

focus on

a career in
environmental health

local government talent: careers



What is environmental health?

Environmental health is all about improving people's quality of life and making sure they are able to live, work and play in safe, healthy environments.

What kind of work would I be doing?

As an environmental health practitioner, you would be involved in a wide range of activities covering food safety, environmental protection, occupational health, public health and housing. You may be involved in all aspects of the work, or you could specialise.

Daily tasks might include: making inspections at restaurants to ensure food hygiene standards are being met; measuring noise pollution and intervening in neighbourhood noise disputes; ensuring employers are safeguarding their employees against accidents in the workplace; promoting a healthy lifestyle and raising awareness of infectious diseases; monitoring standards in rented accommodation and making recommendations for improvements.

Much of the work involves providing information and advice. However, in some cases, it may be necessary to take action to enforce the law, which could mean giving evidence in court.

Where can I find out more?

local government careers information,
job vacancies and talent pool:
www.LGtalent.com

national graduate development programme:
www.ngdp.co.uk

CIEH careers website:
www.ehcareers.org

Insider view: 'My work involves carrying out food hygiene and health and safety inspections, dealing with queries from businesses and individuals, investigating food borne illnesses and workplace accidents, and health promotion. The key skill I need in my job is communication – I have to deal with all sorts of people, from directors in large companies, to shop employees and members of the public. It is an interesting, varied and rewarding career, as it is about improving the environment. I love the fact that my work makes a positive difference to people's lives.'

What kind of jobs are there?

Here are some examples of environmental health related job roles:

- enforcement officer
- environmental health practitioner/officer
- environmental health technician
- health and safety adviser
- laboratory technician
- pest control officer
- pollution control officer
- port health officer.

What qualifications do I need?

To become a fully qualified environmental health practitioner you need either a BSc or postgraduate MSc degree in environmental health accredited by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH).

What skills do I need?

You need to be:

- able to communicate well with different people,
- an excellent investigator,
- a good problem solver,
- practical, with a good knowledge of science subjects,
- able to work well on your own initiative,
- flexible and adaptable.

How much would I get paid?

Salaries vary around the country, but qualified environmental health practitioners may earn £24-32,000 per year.

Are there any other benefits?

Working for a local council can offer a lot of additional benefits, not least, the great feeling of being able to help people in your own community and do something worthwhile and rewarding.

Local councils may also offer some or all of the following: generous annual leave, flexible working hours, pension scheme membership, reduced price public transport, gym membership, crèche facilities, employee guidance and support groups.

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