



# ***Skills Assessment***

## ***A Self Assessment Tool for Older Workers***

***This toolkit has been developed by the partners in the Fair Play for Older Workers project, co-financed by the European Commission. With special acknowledgement to Viv Duke, Encore Recruitment and Liz Bavidge, Fair Play Partnership.***



EUROPEAN UNION  
European Social Fund  
Article 6 Innovative Measures

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## INTRODUCTION

It is easy to forget how much you know and can do when you have been working for many years in a particular sector or job role. Perhaps you have been out of the workforce for some time, with caring or other responsibilities and are not sure about what you know or what you are capable of.

Confidence to match what you have to offer with a fast changing labour market means that you need to identify which highly employable skills you have gained through your day-to-day work and activities without realising it. By skills/competencies we mean being able to do tasks and fulfil roles in a range of contexts.

This is where this kit comes in. It gives you an opportunity to reflect on what skills you have, what skills you would like to use more, and what skills you would like to develop further.

- What do I want to do next in my life?
- What skills have I got to offer?
- Who can I offer these to?
- Where are the opportunities?
- What do I need to show them?
- Am I ready for paid work/voluntary work?
- How do I apply?
- How do I put together a CV?
- What will they ask me at the interview?
- How do I need to prepare?
- Where can I get help and advice?

This pack will:

- give you some ideas of what you can do for yourself
- signpost some agencies that could give further help and advice
- give you an idea of the skills and experience required in certain jobs

### **How to use the toolkit**

You could work through the toolkit in one session, but you'll probably find it more helpful to tackle it a little at a time, as working through one section at a time will trigger ideas that you can add when you return to it.

You might also find it useful to work through the toolkit with a friend, partner or mentor - someone who can reflect back to you your strengths and preferences.

### **If you are working with older clients to advise them on job hunting...**

This toolkit can be of use to you when you are helping a client who might need time to develop ideas and possible actions, which will then set the scene for future interviews.

***SECTION 1***  
***KNOWING YOURSELF***

## SECTION 1 - KNOWING YOURSELF

This section helps you to review the range of skills you have developed in your life so far. Some will be work-related, and some gained from activities outside work.

Identification of your key skills/competencies is important. Potential employers will be keen to establish your key competencies at various stages within the job application process and will use the following identification methods:

- Your response to a job advert (letter or application form)
- Your CV
- The job interview

### **What experience do I have?**

You may know what you have to offer in a new job or role, but it might be worth taking time to reflect on this to make sure you have thought of all the possibilities including whether you would like further help and advice.

Think about the different parts of your life, family, paid employment, qualifications, hobbies, interests, voluntary work and social life.

What were the skills you used that had developed with experience?

For example:

- looking after money and budgets, managing your time, deciding what to do first, dealing with conflicts,
  - all of these skills are needed in family and social life
- speaking to people you don't know well, organising a meeting, planning an event –
  - all of these skills might be used in hobbies or interests.

## Your Personal Competency Profile

You should complete this personal profile to identify the skills, knowledge and understanding you have developed. Think about the experiences you have developed through the jobs you have had or that you have gained from other experiences such as volunteer work or managing a home. Do not be too critical of yourself but be honest!

Competency	Description of Competencies	My Skills			
		You should give a judgement as to the degree to which you have the skills described on the left			
		Very easily	Easily	With some difficulty	With difficulty
<b>Communicating</b>	I can talk to all sorts of people				
	I can listen carefully for long periods				
	I can explain complicated ideas simply				
	I can change my views after discussion				
	I can write things so that other people can understand them				
<b>Coping with pressure</b>	I can cope under pressure				
	I can concentrate on one thing for a length of time				
	I can deal with difficult situations				
	I can handle problems				

<b>Working as part of a team</b>	I can bring my strengths and interests to the group				
	I can compromise for the sake of what we are trying to do				
	I can support others in the group				
	I can accept different views				
<b>Being flexible</b>	I can adapt to new situations and changing demands				
	I can deal with more than one thing at a time				
	I can recognise and accept differing interests and needs				
	I can handle new tasks and challenges				
<b>Organising</b>	I can convert objectives into action				
	I can work to a deadline				
	I can collect information and analyse it				
	I can use my time effectively				
<b>Solving problems</b>	I can deal with difficult situations				
	I can develop new ideas				
	I can turn solutions into actions				
	I can take responsibility for getting things done				

<b>Interpersonal skills</b>	I can work with people of other cultures, beliefs, backgrounds, ages and nationalities				
	I can motivate people				
	I can manage others				
	I can offer and accept constructive feedback				
<b>Technical Skills</b>	I am able to apply my technical knowledge directly to the roles I am interested in				
	I am able to use IT/computer packages				
	I can quickly acquire technical knowledge relevant to the role I am undertaking				
<b>Additional personal skills</b>	e.g. IT skills, language skills				

## ***SECTION 2***

# ***IDENTIFYING THE SKILLS YOU HAVE DEVELOPED***

## SECTION 2 – IDENTIFYING THE SKILLS YOU HAVE DEVELOPED

It is useful to match your skills with what employers are looking for, to help you in writing CVs, completing application forms or responding to interview questions.

### Identifying your key strengths

This section helps you to review the range of skills you have developed in your life so far. Some will be work related, and some gained from activities outside work. Answer as many questions as possible and then give specific examples of how and when you used these kinds of skills. The list of skills is not exhaustive - you may be prompted to add other skills that spring to mind - there is space for you to do this.

Working through this section will also help you to construct responses to job adverts and interview questions to ensure employers are aware of how you have evidenced/displayed these competencies in your personal and working life.

For each area you will be able to:

- ✓ Establish the depth of your experience in utilising this skill
- ✓ Identify the words used in job specifications and job adverts which indicate that this skill is a requirement of the role
- ✓ Identify the questions which employers may ask you , so that you can give evidence of your experience utilising this skill
- ✓ Construct sentences to show that you have this skill which can be transferred into your CV and job applications
- ✓ Collect examples of situations where you have used this skill (which can be used in job applications and during the job interview)

<b>A - Communicating</b>		Very easily	Easily	With some difficulty	With difficulty	<b>Examples of how you have used this skill – where, when, how, in what way</b>
<b>1</b>	I can talk to all sorts of people					
<b>2</b>	I can listen carefully for long periods					
<b>3</b>	I can explain complicated ideas simply					
<b>4</b>	I can change my views after discussion					
<b>5</b>	I can write things so that other people can understand them					
<b><i>Add any further examples of communication skills you have</i></b>						

## A - COMMUNICATION SKILLS

### Words used in job adverts, which indicate a requirement for this competency

Communication skills; presentation skills; listening skills; customer service; people management; negotiation skills; written skills.

### Questions employers may ask to evidence your experience of this competency

- Give me an example of a time you have had to communicate a complex idea or complex instructions to others
- Tell me about a time when you have persuaded others to adopt your point of view
- Tell me about a time when you have needed to listen to and understand a set of instructions
- Describe a situation when you had to write something complex and make it clear

**Record a sentence, which describes your communication skills** (this can be used as part of the Personal Profile section on your CV – see later section on constructing your CV)

**Record as many examples as you can (making use of the above questions) of situations when you have used this skill.** These can be used in your written job application and during the job interview

<b>B - Coping with pressure</b>		Very easily	Easily	With some difficulty	With difficulty	<b>Examples of how you have used this skill – where, when, how, in what way</b>
<b>1</b>	I can cope under pressure					
<b>2</b>	I can concentrate on one thing for a length of time					
<b>3</b>	I can deal with difficult situations					
<b>4</b>	I can handle problems					
<b><i>Add any further examples of coping skills you have</i></b>						

## **B - COPING WITH PRESSURE**

### **Words used in job adverts, which indicate a requirement for this competency**

Ever-changing environment; rapidly growing company; broad range of objectives; exciting role; pressurised role; challenging role.

### **Questions employers may ask to evidence your experience of this competency**

- Tell me about a time when you have changed your priorities to meet others' expectations
- Describe a time when you altered your behaviour to fit the situation
- Tell me about a time when you had to change your plans to take into account new information or changing priorities
- Tell me about a time when you have worked under pressure to meet tight deadlines

**Record a sentence, which describes your adaptability skill** (this can be used as part of the Personal Profile section on your CV – see later section on constructing your CV)

**Record as many examples as you can (making use of the above questions) of situations when you have used this skill.** These can be used in your written job application and during the job interview

<b>C - Working as part of a team</b>		Very easily	Easily	With some difficulty	With difficulty	<b>Examples of how you have used this skill – where, when, how, in what way</b>
<b>1</b>	I can bring my strengths and interests to the group					
<b>2</b>	I can compromise for the sake of what we are trying to do					
<b>3</b>	I can support others in the group					
<b>4</b>	I can accept different views					
<b><i>Add any further examples of team working skills you have</i></b>						

## C - WORKING AS PART OF A TEAM

### Words used in job adverts, which indicate a requirement for this competency

Working as part of a team; team skills; friendly environment; team spirit; people orientation.

### Questions employers may ask to evidence your experience of this competency

- Tell me about a time when you worked successfully as a member of a team
- Describe a situation where you were successful in getting people to work together effectively
- Describe a situation where you were a member (not a leader) of a team and a conflict arose within the team
- Describe a time when you have needed to change your approach to take account of someone else's view

**Record a sentence, which describes your team skills** (this can be used as part of the Personal Profile section on your CV – see later section on constructing your CV)

**Record as many examples as you can (making use of the above questions) of situations when you have used this skill.** These can be used in your written job application and during the job interview

<b>D - Being flexible</b>		Very easily	Easily	With some difficulty	With difficulty	<b>Examples of how you have used this skill – where, when, how, in what way</b>
<b>1</b>	I can adapt to new situations and changing demands					
<b>2</b>	I can deal with more than one thing at a time					
<b>3</b>	I can recognise and accept differing interests and needs					
<b>4</b>	I can handle new tasks and challenges					
<b><i>Add any further examples of when you have been flexible</i></b>						

## D - BEING FLEXIBLE

### Words used in job adverts, which indicate a requirement for this competency

Rapidly growing company; wide and varied role; broad range of objectives; being adaptable; willing to work flexibly.

### Questions employers may ask to evidence your experience of this competency

- Tell me about a time when you had to change your point of view or your plans
- Tell me about a time when you have taken on new challenges
- Tell me about a time when you 'juggled' different tasks

**Record a sentence, which describes your adaptability skill** (this can be used as part of the Personal Profile section on your CV – see later section on constructing your CV)

**Record as many examples as you can (making use of the above questions) of situations when you have used this skill.** These can be used in your written job application and during the job interview

<b>E - Organising</b>		Very easily	Easily	With some difficulty	With difficulty	<b>Examples of how you have used this skill – where, when, how, in what way</b>
<b>1</b>	I can convert objectives into action					
<b>2</b>	I can work to a deadline					
<b>3</b>	I can collect information and analyse it					
<b>4</b>	I can use my time effectively					
<b><i>Add any further examples you have of your organising skills</i></b>						

## E - ORGANISING

### **Words used in job adverts, which indicate a requirement for this competency**

Organisational skills; planning skills; resource management; time management; management; tight deadlines.

### **Questions employers may ask to evidence your experience of this competency**

- Tell me about a time when you had to manage large workloads and how you prioritised these
- Tell me about a time when you were asked to undertake a task which conflicted with existing priorities
- Tell me about a time when you had to meet a very tight deadline on a particular task

**Record a sentence, which describes your planning, and organising skills** (this can be used as part of the Personal Profile section on your CV – see later section on constructing your CV)

**Record as many examples as you can (making use of the above questions) of situations when you have used this skill.** These can be used in your written job application and during the job interview

<b>F - Solving problems</b>		Very easily	Easily	With some difficulty	With difficulty	<b>Examples of how you have used this skill – where, when, how, in what way</b>
<b>1</b>	I can deal with difficult situations					
<b>2</b>	I can develop new ideas					
<b>3</b>	I can turn solutions into actions					
<b>4</b>	I can take responsibility for getting things done					
<p><b><i>Add any further examples you have of your problem solving skills within a team</i></b></p>						

## F - SOLVING PROBLEMS

### Words used in job adverts, which indicate a requirement for this competency

Problem solving; project management; change management; using your initiative; continuous improvement.

### Questions employers may ask to evidence your experience of this competency

- Tell me about a time when you analysed a problem and identified a solution
- Tell me about a time when you have identified a better way of doing things
- Tell me about a time when you set and achieved a goal
- Describe something you have done to improve the performance of your work unit

**Record a sentence, which describes your problem solving skills** (this can be used as part of the Personal Profile section on your CV – see later section on constructing your CV)

**Record as many examples as you can (making use of the above questions) of situations when you have used this skill.** These can be used in your written job application and during the job interview

<b>G - Interpersonal skills</b>		Very easily	Easily	With some difficulty	With difficulty	<b>Examples of how you have used this skill- where, when, how, in what way</b>
<b>1</b>	I can work with people of other cultures					
<b>2</b>	I can motivate people					
<b>3</b>	I can manage others					
<b>4</b>	I can offer and accept constructive feedback					
<b><i>Add any further examples you have of your interpersonal skills</i></b>						

## **G - INTERPERSONAL SKILLS**

### **Words used in job adverts, which indicate a requirement for this competency**

Client relationships; team skills; customer service; dealing with broad range of clients; role involves dealing with people at all levels.

### **Questions employers may ask to evidence your experience of this competency**

- Describe a situation in which you have developed effective relationships with a colleague or client
- Tell me about a time when you relied on a contact in your network to help you with a work-related task or problem
- Give me an example of a time when you deliberately attempted to build a rapport with a colleague or customer

**Record a sentence, which describes your interpersonal skills** (this can be used as part of the Personal Profile section on your CV – see later section on constructing your CV)

**Record as many examples as you can (making use of the above questions) of situations when you have used this skill.** These can be used in your written job application and during the job interview

<b>H - Technical Skills</b>		Very easily	Easily	With some difficulty	With difficulty	<b>Examples of how you have used this skill- where, when, how, in what way</b>
<b>1</b>	I am able to apply my technical knowledge directly to the roles I am interested in					
<b>2</b>	I am able to use IT/computer packages					
<b>3</b>	I can quickly acquire technical knowledge relevant to the role I am undertaking					
<b><i>Add any further examples you have of your technical skills</i></b>						

## H - TECHNICAL SKILLS

### Words used in job adverts, which indicate a requirement for this competency

Technically competent; strong IT skills; professional; qualified; technical role; complex role; ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) qualification; CLAIT qualification.

### Questions employers may ask to evidence your experience of this competency

Employers are likely to ask direct questions relating to the technical skills required in the role. These will be designed to test your specialist knowledge in a particular area

It is also likely that some form of practical test will be given to establish levels of technical knowledge (particularly for IT skills) and you should be advised of this prior to the interview.

**Record a sentence, which describes your specific technical skills** (this can be used as part of the Personal Profile section on your CV – see later section on constructing your CV).

**If IT skills are relevant to the role it is always helpful to include any qualifications or levels of proficiency in software packages (e.g. ECDL/CLAIT qualifications or record BASIC/INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED)**

**Record as many examples as you can (making use of the above questions) of situations when you have used this skill.** These can be used in your written job application and during the job interview

# **SECTION 3**

## **SUMMARY**

**SECTION 3 – SUMMARY**

**Your Key Strengths**

Now that you have identified the range of skills you have developed in your life use this summary table to take stock. List the skills you have identified as strengths and the corresponding sentences you have recorded to describe these skills.

<b>Competency</b>	<b>Description of skill</b>	<b>How you have used this skill</b>
<b>Communicating</b>		
<b>Coping with pressure</b>		
<b>Working as part of a team</b>		



<b>Being flexible</b>		
<b>Organising</b>		
<b>Solving problems</b>		
<b>Interpersonal Skills</b>		
<b>Technical Skills</b>		

## **SECTION 4**

# **IDENTIFYING THE ROLES YOU CAN DO OR WISH TO DO**

**SECTION 4 – IDENTIFYING THE ROLES YOU CAN DO OR WISH TO DO**

**What kind of work would best interest me?** People have values about the work they prefer to do. You might never have set these down in a formal way. Use this checklist to work out what is important to you in your next job.

 Work value	 Level of importance	Low	Neutral	High
<b>Financial - high earnings</b>				
<b>Being in control of others</b>				
<b>Working alone</b>				
<b>Working as part of a team</b>				
<b>Providing services that help others or work with a social goal</b>				
<b>Work that involves persuading others or changing views</b>				
<b>Working to deliver demanding targets</b>				
<b>Work that presents a variety of tasks</b>				
<b>Work that is consistent and has a clear routine</b>				
<b>Being flexible in hours that are worked</b>				
<b>Doing work that is recognised and that earns respect</b>				

## What do I mean by work?

You'll also need to give some thought to the nature of the commitment you wish to make.

- Are you only looking for paid work with a contract of employment, on and with predictable earnings?
- Would becoming self-employed interest you, either working on your own or setting up a business that employs others?
- Can you fulfil your aims through voluntary work?

With any of the above you need to decide:

- Whether this will be a full or part time commitment
- Whether you would prefer to work continuously, or in a series of short term assignments
- The sort of hours that would fit in with your life.

### Summary

I am looking for a job that is/has .....

A job/role in .....field/area .....

I want to develop my skills in .....

This list helps you to identify the types of roles you may be interested in and the key skills, which could be required for each one.

<b>Job Type</b>	<b>Key Skills required</b>
<b>Accountancy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solving Problems</li> <li>• Organising</li> <li>• Technical Skills</li> <li>• Coping with pressure</li> </ul>
<b>Office Work - Clerical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Solving Problems</li> <li>• Organising</li> <li>• Being flexible</li> <li>• Working as part of a team</li> </ul>
<b>Customer Service/Hospitality/Retail</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Interpersonal Skills</li> <li>• Being flexible</li> <li>• Working as part of a team</li> <li>• Coping with pressure</li> </ul>
<b>Health/Medical/Social</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Interpersonal Skills</li> <li>• Being flexible</li> <li>• Working as part of a team</li> <li>• Technical skills</li> <li>• Coping with pressure</li> </ul>
<b>Human Resources/ Personnel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Working as part of a team</li> <li>• Interpersonal Skills</li> <li>• Being flexible</li> <li>• Technical skills</li> </ul>
<b>IT/Internet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Organising</li> <li>• Being flexible</li> <li>• Coping with pressure</li> <li>• Technical skills</li> </ul>
<b>Legal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Interpersonal Skills</li> <li>• Coping with pressure</li> <li>• Being flexible</li> <li>• Solving Problems</li> <li>• Technical skills</li> </ul>

<b>Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Interpersonal skills</li> <li>• Being flexible</li> <li>• Solving Problems</li> <li>• Coping with pressure</li> <li>• Organising</li> <li>• Technical skills</li> </ul>
<b>Manual/Production roles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being flexible</li> <li>• Solving Problems</li> <li>• Working as part of a team</li> <li>• Organising</li> <li>• Technical skills</li> </ul>
<b>Sales/Marketing &amp; Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Being flexible</li> <li>• Interpersonal skills</li> <li>• Working as part of a team</li> <li>• Solving problems</li> <li>• Coping with pressure</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Being flexible</li> <li>• Interpersonal skills</li> <li>• Organising</li> <li>• Working as part of a team</li> <li>• Coping with pressure</li> </ul>
<b>Secretarial/PA/ Administration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Being flexible</li> <li>• Solving Problems</li> <li>• Interpersonal skills</li> <li>• Organising</li> <li>• Coping with pressure</li> <li>• Working as part of a team</li> </ul>

**SECTION 5**  
**PUTTING TOGETHER YOUR PERSONAL**  
**ACTION PLAN**

## SECTION 5 – PUTTING TOGETHER YOUR PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

### WHAT IS A PERSONAL ACTION PLAN?

By working through the first four sections of this Skills Toolkit you will have developed an insight into your key strengths, the competencies in which you have experience and the competencies you may need to develop further through training. You will also have thought about what type of job or role you are looking for.

Now you can use this knowledge to form a personal action plan. Complete the log book below, noting the actions you will take to get to where you want to be. For example you may feel that your IT skills need improving so you set an action to access relevant training.

**Note** – Section 8, Further Development Resources may be useful in helping you to find out what further help is available to enable you to get to where you want to be.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO HELP ME TO GET TO WHERE I WANT TO BE?	WHAT ACTIONS DO I NEED TO TAKE? (e.g. undertake a training course or put together a C.V.)	COMPLETE BY WHEN	COMPLETED
<b>Do I need to improve and/or gain any new skills? (e.g. IT skills)</b>			

<b>Do I need to improve/gain experience in a particular area? (e.g. volunteer to improve organisational skills)</b>			
<b>Do I need to do anything differently?</b>			
<b>What other tasks do I need to undertake? (e.g. put together a CV, seek advice, find information, register with a job agency)</b>			

