

Enhancing your skills set

This actually starts with you thinking about the skills you already have – many of which will have been developed as you have brought up your young family!

These include:

Initiative: taking responsibility for your own work and looking for ways to enhance this.

Planning: this involves prioritising tasks, time management and avoiding distractions.

Teamwork: involves co-operating with others, supporting others and seeking ways to enhance your team.

Communication: includes explaining your ideas and opinions, presenting them in various forms such as print, presentations or images.

Problem-solving: you can assess a situation for the cause(s) of the issue and develop solutions.

When it comes to seeking a new job, an ability to explain how your recent experiences have sharpened your skills-set is a very powerful platform. Clearly, in a job interview situation this will depend substantially on the communication skill mentioned above – that you are self-confident, can articulate your ideas confidently and have some good examples already prepared.

In the preliminary written application for a new job it is very important that you have some recent examples that demonstrate your skills set which is where taking part in various activities come in. These might include working with others in groups run by your children's school(s) or taking part in other voluntary group activities; **this is where our IT Group provision starts to come in.**

If you already have some IT-based skills you may be able to support others in our group(s) who are learning or developing these skills. This might easily provide evidence of both Teamwork and Communication skills.

Another aspect of the IT focus is highlighted by recent revelations linked to Microsoft's end for Windows 7 support that takes effect on 14th January, 2020. It would seem that over one third of PC users are still using Windows 7 which means they are also probably using 'old' versions of such applications as Microsoft's Office Suite (Word, Excel, Powerpoint, etc). For these folks, moving on to Windows 10 and associated Office365 Suite can not only cost an-arm-and-a-leg but also a substantial re-learning programme since Microsoft has heavily revised the 'front-end' of all of these applications.

Clarborough & Welham IT Group does not use Microsoft Office but uses either The Document Foundation's Libre Office or Apache Open Office as alternatives. Not only are these completely free, but they also interface with Microsoft Office too. However, for this present discussion, these applications also provide substantial experience in developing **transferable skills** – a vital aspect of the above skills set. If you learn how to use these office suites, you will also develop skills that make finding your way about in any business's IT software so much easier – and you can explain this to potential employers! You will also have developed skills around word processing, spreadsheets and possibly presentations – Word, Excel and Powerpoint in Microsoft country.