

## Careers in Social Work

### Social Work

Social work is a career in which the main focus is to help people individually as well as within their families and communities to improve their outcomes in life.

Social workers have a duty to care for and protect vulnerable people from harm. Harm could be as a result of or associated with sexual, physical or emotional abuse, mental health, age, disability, substance misuse and addictions and turbulent relationships and family.

They act as advocates and work with a multidisciplinary team of professionals such as courts, police, nurseries, schools and hospitals to support the individual and provide them with the best options to better their life and future life prospects.

### Areas of Social Work

Social work is split into a number of different strands based on the types of people and problems they are working with. These include: the elderly, people with learning and physical disabilities, young offenders, people with mental health conditions, school non-attenders, drug and alcohol abusers, homeless people and children from abusive homes.

### Entry Routes

In order to work as a Social Worker you must get a qualification in Social Work that is accredited by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and must also pass a DBS background check. Social work is a graduate profession and you will need either an honours or a postgraduate degree in social work to find employment. You can find further details on entry routes and course providers here: [www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/social-worker](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/social-worker)

You need to have relevant experience in a social work/care related setting to be accepted onto a postgraduate course and therefore gaining as much experience as you can is strongly advisable.

There are two social work graduate schemes available that you can apply for after completing your undergraduate degree. These combine work and study for a postgraduate Master's qualification in Social Work.

- Frontline: ([www.thefrontline.org.uk/](http://www.thefrontline.org.uk/)) Working with vulnerable children and families
- Think Ahead: (<https://thinkahead.org/>) working with people with mental health

### Getting Experience

Although it is unlikely that you will find an internship or industrial placement opportunity in social work, there are a range of things you can do to develop your experience and skills needed for a role in social work. This includes volunteering with vulnerable people (such as drug and alcohol abuse, elderly, mental health and young offenders for example) in a befriending/coaching capacity. Visit LSU Action [www.lsu.co.uk/getinvolved/action/projects/](http://www.lsu.co.uk/getinvolved/action/projects/) to find out about voluntary work around Loughborough. Another useful website to source voluntary opportunities is <https://do-it.org/>. Most large towns and cities have voluntary organisations which can connect you with organisations needing volunteers. Once you have some voluntary experience, you could look for paid work in care using websites such as Indeed.co.uk.

Frontline has student internships and insight days you can apply for – see their website for details.

You can book a Quick Advice appointment with a member of Careers Network who can support you with finding work experience.

## Resources for Further information

- NHS: [www.nhs.uk/careers/explore-by-career/wider-healthcare-team/careers-in-the-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/social-worker/](http://www.nhs.uk/careers/explore-by-career/wider-healthcare-team/careers-in-the-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/social-worker/)
- Prospects: [www.prospects.ac.uk/social\\_worker\\_job\\_description.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/social_worker_job_description.htm)
- Step Up to Social Work: [www.gov.uk/guidance/step-up-to-social-work-information-for-applicants](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/step-up-to-social-work-information-for-applicants)
- The British Association of Social Workers: [www.basw.co.uk/social-work-careers/](http://www.basw.co.uk/social-work-careers/)