

Using social media to find work, and careers information

Interested in using social media to help find your first job? Great! But, check out the pros and cons first.

Plus points

- Social media networks, like Facebook, Instagram and Google +, are a great way to let your personal contacts, including friends and family, know that you're looking for work.
- You can look for information on companies or organisations you'd like to work for.
- Most big companies use social media to advertise vacancies and recruitment campaigns. Here are a few examples: Scottish Power, RBS Jobs, Police Scotland, Network Rail Advanced Apprenticeship, IBM, Aviva and BAE. Liking or following those you'd like to work for is well worth the effort.
- You'll also find job search and careers information posted by a wide range of organisations, including online events, videos and case studies – Facebook and YouTube are worth looking at. Look for 'Careers in...' events on Facebook.
- You can follow or like recruitment agencies and job websites.
- You can join career interest groups and connect with people with similar interests.
- You can use 'Jobs', 'Careers' and 'Apprenticeship' as keywords to search for vacancies and information.

Potential pitfalls

- Information overload – it's best to focus on specific employers and opportunities rather than cast your net too wide.
- It takes time and effort to build up a profile you can use for job search purposes.
- Employers often check out job applicants' social media profiles as part of the selection process. So, you need to make sure that what they see won't damage your chances of getting that job!
- Employers have sacked workers for criticising or insulting them, their customers or other work colleagues, on social media sites.

How can you avoid the pitfalls?

The whole point of social media profiles and networks is to share information and make contacts. And that's exactly why you need to be careful about how you use them, what you share, and who you share it with. Here are a few pointers to help you out.

- You might not have looked at your 'public' profile – what anyone using the social network can see about you online – but you should.
- Check out your privacy settings and make sure that the information about you that's available publicly is as much under your control as possible.
- Tailor your social media profile to the jobs you are applying for.
- Make sure your profile picture, if you add one, is appropriate for employers to see.
- Avoid bad language, dodgy photographs and posting any opinions that might make a bad impression on potential employers, or workmates.
- If you've worked before or are in a job already, think twice about making comments about your employer,

boss or other workers online.

- Remember that what you post on social media stays there; think before you post.