

What values do I need to work in social care?

Depending on the role, you don't always need qualifications or previous work experience in the sector 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?

Values are the beliefs and views that people hold about what is right or wrong. They apply to all aspects of life and influence how a person **behaves** in different situations.

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

- Dignity and respect
- Learning and reflection – (thinking about what you do and why you do things in a certain way)
- Working together
- Commitment to quality care and support

Here are examples of how these values and behaviours might look in your everyday work. They explain some of the things employers do and don't want to see in employees.

What employers would like to see	What employers don't want to see
Dignity and respect	
You spend time listening to people to get to know them and their needs	You ignore people and do not make time to welcome them or to get to know them and their needs
You respect people's right to make their own choices and decisions about how they want to be supported	You do not respect people's right to make their own decisions. You believe you know what they need better than they do

You communicate with people in a clear, open and straight forward way using appropriate language	You use jargon when communicating with people, and talk to people in a patronising, childlike or inappropriate way
Learning and reflection	
You accept and think about any feedback you are given about your work and learn from the feedback.	You are dismissive and defensive about feedback and do not consider how to use the feedback to change the way in which you work
You are honest and transparent and are not afraid to admit when you have made a mistake	You blame others when things go wrong in work and do not admit when you make mistakes
You know your own limits and can identify when you need help and support and are feeling stressed by your work	You do not know your own limits and are not willing to ask for support and help when you need it
Working together	
You offer people a range of realistic options and choices about the support available to them	You do not provide people with any choice or you give people false expectations about the choices and options that are available to them
You are committed to working as part of a team and support others in the team	You prefer to work on your own and do not work with or support others in the team
You understand and respect that other people have different priorities and needs	You do not respect or understand other's needs and priorities and are not flexible in the way in which you work with them
Commitment to quality and support	
You give people your full attention and help people when they need it most	You do not give people your full attention or put them at the heart of what you do – you read the paper or use your phone instead of focussing on them
You are warm, kind, reliable, empathetic and compassionate towards the people you support	You are intimidating, patronising, unreliable and you lack compassion towards those you support
You are flexible and react calmly to whatever goes on in the day making changes as necessary	You are reactive and firefight, panicking and losing control when things change in the day

Demonstrating your values, behaviours and attitudes

You may not have experience of working in a social care role, but you might have other experience which demonstrates that you have the right values. You could draw on experiences from

- a hobby
- volunteering or work experience
- your home life
- a previous job (part time or full time)
- or from everyday living.

Have a think about some of the values and behaviours employers would like to see and write down examples of where you have used them.

Social care values	Your experience
Spending time listening to people to get to know them	
Respecting people's right to make their own choices and decisions	
Accepting and thinking about any feedback you are given and learning from the feedback.	
Knowing your own limits identifying when you need help and support if you are feeling stressed	
Working as part of a team and supporting others in the team	

<p>Understanding and respecting that other people have different priorities and needs</p>	
<p>Giving people your full attention and helping people when they need it most</p>	
<p>Being flexible and reacting calmly to whatever goes on in the day making changes as necessary</p>	

Here are some ways you could build your experience and put your values and behaviours into practice. Demonstrating first-hand experience will help you when starting your career in social care.

- Volunteer with a local community or charity group. Visit www.do-it.org to find local volunteering opportunities.
- Try work experience or taster days where you work closely with people or provide customer service.
- Join a local team or group; this could be a sports team or hobby group.
- Organise or support a fundraising activity.
- Offer help to a family member, friend or neighbour who might need an extra hand, for example going shopping with an elderly neighbour.

Further resources

A Question of Care: A career for you?

This free online quiz shows you what a career in care can really be like. At the end, you'll get a personal, confidential report based on your answers which might help you decide whether care is right for you.

Visit www.aquestionofcare.org.uk.