



JOB of the Week



Job name: Social Worker

Job description: Social workers support individuals and their families through difficult times and ensure that vulnerable people, including children and adults, are safeguarded from harm. Their role is to help improve outcomes in people's lives. They maintain professional relationships and act as guides and advocates. They sometimes need to use their professional judgment to make tough decisions that might not always be well received by those they are trying to help. As a social worker, you'll work in a variety of settings within a framework of relevant legislation and procedures, supporting individuals, families and groups within the community. You may work in homes or schools, hospitals or on the premises of other public sector and voluntary organisations.

Social workers tend to specialise in supporting either children and families, or vulnerable adults.

Tasks you will undertake in the job: Many social workers work with young people and their families. You might also work with the following groups: The elderly; people with learning and physical disabilities young offenders; people with mental health conditions; school non-attenders; drug and alcohol abusers and the homeless.

Government legislation focusing on the integration of health and social work services means that social workers often work in multidisciplinary teams. Tasks typically involve:

- conducting interviews with individuals and families to assess and review their situation
- undertaking and writing up assessments (sometimes in collaboration with other professionals), which meet specified standards and timescales
- offering information and support
- organising and managing packages of support to enable people to lead the fullest lives possible
- recommending and sometimes making decisions about the best course of action for a particular person or family
- liaising with, and making referrals to, other agencies
- participating in multidisciplinary teams and meetings regarding, for example, child protection or mental health
- maintaining accurate records and preparing reports for legal action
- giving evidence in court
- participating in training, supervision and team meetings.

Skills required for this job (core competencies):

Communication	Resilience	Organisation	Teamwork
Problem Solving	Initiative	Creativity	Digital literacy

Sectors in which Social Workers would normally work: Social workers can work in both statutory and non-statutory roles. In a statutory position, your role is to adhere to the laws that exist to protect the vulnerable clients that you work with. Social workers have a duty to abide by the legislation and the power to enforce it. In non-statutory roles, social workers still work with a similar client group but are not specifically responsible for enforcing the law. You'll be employed in the charity sector or in specialist roles, such as providing support for drug and alcohol users, homeless people and people with mental health issues. You may also work in early intervention roles, aiming to prevent the escalation of problems in society to where statutory services are required.

Career path and progression within the industry:

There are many specialist roles available in social work, once you've completed the appropriate induction and training. These roles include: Homelessness officer; Day-care social worker; Education welfare officer; Healthcare social worker; Mental health social worker.

Career development may involve a change of role within a specialism, e.g. from child protection to fostering and adoption. It's also possible to transfer from one specialism to another, e.g. from working with children to working with the elderly.

Social work is a profession where promotion is likely to take you away from hands-on work. Three to five years after qualification it's possible to become a senior practitioner, team or care manager. In this role, you would have responsibility for managing other social workers, (resulting in a reduction in direct contact), and an increasing involvement in managerial, financial and political issues. Another route is to become a practice educator, which allows you to become involved in the supervision and management of social work students and less experienced staff.



Salary: Average salary is £35 880 for a Social Worker but this depends on experience and career progression.

The UK average salary is £28,758



Working hours: Social workers generally work for 37 hours in a week, average working hours in the UK are 37.5. If you work as a residential care social worker, regular unsocial hours are normal practice. Occasional evening and weekend work may be necessary if working in child protection or fostering and adoption teams. Part-time work, job shares and career breaks are possible.

Essential skills you need to show: You'll need to show evidence of the following:

- patience and the ability to remain calm in a crisis / resilience
- flexibility to adapt to new roles, tasks and situations / initiative
- strong observation, analytical and listening skills
- the capacity to absorb legal and procedural information
- the ability to negotiate, mediate and interpret on behalf of service users
- good organisational skills to work autonomously and plan meetings for a caseload of clients.

Empathy combined with a genuine desire to improve the quality of the lives of service users is essential, as is the ability to think on your feet and make difficult decisions under pressure. An interest or participation in some aspect of your local community is useful. General administrative skills are also needed.

This job in the future: The workforce is projected to grow by 5.7%, creating 6 800 jobs; in the same period, 56.1% of the workforce is likely to retire, creating 66 900 job opportunities.

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www.successatschool.org

www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk

www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/job-sectors

www.ucas.com/careers-advice

www.kudos/cascaid.co.uk/#/ (you all have a log on for this service)

www.careersbox.co.uk (careers videos)

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