

Information sheet 009: Working in the Community in England

Community work offers a variety of challenging opportunities. Community work can be of a general nature or it may involve working within specific communities, agencies or individuals across a range of issues.

You may work in the statutory sector, i.e. those organisations that are funded by, and accountable to, national or local government, e.g. Social Services, NHS. Alternatively you might find yourself working with voluntary organisations.

Much of the work is project-based, which means that community development workers might find themselves working in a specific geographical area with identified social or economic priorities. Project based social worker may similarly focus on particular social issues or vulnerable groups, e.g. drugs or the elderly.

General community work is usually based in a particular geographical area. The focus is on working with the community to identify their needs and issues and to develop strategies to address those issues. The location may be either urban or rural. Rural community development work has become more high profile in recent years.

Specialised community work focuses on either specific groups within a region (such as the homeless, the long-term unemployed, families with young children or ethnic minorities) or on particular concerns (such as public transport, mental health or drugs action.)

Specific information is given as follows

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1) Entry Requirements

Commonly you will have a degree or Higher National Diploma preferably in a social science subject.

Entry without a degree or HND is possible, although career development is more restricted. A degree in any subject will be an advantage in gaining higher level posts. Work is currently underway to develop more relevant and standardised qualification and progression routes. You can access this at the Federation for Community Development and Learning website – <http://www.fcdl.org/home>

Previous experience of community involvement and/or voluntary work is desirable. People often become community development workers through teaching, youth work, community work, or involvement in the health sector. Development work overseas may also be relevant. It is essential to have a proven interest in community and social issues. Experience of at least a year's involvement in areas such as community work, women's projects, pressure groups or youth work, is advisable.

It is a good idea to become involved in voluntary work. Contact your local Volunteer Bureau (you can search for your nearest branch via Volunteering England (www.volunteering.org.uk) or the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) (<http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk>) to get some community project experience

Those who wish to work with children or vulnerable adults will be expected to undergo a CRB (criminal records bureau) check.

For many posts, postgraduate qualifications are essential in order to progress to more senior-level positions. This is particularly true for those working in the statutory sector. For details of courses, whose titles differ, see Prospects Postgraduate Directory (<http://www.prospects.ac.uk>)

2) Typical employers

The list of organisations who employ community development workers is lengthy, but in the main includes:

- voluntary sector organisations;
- local authorities;

- community education;
- rural community councils;
- social services;
- housing associations;
- primary care trusts.

See “Further Information” on page 7 for contact details.

3) Training

The voluntary sector has many interesting and relevant training opportunities, including accredited training programmes available at colleges and other learning centres

Social services and other organisations employing community development workers offer programmes of in-house training. These can run from apprenticeship schemes, through to mentoring, peer review, visits to other projects to shadowing an experienced worker. These can be organised in-house or between organisations.

They may have some links to qualifications - some apprenticeships schemes link to NVQs while others link to postgraduate diplomas provided by colleges. These usually focus on issues such as child protection and equal opportunities. It is also quite common for community development workers to pursue their own professional development by undertaking Masters or other postgraduate qualifications. Relevant subjects include: voluntary sector studies; housing practice; business and community; legal studies; public health/community health; and social services management

4) Qualifications

National Open College Network (NOCN) Programmes

The National Open College Network (NOCN) - www.nocn.org.uk - provide nationally recognised awards in community development at levels 1, 2 and 3.

We are working closely with the Community Development sector in England to develop a suite of new community development work qualifications suitable for those working in the statutory and the voluntary sectors to replace the NVQs which expired in December 2010.

The following qualifications are currently available:

Role	Training available
Community development worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SVQs Level 2,3 and 4 in Community Development Work • NOCN Certificate/Diploma at levels 1&2 in Faith Community Development • NOCN Awards at Entry level and level 1 in Preparation for Event Volunteering • Postgraduate qualifications in Community Development Work

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA hons Community Development • Foundation degree (<i>under development</i>)
Community learning and development worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA hons Degree (four years full-time, or part-time equivalent) in Community Learning and Development.
Community education officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognised teaching qualification eg PGCE or DTLLS • Learning & Development Awards • Apprenticeship in Community Development at NVQ Levels 2 and 3 • BA hons Community Studies <p>You can develop your career by completing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A postgraduate course in community studies or education • teaching/training qualifications as above
Family learning/parenting practitioner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching qualification eg DTLLS or PGCE • Skills for Life subject specialism or learning support qualifications • Childcare/child development qualifications

5) Higher Education

The courses listed below are not intended as a comprehensive guide to what individual courses are available.

Level 8 – PhD

Level 7 - Masters Degree: MA in Community Development.

MSC in Organisation and Community Development, MSC in Health and Community Development

Level 6 - Honours Degree: BA in Community Development;

BA in Education and Community Development

Level 5 - Foundation Degree: Urban Regeneration and Community Development; Individual & Community Empowerment

Level 4 - HE Certificate: in Community Development City and Guilds Level 4 - higher level professional diploma*

For more details click here [Learning and Qualifications Framework](http://www.fcdl.org.uk/publications/documents/Learning_and_qualifications_framework/Learning_and_Qualifications_Framework_leaflet.pdf)
http://www.fcdl.org.uk/publications/documents/Learning_and_qualifications_framework/Learning_and_Qualifications_Framework_leaflet.pdf

6) Salary and Conditions

There are no standardised pay and conditions within this sector. Many salaries are referenced to the NJC Local Government Pay Scales. A general guide is:

- Range of typical starting salaries: £15,000 - £20,000 (salary data collected Oct 08)
- Range of salaries with two or more years' experience: £20,000 – £30,000 (salary data collected Oct 08).
- For public sector posts, there are national pay scales and sometimes an unsocial hours allowance.
- In the voluntary sector, variations are considerable, and pay often depends on experience and location.

To gain more of an idea of salaries and conditions you could look at available job vacancies by searching the websites listed below.

7) Sources of Vacancies

The Big Issue: <http://www.bigissue.com>
Community Care Jobs: <http://www.communitycare.co.uk/jobs/default.aspx>
The ethnic press: <http://www.ethnicnow.com/jobs/>
The Guardian: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/>
(Wednesdays) also offers a fortnightly page of adverts for volunteers in this country and abroad.
Job Vacancies: <http://jobs.planningresource.co.uk/jobs/community-renewal-development>

Local authority vacancy bulletins can be obtained from your authority. To identify yours see:

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DI1/Directories/Localcouncils/index.htm>
Local Government Jobs: <http://www.lgjobs.com/>
New Statesman: <http://www.newstatesman.com/>
Prospects: <http://www.prospects.ac.uk>
The Voice: <http://www.voice-online.co.uk/>
The Voluntary Agencies Directory: <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk>

Regional and local press;

8) Further Information

Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE): <http://www.acre.org.uk/>
Citizens Advice Bureau: <http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>
City & Guilds: <http://www.cityandguilds.com>
Communities Online: <http://www.communities.org.uk/>
Community Development Exchange (CDX): <http://www.cdx.org.uk/>
Do-it: <http://www.do-it.org.uk/>
Federation for Community Development Learning: <http://www.fcdl.org.uk/>
Homes and Communities Agency: <http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/>
National Council for Voluntary Organisations: <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/>
NOCN: <http://www.nocn.org.uk/Homepage/>
People and Planet - Ethical Careers Service: <http://peopleandplanet.org/careers/>
Working for a Charity: <http://www.wfac.org.uk/>