



Navigating AI in Recruitment

Guidance for Recruiters
and Candidates



What is AI?

Artificial intelligence (AI) is technology that can answer questions and solve problems. It uses large quantities of data to make decisions from patterns identified using algorithms. AI has become increasingly integrated into many aspects of our lives. From virtual assistants like Alexa and Siri and recommendation algorithms in shopping, TV or music apps, to using facial recognition to unlock a device, you may be surprised how often you interact with it in your daily life.

Now, AI is also having a significant effect on recruitment, presenting both exciting opportunities and risks for recruiters and candidates navigating the recruitment and job search process.

In particular, the development of GenAI (or Generative AI) is having a huge impact. GenAI is a type of AI that has been designed to be able to create content. Traditional AI would make suggestions based on a summary of data that already existed, but GenAI can ‘generate’ new content.



How to use this guide

This guide is designed to provide both recruiters and candidates with a framework for using AI in recruitment. Recruiters may be wondering how to ethically use AI to help manage an ever-increasing number of applications, many assisted by AI themselves. Candidates, on the other hand, may be exploring how AI tools can help the job search, while also wondering what's acceptable use and if there are any potential pitfalls.

To provide targeted guidance, this guide is split into two sections:

- one for recruiters
- one for candidates.

You can jump directly to the section most relevant to you. While there isn't a perfect approach to using AI for recruiters or candidates, this information is designed to help you make the best decision for your needs.

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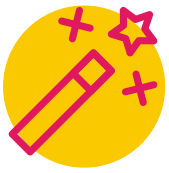
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How to approach using AI as a recruiter

If you're a charity recruiter, you might be experiencing rising application numbers, partly driven by candidates' increasing use of AI. This could mean you're finding yourself sifting through more applications from candidates who aren't genuinely aligned with your mission or who don't have the right skills. Or you might be looking for ways to improve your recruitment process with limited resources and wondering if AI could help.

This section is specifically designed to help you, as a recruiter in the charity sector, to explore the potential of AI in recruitment, including the advantages and disadvantages.





How can AI be used in recruitment?

AI is increasingly being used across the various stages of the recruitment process. While it is often embedded within applicant tracking systems (in ways that users aren't always aware of), its uses extend way beyond these platforms.



AI is commonly being used in other recruitment software for tasks like:

- ✓ writing compelling job descriptions,
- ✓ preparing effective interview questions,
- ✓ matching candidates to jobs,
- ✓ communicating with prospective candidates through chatbots,
- ✓ screening large volumes of candidates,
- ✓ assessing skills and behaviours,
- ✓ scheduling interviews,
- ✓ generating candidate notes.

Common examples of how AI can be used in recruitment

Task	Possible tools	 Benefits – if used effectively	 Potential drawbacks
Creating job descriptions	GenAI tools e.g. ChatGPT, Perplexity, Claude, Gemini, Co-Pilot, or similar tools developed specifically for recruitment.	- Saves time. - Helps eliminate biased language and ensures consistency. - Can suggest relevant keywords for better visibility.	- May lack detailed understanding of company culture and generalise. - Can make mistakes or exaggerate, so needs human review. - Risk of losing charity voice and over-optimising for SEO.
Writing interview questions	GenAI tools e.g. ChatGPT, Perplexity, Claude, Gemini, Co-Pilot, or similar tools developed specifically for recruitment.	- Generates a wider range of questions and saves time. - Can help reduce bias and ensure consistency. - May help align questions with key competencies/skills.	- Potential for bias if the AI's training data is biased. - Might lack context or seem inauthentic. - May not fully understand that certain skills or experiences might be prioritised differently by the hiring team for the specific role, leading to less relevant questions.
Screening candidates	Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) with AI-powered screening features, CV-parsing software, AI-powered assessment platforms, video interview analysis tools.	- Automates initial screening and saves significant time. - Improves efficiency and can reduce unconscious bias. - Can focus on relevant skills, rather than demographics.	- Potential for bias in algorithms and dehumanisation of the process. - Lacks detailed understanding and risks over-reliance on algorithms.
Summarising candidate information e.g. interview notes	Natural Language Processing (NLP) powered tools integrated into ATS or note-taking apps, transcription services with AI summarisation, recruitment-specific AI platforms.	- Saves time on administrative tasks, allowing recruiters more time to spend on reviewing applications. - Can make more accurate summaries than relying on human memory. - Allows easy information sharing and can identify key themes. - Ensures consistency in summaries.	- Risk of losing detailed understanding and context from the original information. - Potential for errors in AI-generated summaries.
Scheduling interviews	AI-powered scheduling platforms and ATS with integrated scheduling features.	- Saves time and improves efficiency, allowing recruiters more time to spend on reviewing applications. - Could improve the candidate experience.	Risk of impersonal communication and errors or technical glitches.



How is AI being used by charity recruiters?

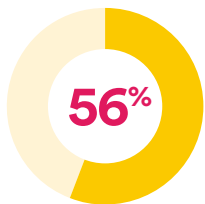
While the use of AI in recruitment continues to grow, data from our survey, conducted last year, offered a snapshot of its use among charity recruiters at that time. Our findings, presented in the [CharityJob Perspectives on AI in Charity Sector Recruitment 2025](#) report, showed that only 16% were using AI to help with their recruitment. Among those who hadn't yet adopted it, 56% said they were open or somewhat open to using it. Given the rapid advancements in AI over the past year, we expect that both these numbers have now grown.

For the minority who told us they were using AI, it was most commonly for writing job descriptions and creating interview questions. The survey findings also revealed that AI was rarely being used to assess candidates on skills, value alignment, or qualifications and experience.

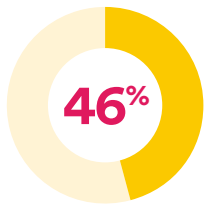


What are the benefits of using AI?

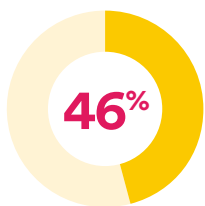
The recruiters who participated in our survey highlighted several potential benefits of using AI.



agreed that AI **makes recruitment quicker.**



agreed that AI can **help make less biased decisions.**



also agreed that AI **makes the recruitment process easier and more efficient.**

When asked about more specific tasks that AI could help with, the majority chose **writing job descriptions** (76%) and **creating interview questions** (68%).

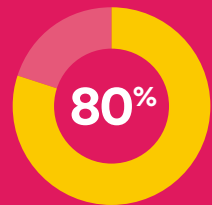


What are the risks of using AI and how can they be mitigated?

The recruiters we surveyed also felt that using AI presented some risks.



felt that AI shouldn't be used in **making the final candidate decision.**



believed it shouldn't be used in any **ethical decision-making.**



Key risk areas and mitigation strategies

Risk area	Specific risks	Mitigation strategies
 Bias in AI While AI may be able to improve fairness and objectivity in the recruitment process, some research has shown that it can also accidentally replicate and amplify existing societal biases, which could lead to exclusion and possibly violate the Equality Act 2010.	• Amplification of historical bias AI algorithms learn from potentially biased past decisions e.g. Amazon's past recruitment was biased against women, because the ideal employee was defined based on historical CVs. Therefore, datasets can unknowingly reflect historical patterns of exclusion, leading to unfair decisions. • 'Black box' algorithms Many AI algorithms operate as 'black boxes', with a lack of transparency on how they arrive at decisions. This can make it difficult to detect biases. • Training data concerns The training data used to teach the AI tool may be unrepresentative, or reflect existing stereotypes, which can skew results. Even when sensitive info is excluded, other variables (e.g. post code) can lead to indirect discrimination.	• Do some research on the tools you're using to assess their risk of bias. Make sure they are using diverse training data. • Consider testing the tools yourself (with a diverse group, where possible) before using them with candidates, and review results. • Use AI as a tool, not a sole decision-maker, and consider where it is appropriate to use it. • Continue to monitor use of your AI tools with the above in mind.
 Data privacy & GDPR compliance AI's data processing brings significant privacy risks and it's vital to maintain GDPR compliance.	• Improper data storage/security AI tools storing sensitive candidate information are vulnerable to data breaches. • Automated decision-making and candidate rights GDPR has strict guidelines regarding automated decisions that significantly impact individuals, and candidates have the right to human intervention and the ability to contest automated decisions. AI-driven recruitment processes that solely rely on automation trigger additional GDPR compliance requirements. • Lack of transparency Candidates must understand how their data is processed, especially in automated decision-making. A lack of transparent privacy notices and explanations of AI processes can lead to GDPR violations.	• Conduct due diligence and make sure your AI tools are fully data-compliant. • Obtain explicit consent from candidates for data processing, through clear, jargon-free privacy notices. • Consider where it is appropriate to use AI, e.g. you may choose to use it to support you with organising interviews, but not shortlisting candidates. • Maintain human oversight for significant automated decisions.



Researching AI tools

As AI and its uses are constantly changing, it's really important that you keep a close eye on the ethical and legal implications and deal with anything that arises. This will ensure that AI use in charity recruitment is effective, but also, responsible. You should do some thorough research before making any significant decisions about the use of AI tools and seek further guidance if needed.

Always make sure any software you use has the latest updates installed, then begin your research by thoroughly reading and understanding the terms of use/terms and conditions of the AI tools that you're using. You may also want to consider requesting things like a bias audit, performance testing, and model cards (key facts about the AI models in use) from the tool provider to further your understanding.

If you've created your own AI tools, then you may need to implement other mitigation strategies and seek more detailed guidance.



Identifying candidate AI usage

As the trend of candidates using AI grows, you may find yourself with unmanageable numbers of applications or lower quality applicants, or both. This might make it tempting to 'fight AI with AI' and use it to identify applications that have been created with AI tools. However, research has shown that this isn't always accurate, and you risk detecting false positives. For example, there's a danger of penalising candidates whose first language isn't English. Therefore, we don't currently recommend using AI for this purpose.





How do you decide your AI strategy?

As well as issues like bias and data privacy, it's very important to consider the ethical implications of using AI in recruitment. Making decisions with these four core principles in mind can help to keep things fair and ethical.

Four core ethical principles:



1. Fairness

Aiming for equitable outcomes and being aware of potential biases in AI.



2. Transparency

Being clear and open with candidates about AI's role in the process. For example, you may want to provide brief guidance for candidates on what you consider acceptable AI use from them and be upfront about how your organisation is using it.



3. Explainability

Ensuring that AI processes and decisions are clear and understandable when closely examined and being accountable for them.



4. Respect for human input

Using AI to support, rather than replace, human judgement. For example, you may choose not to use AI to shortlist candidates but to use it to help you organise your recruitment process.



Suggestions for responsible use of AI

Understanding the potential benefits and risks, alongside the above core ethical principles, provides a foundation for responsible use of AI in charity sector recruitment. The following section offers practical suggestions and guidance on how to approach the use of AI tools responsibly.

☐ Be transparent with candidates

If you're planning to use AI to assess a candidate's application, CV or skills, then clearly communicate exactly how it will be used. This can help to foster trust and understanding, as well as creating a better candidate experience.

If you have specific expectations on how candidates should use AI for applications, then communicate these clearly. You could provide a 'dos and don'ts' list to help set boundaries for what appropriate use of AI looks like for you. For example, you might tell candidates that it's fine to use AI to help them with their grammar or spelling, but it's not acceptable to use it to write their whole cover letter for them.

Having this transparency helps to maintain integrity in the recruitment process.

☐ Measure the success of AI use

You should also monitor the success of your AI use in recruitment, to make sure the tool is doing what you intended it to do. One way to do this is for hiring managers and stakeholders to agree some key metrics, based on your charity's goals and core values.

Key metrics that could be useful to assess include:

- ✓ time to hire,
- ✓ cost per hire,
- ✓ diversity of hire,
- ✓ applicant conversion rate,
- ✓ new hire retention rate,
- ✓ the candidate experience.

 **Ask yourself:** are there areas where AI is excelling? Are there others where it isn't working and adjustment is needed? This can help to track progress and success, and highlight where you might need to tweak your strategy.

Strategic AI use: consider when to automate and when to augment

As a rule, you might find it helpful to use AI for automating large numbers of repetitive tasks. For example, for sending receipt of application emails or scheduling initial interviews, as this can save time and make things more efficient. On the other hand, for tasks that have a direct impact on your candidates—such as shortlisting applications, matching individuals to roles, and communicating with them—it may be more effective to use AI to supplement your normal work, rather than relying on it completely.

Also, while AI tools can provide valuable help by highlighting relevant information, streamlining processes and more, don't forget that they aren't without their own limitations and potential for bias. Therefore, it's important to maintain a significant human oversight of the hiring process, particularly when it comes to evaluating candidates and making final hiring decisions.

Ultimately, it's up to you as recruiters to decide your own strategies. However, a balanced approach that automates where appropriate, while thoughtfully augmenting human abilities in other areas, can help charities to benefit from AI without compromising ethics.



What does the future hold for AI in recruitment?

As we've explored, AI is rapidly evolving and will continue to reshape the recruitment landscape. However, it's a common misconception that it will replace recruiters; instead, it will probably lead to a change in their roles. AI can help to streamline the recruitment process by automating routine, time-consuming tasks, which frees up charity recruiters' time for more strategic work. The future of effective charity recruitment will likely be a blend of AI and the irreplaceable human skills of charity sector recruiters.

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How to approach using AI as a candidate

If you're a candidate looking for your next role, you might have lots of questions about using AI. Is everyone using it? If so, should you be doing it too? Which tools should you use? Or maybe you're an AI-expert who already uses it for everything and are wondering if that's okay.

As AI has increased in ability and popularity, it has become much easier for candidates to submit entire applications written by AI, just at the touch of a few buttons. This means recruiters are being increasingly overwhelmed with a huge number of very similar, low-quality applications that aren't personalised to the applicant. This leaves them less time to look at the genuine applications and makes it harder for candidates to stand out. But does that mean you shouldn't be using AI at all?

Ultimately, that's a decision that you need to make for yourself—but what we can tell you is the ways in which AI could help improve your application and chances of getting the role, and the ways in which it definitely won't.





How are people using AI for job applications?

Last year, we surveyed charity candidates for the [CharityJob Perspectives on AI in Charity Sector Recruitment 2025](#) report and found that 46% had used AI to help them with a job application. Of those, 22% had used it to help them to create their CV, 41% had used it to help them with a cover letter and 25% to help them with interview preparation. As AI increases in popularity, we now expect these numbers to have grown.



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41%

Of those had
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cover letter

22%

Of those had
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their CV



How can AI help with your job application?

Used in the right way, AI can be an excellent resource to help with your job application. The key is that it can help you—we don't advise that you use AI to do it all for you. The best way to use AI will depend on your individual needs and strengths and weaknesses. For neurodivergent people, or those with learning disabilities, AI can help to level the playing field. For example, for those with dyslexia it can help with checking spelling.

Here are some ways you could use AI to help

At the start of your application:

- ☐ Use it to **help you research** the charity you're applying to—as you would use other search engines.
- ☐ Use it to help you **pull out the key skills from the job description** and the matching skills from your CV.
- ☐ Use it to **generate ideas for your cover letter**—to highlight some examples of your skills that match the requirements of the role, and you can then add the personal detail of how you have experience of using those skills.

When you've finished your cover letter and CV:

- ☐ Use it to **check your spelling, grammar and punctuation**.
- ☐ Ask it to **make suggestions for tweaks to make your cover letter clearer** or better structured, or to shorten your CV.

Before an interview:

- ☐ Use it to **generate some sample interview questions and answers to help you practise**. These will give you an idea what to prepare for, based on the job description and skills required.
- ☐ You could then use the answers as a template to **apply your own work experience examples to**.



Is it okay to use AI to help with your job application? Is it cheating?

Using AI in itself wouldn't generally be viewed as cheating, but it's all about how you use it. If you copy and paste an AI cover letter without doing any work yourself, then that could be considered cheating—a bit like copying an exam paper. Doing that is essentially passing someone else's job application off as your own, and you may or may not get found out, but either way if your application looks almost identical to many others then you're highly unlikely to get through to the next stage.

But using AI to genuinely help you improve your application won't be a problem in most cases. It's like using the spellchecker in MS Word, using a CV-writing service, or asking a friend to read your application and give you pointers on what could be improved. You wouldn't think of asking a friend's opinion as cheating—but you might think differently if they wrote the whole application for you.



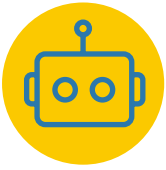


What's the downside of using AI?

While it's very tempting to let AI do all the hard work for you and fire off multiple job applications in five minutes flat, if you don't spend the time tailoring the application to you and your personal experience, skills and abilities then you can't expect to stand out.

Recruiters are receiving a much higher volume of applications at the moment, thanks to market conditions and AI making it so much easier for people to apply. This means if your application looks the same as 50 others that have also used AI, then the recruiter is more likely to reject the whole lot, as they can't differentiate between them. We know that job applications can be a time-consuming burden, and the good news is that AI can help you cut that time down, but, if you want to get the right job, you do still need to put the effort in to produce a unique and authentic application, in your own voice and tailored to your own experiences.

Also, AI isn't perfect. It can get things wrong and make mistakes—which is yet another reason not to generate a cover letter and copy and paste it without editing.



Will recruiters know if you've used AI to help with your application?

There isn't a magic way recruiters can instantly know, but if they're using AI themselves then they will most likely have an idea. The main way that they would be likely to know is if you directly cut and paste text from AI—and it's very similar to lots of other applications they receive. But if you use the AI-generated text as a template to write a unique application, then they're unlikely to know or mind.

Some recruiters may state in the advert or job description that you mustn't use AI to help with your application—and if that's the case then you should respect their wishes and avoid using it. Also, some recruiters are now asking you to declare whether you've used AI when you submit your application. Our advice here is to always be honest. If they didn't want you to use it at all, then they should state this beforehand, so it's better to be upfront than to get caught out.

This shouldn't apply to things like checking spelling—you'll just need to declare whether you're using AI to write any part of your application, or avoid using it altogether, if requested. For clarity, we're calling on recruiters to be specific in their guidance.



Do recruiters want/not want AI to be used for applications? Will they treat your application differently if they know you've used it?

Recruiters' opinions will vary widely on this, depending on their own understanding and usage of AI. Some will be very against candidates using it and should make this known, as discussed above. Others will accept AI as a normal part of our evolving digital world and will expect some usage in job applications. The [CharityJob Perspectives on AI in Charity Sector Recruitment 2025](#) report found that 35% of recruiters said that knowing a candidate had used AI would deter them from putting them through to the next stage. However, 57% said it might influence their decision, but they'd still consider the application.

As we've explained above, this reaction will very much depend on how you've used AI, so it doesn't mean that you have to avoid using it at all. Some recruiters will offer specific guidelines on what they view as acceptable and unacceptable usage of AI for applications (and we're advising more of them to do this), so don't forget to check before you get started.

Dos and don'ts of using AI for job applications

Do

-  **Use AI as a starting point to generate ideas.** It can help you to research the charity you're applying to. It can help you to pull the important points out of a job description and suggest examples of how you've applied the required skills in your previous work experience.
-  **Use AI to check your cover letter at the end.** It can check your spelling, grammar and punctuation and make suggestions for tweaks to make it clearer or more concise.
-  **Use AI to suggest interview questions** so you can practise.
-  **Check everything AI suggests** (it can make mistakes!) and make sure you personalise it to your situation and experience.

Don't

-  **Submit a cover letter AI has written without changing anything.** This won't be a true reflection of you as a person, or of your abilities, and it won't help you to get the job.
-  **Blindly trust everything AI tells you.** If something doesn't seem right, check it or don't include it.
-  **Memorise AI's suggested interview question answers and regurgitate them in an interview.** The questions you get will never be exactly what AI suggests, and you need to be able to adapt to answer them properly. You also risk sounding exactly the same as other candidates, and if you don't stand out from the crowd then you won't get the job.

Personal choice

Ultimately, unless specifically instructed by a recruiter, the choice of whether to use AI for your application is a personal one. If you do choose to use it, then the key is to remember to use it to help you increase the quality of an application, not the quantity of applications you can submit. And don't try to pass off something AI has written as your own work if you haven't edited or personalised it.

And, once we get over the initial bumps in the road, we think, if used responsibly, AI will make finding a new job much easier in the future. Not only will it make it quicker to apply for jobs, but it also has the potential to help you find jobs that are a good fit for your skills and interests, and to offer more equal opportunities for marginalised groups. And that can only be a good thing.

Conclusion

These guidelines set out the essential ideas to consider when deciding how to approach AI usage. For recruiters, the principles of fairness, transparency, explainability and respect for human input should help guide organisations of all sizes on how to implement AI. For candidates, it's about how AI can best support the production of a unique, personalised job application.

However, and how much, you use AI is up to each individual or organisation, but taking a human approach will always be key in ensuring fairness and transparency, and for AI to be a help to everyone involved in the process, rather than a hindrance.



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