Let's be honest now - application forms can be a pain in the neck. They often ask difficult questions and are really time consuming compared to just sending off a CV. So why would an employer use them?

From an employer's perspective the application form is a sophisticated selection tool. Within certain limits, it allows employers to obtain the information they want, not just the information you decide to give. This makes straightforward, "like with like" comparison much easier because it removes the distraction / frustration of differing CV formats.

Many larger organisations put a great deal of time and effort in designing application forms to suit their specific needs.

Ignoring an application form and sending off your CV instead will often result in a polite request to complete the full application form or, worse; no response at all (i.e. a rejection for not following instructions).

TOP TIPS:

- **Follow the instructions on the form and read through each section of the form before putting pen to paper or start typing.**

- **Generally, the amount of space allocated to a question reflects its importance.**

- **Be aware that most application forms have a list of standard questions relating to ethnic background, health, disability, criminal records, and gender.**

- **Avoid simply repeating the words used in the job specification (e.g. 'I am committed to Equal Opportunities') make a personal interpretation.**

- **Think 'ABC' - Accurate, Brief and Clear.**

- **Take every opportunity to show how your skills match the post advertised.**

- **Answer every question. If the question does not apply to you, write 'Not Applicable' or N/A.**

- **Check the form thoroughly and don't forget to sign and date it.**

- **Keep a copy of your completed application form – it will help with preparing for an interview questions and also save time when you are filling in other applications.**