more confident.

Example:

"I have made mistakes in the past and have taken responsibility for them. During my time in custody, I focused on developing skills such as teamwork and time management. I am now determined to contribute positively to society through meaningful employment."

Being prepared for difficult questions will help you remain calm and composed.

Final Takeaways

- Research the company and prepare your answers in advance.
- Present yourself professionally, whether in person or online.
- Use confident body language to make a positive impression.
- Structure answers using the STAR method for clarity.
- Handle difficult questions honestly and concisely, focusing on your future.

Interviews are not just for employers to assess you—they are also your chance to evaluate the company and decide if the role is right for you.

Episode 5: Disclosure and Honesty



This episode covers a sensitive but essential topic: how to disclose criminal convictions during the job application process. Understanding your legal rights and how to present your history professionally can help you secure employment.

By the end of this episode, you will:

- Understand the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and how it applies to disclosure.
- Learn when and how to disclose unspent convictions.
- Know how to structure a professional disclosure statement.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 governs how and when convictions must be disclosed. It introduces the concepts of spent and unspent convictions:

- **Spent convictions** – After a set period (the "rehabilitation period"), a conviction is considered spent and does not need to be disclosed to most employers.
- **Unspent convictions** – These must be disclosed when asked on job applications or in interviews.

Some roles are exempt from this Act, meaning all convictions must be disclosed regardless of whether they are spent. These roles include:

- Jobs working with vulnerable adults or children (e.g., social work, teaching, healthcare).
- Certain legal, financial, and law enforcement positions.

If you are unsure about your rehabilitation period or disclosure requirements, seek guidance from Unlock (The National Association of Reformed Offenders) or a legal professional.

Rehabilitation Periods – A Simplified Overview

Rehabilitation periods vary depending on sentence length and type of offence.

- Custodial sentences over 4 years – Never spent, must always be disclosed.
- Custodial sentences between 1 and 4 years – Spent after 4 years.
- Custodial sentences under 1 year – Spent after 1 year.
- Community orders – Spent at the end of the order.
- Fines – Spent after 1 year from the date of conviction.

For violent, sexual, or terrorism-related offences, the conviction may never be spent under Section 18 of the Sentencing Act 2020.

Note: This is a general guide—individual circumstances may vary. Always seek professional advice if in doubt.

When Must You Disclose a Conviction?

You must disclose unspent convictions in the following situations:

1. **If an employer asks directly** – Many application forms include questions about criminal records.
2. **For roles exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act** – These require full disclosure of all convictions, even if spent.
3. **During a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check** – Some jobs require a background check.

Failure to disclose when required could lead to dismissal if discovered later.

Understanding DBS Checks

Employers may request DBS checks to review an applicant's criminal record. There are different levels:

- **Basic DBS check** – Shows **unspent convictions** only.
- **Standard DBS check** – Shows **spent and unspent convictions**, cautions, reprimands, and warnings.
- **Enhanced DBS check** – Includes all information in a Standard check **plus** any relevant police information.

Employers can only request a DBS check if the role legally requires it. You will always be asked to give consent before a check is carried out.

Structuring a Professional Disclosure Statement

If you need to disclose a conviction, it is essential to **be professional, concise, and positive**.

Key points to include:

- **Be honest and factual** – Briefly state the offence, date of conviction, and sentence.
- **Emphasise rehabilitation** – Highlight the positive steps you have taken since.
- **Showcase your skills** – Focus on what you can bring to the company.
- **Keep it brief and relevant** – Avoid unnecessary details or excuses.

Example:

"In [Year], I received a conviction for [Offence]. I have since taken steps to develop my skills, including completing [training/course]. I am now eager to contribute positively to a workplace and believe my experience in [Skill 1] and [Skill 2] makes me a strong candidate for this role."

Practicing this response in advance will help you feel more confident when disclosing.

Framing Disclosure Around Growth and Rehabilitation

Employers want to see that you have learned from your past and are committed to a positive future. When discussing your conviction, focus on:

- **Taking responsibility** – Acknowledge your past without making excuses.

- **Learning from mistakes** – Explain what you gained from the experience.
 - **Positive changes** – Highlight skills developed, courses completed, or volunteer work.
 - **Future focus** – Show motivation and a desire to contribute.
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Final Takeaways

- **Know your rights** under the **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**.
- **Understand whether your conviction is spent or unspent** and when disclosure is required.
- **If disclosure is necessary, be honest, concise, and focus on rehabilitation.**
- **Frame your disclosure around your personal growth and future contributions.**
- **Seek professional advice** if unsure about legal requirements.

Being **honest and professional** about your past while focusing on your **future potential** will help you move forward with confidence.

Next Steps

If you need further guidance, support organisations like Unlock can help you understand your disclosure rights and prepare a strong case for employment.

This concludes the *Job Finder* series. Best of luck with your job search—you have the skills and determination to succeed.

