

Find out more about

**job roles in**

**adult social care**

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/thinkcarecareers](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/thinkcarecareers)

**There are lots of  
job roles available  
in adult social  
care, including  
direct care  
roles and  
support  
roles.**



This booklet talks about a few of them, which should give you an overview of the type of work you could do in the sector – and what skills and experience you need to get the job.

Visit [www.skillsforcare.org.uk/thinkcarecareers](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/thinkcarecareers) to find out more about working in adult social care.

# What kind of person do I need to be to work in adult social care?

Depending on the role, you don't always need qualifications or previous work experience to get a job in social care. What's really important is having the right values, behaviours and attitudes to work effectively with people who need care and support.

## What are values in social care?

Our values and behaviours define us. They influence who we are, what we believe is important in life, the way we live and how we treat people.

Here are some of the values and behaviours you might need to work in social care.

- Dignity and respect.
- Learning and reflection.
- Working together.
- Commitment to quality care and support.

## What skills do I need to work in social care?

Every role in social care will also require you have a set of skills.

Some of these will be specific to the job you are applying for. However, there are some skills that all social care workers need; these are called core skills. You might also recognise these as 'transferable' or 'life' skills.

Core skills include:

- **English skills** including the ability to read, write, listen and speak
- **number skills** including the ability to do calculations and record numbers
- **digital skills** including finding information online and recording personal data digitally
- **employability skills** including team work and problem solving.

# What qualifications do I need to work in adult social care?

## Before you start work in adult social care

Most social care qualifications can be done once you've started your job; in fact many qualifications can't be done until you have built up some practical experience. However, there are some that would be very useful to have before you apply for your first job.

These include any qualifications that show you have good communication skills and other general employability skills. For example GCSE or functional skills qualifications in English, maths, or ICT.

It may also be useful to have any qualifications that show you have an understanding of the health and social care sector such as a Level 1 Award or Level 2/3 Certificate in Preparing to Work in Adult Social Care.



# Qualifications whilst you're working in adult social care

The qualifications you would be working towards in health and social care are diplomas.

## **The most common qualifications for the job roles in this booklet are**

- Level 2 Diploma in Health and Social Care
- Level 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care.

If this is your first job in adult social care, then you could gain these diplomas whilst you work.

As well as the diplomas there are a range of smaller Continuing Professional Development (CPD) qualifications which can support workers in more specialist areas of social care or with particular interests or requirements. These CPD qualifications will be either awards or certificates.

## **The range of topics include:**

- dementia
- learning disability
- stroke
- end of life care
- mental capacity
- activity provision
- diabetes.

For direct care roles, you will have to complete a thorough induction which should cover the minimum standards, the Care Certificate, when you start work. This is a great introduction into the care and health sector; non-direct care roles can also benefit from this training. Your employer should arrange this as part of your induction, but it may be worth asking about the induction process in your interview.

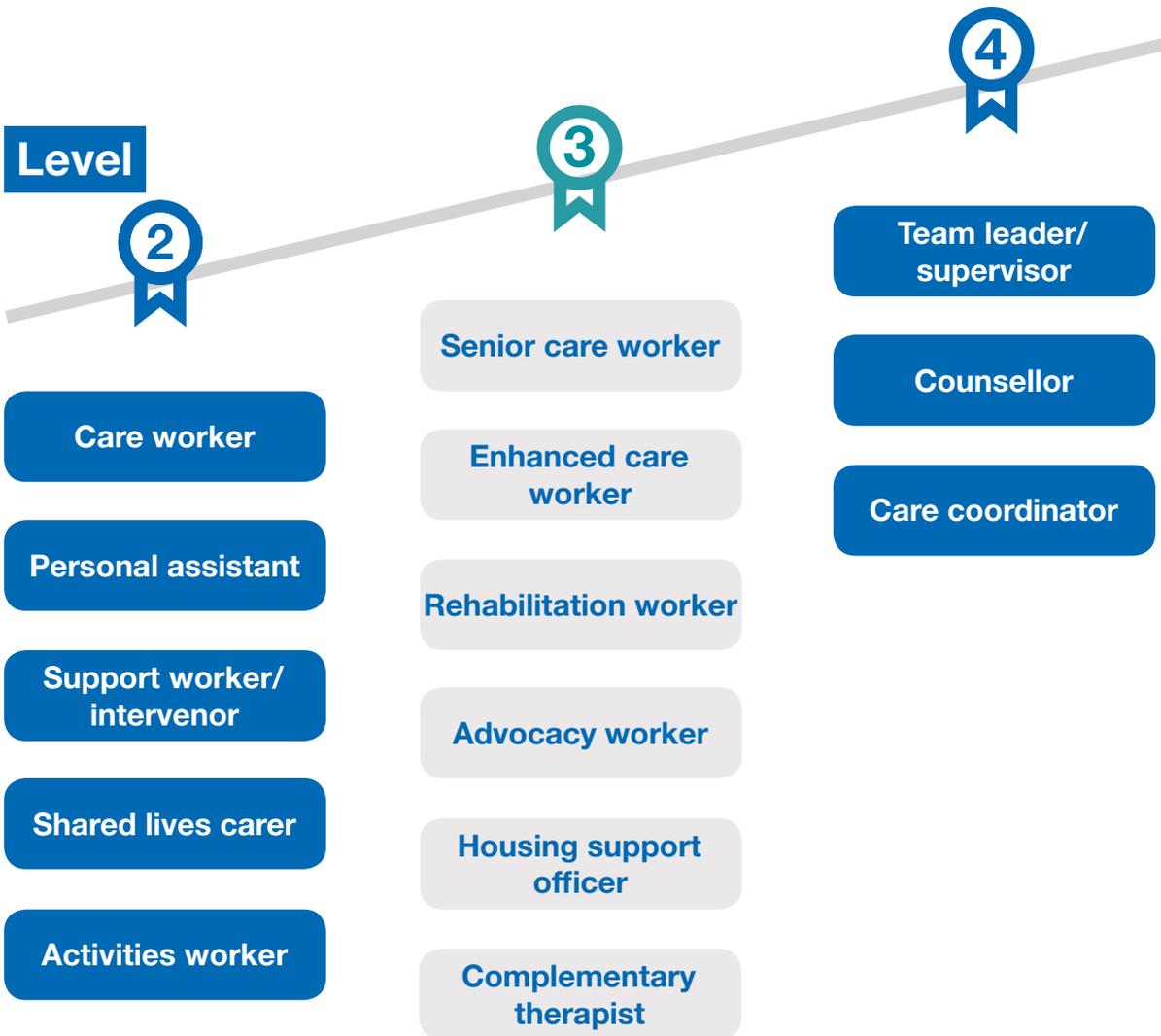
# Job roles in adult social care



There are lots of different jobs roles in adult social care and this booklet will give you an overview of a few of them.

You can read more about the different adult social care job roles on our Think Care Careers website

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/thinkcarecareers](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/thinkcarecareers)





5

Management

Registered manager

Commissioner

Owner

Shared lives coordinator

Nursing associate

6

Social worker

Occupational therapist

Registered nurse

Specialist coordinator

Support roles

Administrator

Assistive technology

Cook

Employment advisor

Welfare rights officer



# Care worker



**You'll work with people who need direct care and support, and you'll be responsible for an individual's overall comfort and independence. You could work in a residential or nursing home, in peoples' own homes, or out in the community. You could also be a live-in carer, living with an individual over a specified time period.**

No two days are the same as a care worker, but the role often includes:

- supporting people with social and physical activities
- helping with personal care such as support with showering and dressing
- monitoring people's health, for example by checking body temperatures and fluid intake
- helping people to live as independently as possible.

## What training/qualifications will I need?

There are no set entry qualifications, although you may benefit from holding a qualification in a related topic (e.g. GCSE, BTEC, or other vocational qualification). It is possible to enter this role through a Level 2 Apprenticeship in Health and Social Care.

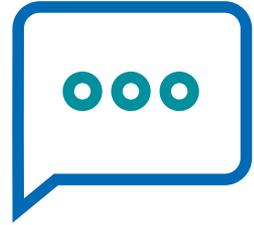
Although no formal experience is required, related voluntary or informal experience (such as caring for relatives) will support your application. You'll be required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring check.



Hear from ...

## John Garrity

Carer, Executive Care Group, Harrogate



### **John works in a nursing home for elderly people that need general and dementia care.**

Before John started in social care, he spent a number of years working in the hospitality industry. He had always enjoyed working with people and was drawn to the idea of helping people. When he found himself unemployed, John did a pre-employment training course recommended by Jobcentre Plus, and from there got his role with the Executive Care Group.

John's primary role is to support individuals who need care and support with everything from personal care and mental care issues, to assisting nurses with medical care.

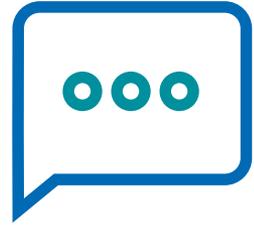
There is no such thing as a typical day in John's role. He can be doing anything from assisting people with washing and dressing, to organising activities like bingo, dominoes and days out.

 **Just knowing that I can make people happier and more comfortable in their environment is the most satisfying part of my job.** 

Hear from ...

## Sue Cash

Personal assistant



**Sue works as a personal assistant (PA) and supports Marta who has a health condition called Freidreichs ataxia.**

Sue has worked in a variety of social care roles but decided to become a PA as she enjoyed working closely with individuals and wanted to do more of this.

She supports Marta with a range of care needs including:

- assisting with personal care
- helping with medication including insulin
- helping Marta at meal times
- doing small tasks around the house.

Sue gets on really well with Marta and they have an active social life together. They enjoy going to the local farm, swimming, bingo, going to concerts and having lunch in the pub.

Sue loves working with Marta and enjoys the close friendship they have.



**The best bit of this job is not only having a job, but having a friend. It's not like going to work.**



# Personal assistant



**Personal assistants, or PAs as they're often called, are employed directly by an individual, rather than an organisation, to help them live as independently as possible.**

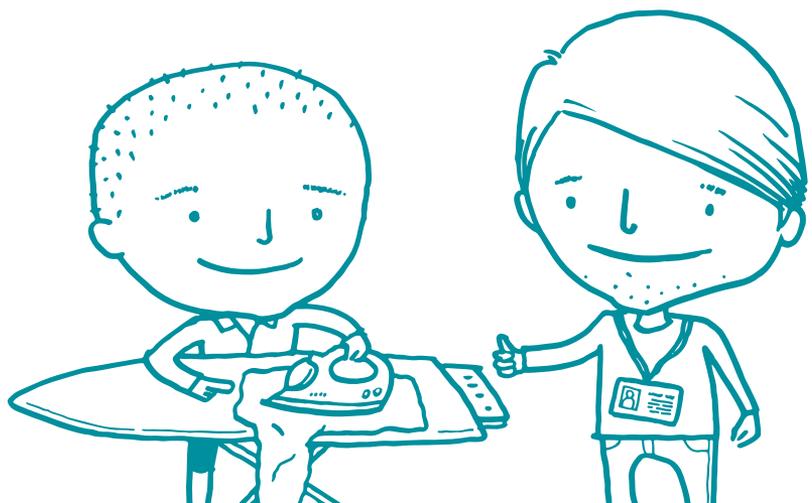
You could work with lots of different people with difference care needs, for example someone who has a physical disability, learning disability or mental health condition, so each job is unique.

As a PA you could work with someone at their place of work, at home, college or in the community. The things you will do as a PA will depend on the needs of your employer, but they could include things like assisting with mobility, doing hobbies, helping to cook meals, visiting friends and family, personal care, going on day trips or holidays, attending meetings and taking notes. Some PAs also help their employer to manage a larger team of PAs.

## What training and qualifications will I need?

Many individual employers select personal assistants on the basis of their personality and flexibility; for many, experience of social care is not important. The softer skills like empathy and compassion are valued more than qualifications, but the core skills and values will still apply to this role.

Relevant parts of the Care Certificate and training courses which meet the needs of your employer can be helpful, particularly in relation to a specific condition. PAs might also get the opportunity to complete health and social care diplomas as part of their role.



# Activities worker



**Your role would be to design and oversee activities for people who need care and support. This could be in a residential care home, a community care setting or in an individual's home.**

The activities stimulate new interests and skills, and are designed specifically to meet individual's needs.

The role often includes:

- talking to people about what activities they like to do
- developing and providing activities for individuals and groups
- booking external suppliers to provide entertainment
- organising trips out in the local community.

## What training and qualifications will I need?

Activities co-ordinators will usually have experience of working in a residential, community or voluntary setting and experience of organising activities. Qualifications demonstrating strong English and number skills (such as GCSE grades A–C in maths and English) are usually required. A Level 3 Diploma or Apprenticeship in Health and Social Care is also a desirable qualification for this role, as well as awards and certificate in activity provision.



# Rehabilitation worker



**Your role would involve supporting individuals to live as independently as possible, often following an illness or accident.**

You'll support people with many aspects of their everyday living, including personal, emotional and social care.

The role often includes:

- doing specialist assessments to identify what care and support people need
- working with other professionals such as social workers and housing support to help people
- teaching people life skills such as making a cup of tea, cooking or reading braille
- organising activities such as sports, drama or educational activities.

## What training and qualifications will I need?

For some roles there are no formal entry level qualifications, but entrants need to have strong English and number skills (such as GCSE grades A–C in maths and English).

For other roles it's necessary to have at least one year's experience of working with individuals with care and support needs. Holding or working towards a Level 3 Diploma or Apprenticeship in Health and Social Care is desirable.



# Advocacy worker



**Advocacy seeks to ensure that people, particularly those who are most vulnerable, have their voice heard on issues that are important to them, and have their views and wishes genuinely considered when decisions are being made about their lives.**

In this role you will empower individuals to express their views, wishes and choices and remain as involved as possible in all decisions which affect them. For example, you might provide advocacy for someone with dementia. As part of your role you might support them to make decisions about getting carers in their own home or moving into residential care.

## **What training and qualifications will I need?**

There are no formal qualification requirements for this role although you will benefit from having relevant life experience, as well as knowledge of local government and other public services.

A degree in social sciences or a legal background is useful and some employers may require a social care qualification. You may have experience in counselling or gained experience in advocacy or welfare rights.



# Complementary therapist



**In this role you'll provide complementary therapies such as reflexology, massage and aromatherapy to individuals who may be experiencing emotional distress, pain or psychological issues. You could work in a hospital, health centre, hospice or in someone's own home.**

The role could include:

- doing assessments to identify treatments for people
- delivering complementary therapies such as reflexology, massage and aromatherapy
- evaluating the therapies and amending treatment plans where needed.

## **What training and qualifications will I need?**

Each therapy will have its own entry requirements and employers may expect therapists to be registered with either the General Regulatory Council for Complementary Therapies or the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC). You may also need some previous experience of working in social care or health.

# Housing support officer



**In this role you'll provide housing related support and advice to individuals, to help them live independently and maintain their tenancy. You may be working in sheltered accommodation, supported living services, a hostel for the homeless or supported housing. You could be working as a residential warden, ensuring a safe and secure environment for all residents and acting as the first point of contact for care staff and contractors.**

This role could include:

- assessing the needs of people who need housing
- supporting individuals with many aspects of everyday living; including personal finance, cooking and shopping
- carrying out inspections and health and safety checks
- working in teams with other professionals such as social workers to make sure people get the right housing and support
- providing advice and informal counselling when necessary.

## **What training and qualifications will I need?**

For some roles there are no formal entry level qualifications, but you will need to have good English and number skills (such as GCSE grades A–C in maths and English). For other roles you will need at least one year's experience of working with individuals who need care and support. Having a degree or Level 3 Diploma or Apprenticeship in Health and Social Care is often required or desirable.

# Commissioner



**As a commissioner you'll arrange services for people who need care and support. You could commission NHS-funded services such as therapy, or work with particular client groups such as older people or people with a mental health condition. You could work for a local authority, a Clinical Commissioning Group or another NHS service. There a range of roles within commissioning teams – including quality assurance and compliance.**

The role could include:

- finding services that people who need care and support can use in the local community
- researching information on best practice, national policy and legislation and local market intelligence
- planning and doing visits to local care providers to make sure they're delivering good care services
- writing contracts and carrying out assessments.

## What training and qualifications will I need?

Entry requirements will depend on the role but the majority will require relevant experience in a health or social care setting as well as a social care, business or management qualification at level 4 or above. For senior positions you'll be required to have previous experience in a similar role.



# Management



**There are lots of different jobs which fall under the management category in adult social care, from being a supervisor, senior PA or team leader, to being the CEO of a residential care business.**

**Supervisors** have some responsibility for the quality of care an organisation provides. They supervise the work of other care and front line workers.

**First line managers** are responsible for the day to day provision of social care services – this means they support the staff and have a key role in ensuring that the standard of care delivered is always high. Typical jobs in this category are team leaders, service managers and residential wardens.

**Middle managers** are responsible for overseeing the organisation and managing whole departments. Examples of their duties include determining staffing requirements and managing budgets. Workers in this category could be area managers, managers or department heads.

**Senior managers** have overall responsibility for the organisation, and their main job role includes giving the organisation leadership and direction. They have final responsibility for the quality of care provided and the health and safety of staff, people using care and support and any visitors. Senior managers could be owners, directors or chief executives.



## What training and qualifications will I need?

Knowledge and experience of the care sector is usually required for these roles.

The core qualification is the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership in Health and Social Care. This qualification can only be achieved once you are working in a management role. In addition, new managers or aspiring managers would be encouraged to work through the Manager Induction Standards to support them in their role.

Some individuals who have a mental health or physical disability choose to employ their own care staff, known as personal assistants (PAs) - they are called individual employers. Individual employers might manage their own team of PAs, or a family member or senior PA may support them with this. They may also want to complete the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership in Health and Social Care, or other training to develop management skills.



# Social worker



**Social workers provide advice and emotional support to help people adjust to changes in their lives, caused by illness, age related problems, disability or bereavement. They may also work with people who suffer from mental illnesses like depression, anxiety, schizophrenia and personality disorders.**

Your job would be to work out what type of care and support is needed, and visit people to reassess their needs over a set period of time.

You would usually work as part of a team, responsible for a number of cases which all might need a different approach. You also need to work closely with organisations such as the police, health services, schools and probation services.

## What training and qualifications will I need?

To qualify as a social worker you will need to do a degree in social work that's approved by the Health and Care Professionals Council.

Entry requirements for the degree can include A-levels or a Level 3 entry to degree programme (including a Level 3 Apprenticeship in Health and Social Care). Some experience of working with people in a social care setting is essential.

There are post graduate qualifications and also some fast track graduate entry schemes available. Once qualified you will need to register with the Health and Care Professions Council.



Hear from ...

# Jane Haywood

Principal social worker, Derby City Council



## **Jane works with Derby City Council with adults in the health and housing department.**

She has worked in social care for over 25 years, but still finds the industry interesting and challenging and feels fortunate to have found a role she loves.

Jane's role couldn't be more varied; no two days are the same. Her role covers 50 per cent coaching and mentoring the hospital social work team, and 50 per cent managing a complex case load that allows Jane to work with people who use services first-hand.

Jane tends to work with older people who have been hospitalised, and assists the hospital with discharging patients that need social support services. She is responsible for assessing the support available and ensuring the best interests of the individual are managed.

Jane is keen to recommend a career in social care as she has thrived, and continues to excel, in her role.

**I find it fulfilling, interesting and exciting.  
There are so many different levels in social care,  
but ultimately you are helping people to achieve  
and realise their potential, and that's satisfying.**

# Occupational therapist



Sometimes referred to as an OT practitioner or therapist for short, this role can work with people who need care and support in the following areas:

- physical rehabilitation
- mental health
- learning disabilities
- care management
- equipment for daily living
- housing.

You would work with people to overcome the effects of their disability, and assess what treatment or equipment is needed to increase their independence. This could be physical treatment to improve their mobility, or advising on equipment they need or the design of people's houses. For example, you would give advice to housing departments for a person who uses a wheelchair.

## What training and qualifications will I need?

You'll need a degree in occupational therapy that's approved by the Health and Care Professions Council. If you already hold a degree, you could do a postgraduate diploma to become an occupational therapist.

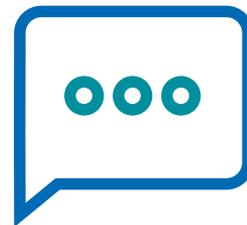
You could also start as an occupational therapy support worker and complete an in-service degree.

Once qualified, you'll need to register with the Health and Care Professions Council.

Hear from ...

## Hanna Munro

Senior occupational therapist,  
Risedale Estates, Cumbria



**Hanna is a senior occupational therapist and supports six care homes that specialise in residential nursing, dementia and mental health.**

Hanna started her career in leisure management, before moving into the social care sector and gaining a BSc Hons in Occupational Therapy.

Her role covers the physical, mental and management aspects of social care. She offers key services including:

- fall prevention
- wheelchair and seating assessments
- provision of daily living equipment
- rehabilitation.

There's no such thing as an average day in my role. I can be managing patient referrals or carrying out wheelchair, handrail or seating assessments across the care homes, or training the nursing teams.

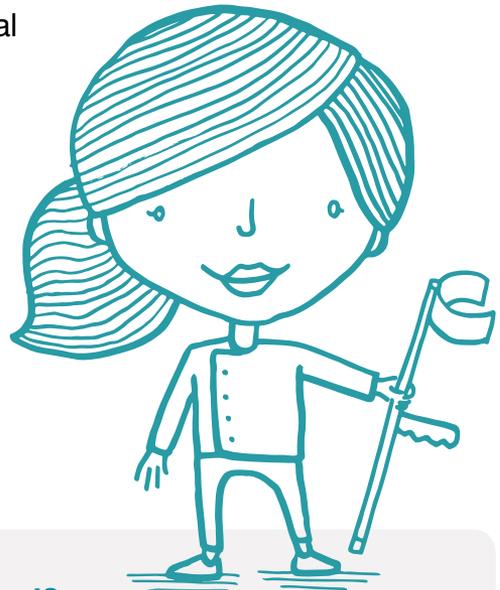
# Registered nurse



**To become a registered nurse you should be fully trained and have an official certificate. As a registered nurse in adult social care you could work in a nursing home or out in the community.**

Nurses in adult social care can work in the following areas:

- caring for adults, elderly people and others who are ill, injured or have physical disabilities
- working with people who have learning difficulties to help them become as independent as possible
- community psychiatry and other psychiatry (mental health) nurses help people suffering from mental health problems e.g. personality disorders, neuroses, phobias, acute anxiety, alcohol dependency, severe eating disorders and depression.



## What training and qualifications will I need?

To work as a registered nurse you must have either a diploma (which takes three years)

OR

a Bachelor of Science (BSc) Degree (which takes three to four years) in Nursing. These qualifications are made up of half theory work and half practice.

Entry requirements for the degree can include A-levels or an entry to degree programme (including a Level 3 Apprenticeship in Health and Social Care). Some experience of working in a social care or health setting will also be beneficial.

# Counsellor



**As a counsellor you may work with people who are coming to terms with bereavement, living with a long-term condition or experiencing problems with drug or alcohol addiction. In this role you'll help people to overcome their challenges and to make appropriate changes to their life.**

Your role might include:

- giving people the opportunity to talk and work through their feelings
- listening to people and asking questions to encourage them to reflect on their experiences
- encouraging people to cope with challenges and make positive changes in their lives.

## **What training and qualifications will I need?**

To become a counsellor you need to fulfil the requirements of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). Further information can be found at [www.bacp.co.uk/student/become.php](http://www.bacp.co.uk/student/become.php)

A degree in a related subject such as nursing, psychology or social work may support you in your career, as will previous counselling experience.



# Support roles



**Administration roles are not specific to care, but larger care and support services have many roles available within an office environment, and might include**

- personnel and human resources (HR)
- receptionist
- finance
- IT
- marketing.

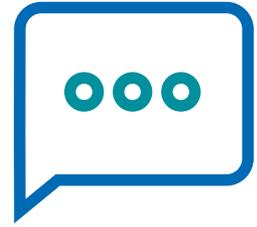
**Ancillary job roles, which are not specific to working in care but are vital to providing a good service, can include any of the following:**

- domestic and cleaning staff
- catering staff and chef
- driver
- maintenance
- handy person.



Hear from ...

**Julie Allen**



**Office manager, Wealdon Community Care,  
East Sussex**

**Julie works as an office manager with Wealden Community Care in East Sussex.**

Julie previously worked in the insurance industry. However, when her personal circumstances changed, she needed a role that offered more flexibility. She started as a community carer and has taken on more office based responsibilities as her career has progressed.

Her role now is varied and can include training and supervising staff, conducting appraisals and interviews, creating care packages, sorting out wages and attending social services meetings and forums. Julie also works as a community carer some weekends as she enjoys engaging with people who need care and support.



**I would strongly recommend the social care sector for its job satisfaction and the fact there are endless opportunities to progress your career.**



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