

focus on

a career in
social work

local government talent: careers

What is social work?

Social work is all about supporting and protecting the most vulnerable members of society, their families and carers. Social work includes adult services, where the emphasis is on health, well-being and enabling people to maintain their independence, and children's services, which involves support for young people helping them stay happy, healthy, successful and safe.

What kind of work would I be doing?

As a social worker in adult services your tasks might include: liaising with hospitals regarding the care of elderly people; enabling people with disabilities to live independently; helping people who have been in prison back into work and the community; working with those who have HIV/AIDS.

As a social worker in children and young people's services your tasks might include: providing help for young people who are leaving care; recruiting, assessing and supporting foster carers and adoptive parents; supporting young people who are in trouble with the police; protecting children who are at risk of abuse.

Social workers spend a lot of time making visits to people's homes, hospitals and residential homes. They also liaise with a large number of different people including doctors, police officers, teachers, parents, children, solicitors and many more.

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

social work careers information website:
www.socialworkandcare.co.uk

Insider view: 'I worked for a number of years as a social worker in both children's and adult services. My current role, as a locality manager, involves overseeing the domiciliary and residential care services for the area. The best thing about the job is being able to help lots of people and make an impact on the way services are delivered.'

What kind of jobs are there?

Social workers may specialise in a number of different areas. A few examples include:

- care management
- children's services and child protection
- education
- fostering and adoption
- mental health
- older people's services
- services for people with disabilities
- youth offending team.

What qualifications do I need?

To become a qualified social worker you need a degree in social work accredited by the General Social Care Council (GSCC). Once qualified, you also need to register with the GSCC and demonstrate that you have completed the required social work training.

What skills do I need?

You need to be:

- an excellent communicator,
- a good listener,
- able to engage with people who find it hard to communicate,
- sensitive and tactful,
- a persuasive negotiator,
- able to assess a situation quickly and find a sensible solution.

How much would I get paid?

Salaries vary around the country, but qualified social workers may earn £20-30,000 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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