

Working in social care

Social care is about providing physical, emotional and social support to help people live their lives. For various reasons and at different stages in their lives, some people need support to develop and maintain their independence, dignity and control.

Social care provides a whole range of services to support adults and older people.

If you work in social care, you could help people in their own homes, in residential homes or in a number of other places such as day centres or supported housing.



Working in social care

Working in social care means supporting people with their non-clinical needs, although there is an important crossover between working in health ^[1] and working in social care.

The social care sector employs 1.48 million people and will have half a million extra jobs available by 2030.

1.54 million people currently work in the social care sector. Because of the increasing number of disabled younger adults living longer and the growing number of older people needing care, adult social care is growing and the sector needs another half a million jobs, and people to do them, by 2035.

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Health and social care working together

Many staff now work in roles that cover both health and social care, and the values and qualities needed are very similar.

The Government has set out the need for the health and social care sectors to develop new integrated care models to promote health and wellbeing and provide care. In the future, this could mean your career crossing both sectors in new and exciting roles.

Several methods are in place across the country to develop and promote these new ways of working, such as:

- providing key skills training for health staff so they can assess mental health wellbeing
- training for physiotherapists so they can undertake dementia assessments
- enhancing the competencies of care home staff so they can support clinical and non-clinical professionals
- ways of encouraging closer working and learning between primary and community-based nursing teams

See the [NHS England's Workforce Training and Education website](#) [2] for more information.

• **A range of options**

There are many different types of social care career options to choose from. For example, you could:

- specialise in a particular area, such as [occupational therapy](#) [3]
- provide direct care as a care worker or [personal assistant](#) [4]
- help provide the essential support needed to run a care home, such as [administration](#) [5], [catering](#) [6] or [maintenance](#) [7]
- work with people to find solutions to their problems as a [social worker](#) [8]

• **The opportunities available**

Visit the [Think Care Careers website](#) [9] for details of the roles and progression available in social care, which include:

- care worker
- personal assistant
- [social worker](#) [8]
- community support and outreach worker
- supervisors and managers
- occupational therapist
- activities coordinator
- technician
- administration
- support staff such as cleaning staff, chef and driver

You can also see how to [develop in these roles, from entry level to senior manager](#) [10].

Click on the Health Careers links below to see some of the health roles that work closely with or are also employed in social care settings:

- the [allied health professions](#) ^[11], especially [occupational therapists](#) ^[12]
- [management](#) ^[13]
- [nursing](#) ^[14]
- [psychological therapies](#) ^[15]
- [public health](#) ^[16]
- the [wider healthcare team](#) ^[17] including and [administrative staff](#) ^[18]
- [social work](#) ^[19]

• **Values**

If you work in a health or social care role, you're making a positive difference to someone's life. You'll need good communication and listening skills, and feel passionate about supporting other people to live a more independent and fulfilling life.

You can gain an enormous sense of personal achievement from simply knowing that your job is helping people. It's about making a positive difference to people's lives by contributing to their health, happiness and wellbeing.

These are just some of the qualities you need to be a great care worker:

- treat people with respect and dignity
- be a good listener and communicator
- be reliable
- be able to follow instructions and procedures
- have an understanding of other people's feelings

Visit the [Skills for Care website](#) ^[20] ^[21] for more information about the values that employers are looking for. And have a look at the [Health Careers Recruiting for values page](#) ^[22] to see how the above qualities compare to those needed to work in health.

• **Find out more**

Visit the [Think Care Careers website](#) ^[9] for more information about working in social care. The site will show you the types of role you can choose from, the skills and qualifications you'll need, and the different pathways and progression routes available.

Have a look at the [explore roles section](#) ^[23] of this website to see which health roles cross over with social care.

Take the [A question of care challenge](#) ^[24] to see what a career in care is like and if you've got what it takes.

Partner logos

Skills for Care _ [25]

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/working-health/working-social-care>

Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/working-health> [2] <https://hee.nhs.uk/our-work/planning-commissioning/delivering-nhs-five-year-forward-view/supporting-new-care-models> [3] <http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Care-careers/Think-Care-Careers/Jobs/Occupational-therapist/Occupational-therapist.aspx> [4] <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Careers-in-care/Job-roles/Roles/Personal-assistant.aspx> [5] <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Careers-in-care/Job-roles/Roles/Administration-and-office-roles-such-as-finance-HR-and-marketing.aspx> [6] <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Careers-in-care/Job-roles/Roles/Cook-or-kitchen-assistant.aspx> [7] <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Careers-in-care/Job-roles/Roles/Maintenance-worker.aspx> [8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/social-worker> [9] <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Careers-in-care/Think-Care-Careers.aspx> [10] <http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Care-careers/Think-Care-Careers/Develop-your-career/Develop-Your-Career.aspx> [11] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals> [12] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/occupational-therapist> [13] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/management> [14] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing> [15] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/psychological-therapies> [16] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health> [17] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team> [18] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/administration> [19] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/clinical-support-staff/social-worker> [20] <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Documents/Recruitment-and-retention/Careers-in-care/What-values-do-I-need-to-work-in-social-care.pdf> [21] <http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Recruitment-retention/Values-based-recruitment-and-retention/Recruiting-for-values-and-behaviours-in-social-care.aspx> [22] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/working-health/nhs-constitution> [23] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles> [24] <http://www.aquestionofcare.org.uk> [25] <http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Home.aspx>