

# Make a difference in your new career

Social services and healthcare



Social work



Children and young people



#lifechangingwork

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Make a



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## Contents

### **4 Welcome**

5 About SSSC registration and the Codes of Practice

### **6 Children and young people**

7 Childhood experiences last a lifetime

8 Professional registration with the SSSC

10 Qualifications for working with children and young people

12 Career stories

### **14 Social services and healthcare**

15 Working together to make a difference

16 Professional registration with the SSSC

18 Qualifications for working in social services and healthcare

20 Career stories

### **22 Social work**

23 Anything is possible

24 Preparing to study social work

25 Studying social work

28 Career stories

30 Enhanced pathways for social workers

### **32 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**





Welcome



# About SSSC registration and the Codes of Practice

Welcome to our careers booklet. We've made it to celebrate the caring professions and help you make your first steps in a new life changing career.

One in 13 people in Scotland work in social services. Every day they make a difference to people's lives.

With opportunities to gain new skills, qualifications and pride in what you do a job in social services could make a difference to your life too!

## Before you start, let us tell you about Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) registration and the SSSC Codes of Practice.

The SSSC is the regulator for social service workers. We make sure people on our Register are trusted, skilled and confident.

We publish the Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers which set out the behaviours and values expected of everyone working in this profession. You can download them for free in a range of formats and languages at [www.sssc.uk.com/codes](http://www.sssc.uk.com/codes)

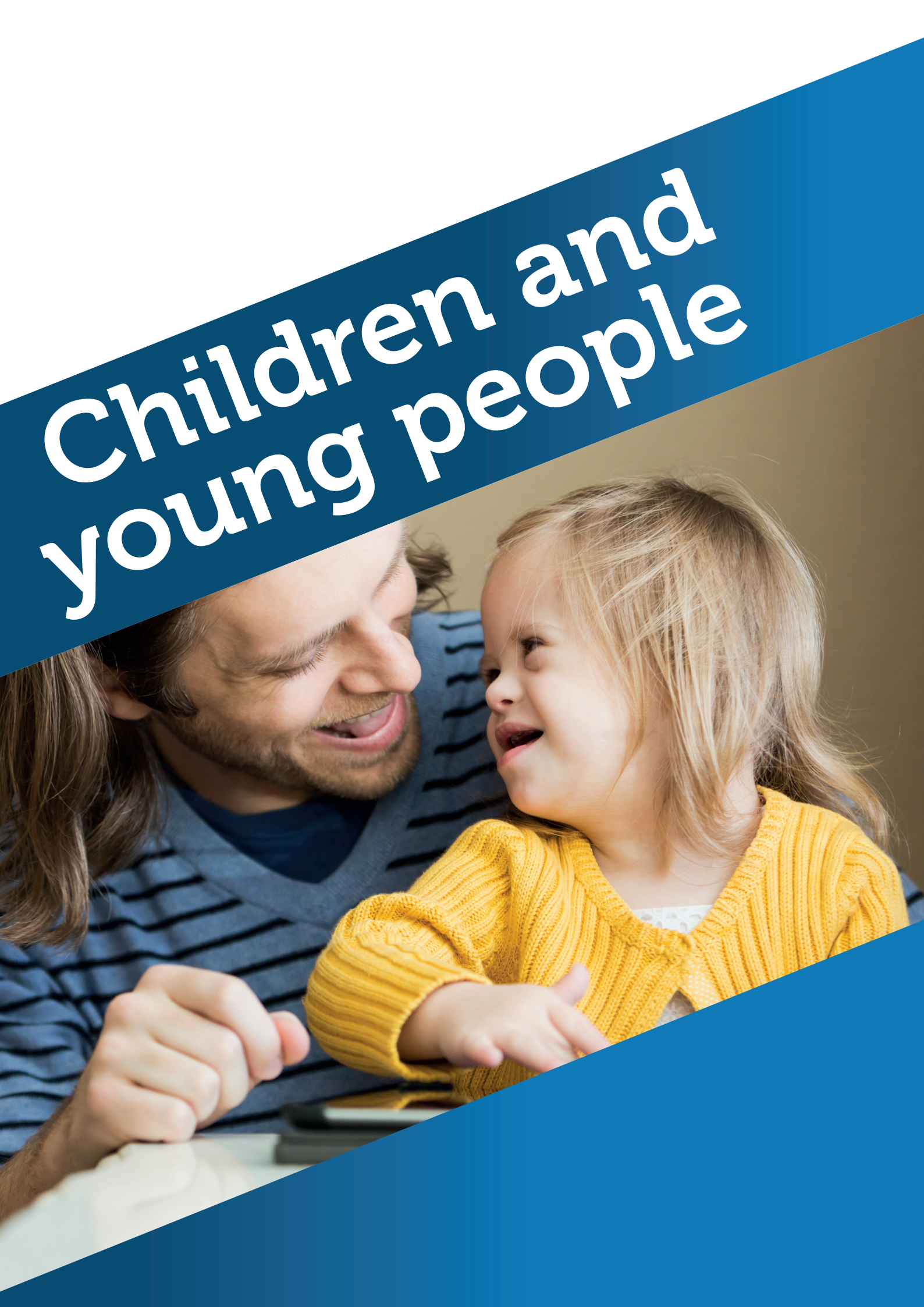
The SSSC wants to support you to develop your skills and progress in your career. Whatever your role and level of experience, our Learning Zone has apps and resources to help. They're all completely free. Visit <http://learn.sssc.uk.com>



There is no doubt that having a qualification in social work and being registered with the SSSC opens up many career pathways.

**Margaret Butler**  
Substance misuse recovery worker





# Children and young people

## Childhood experiences last a lifetime

In this career you could be inspiring children in their early years, supporting their development through childhood and helping them thrive as young adults.

There are many types of work including early learning and childcare (like nurseries), out of school care (like after school and holiday clubs), childminding and residential schools which provide additional support for learning.

You could also develop a career in residential childcare which means providing a loving, safe and supportive home to children and young people living away from their families.

Whichever role you choose good communication, creativity, resilience and an understanding of how children and young people think and feel will help you succeed.



I've been going to out of school care since I was in primary one. I always looked up to the playworkers and wanted to be like them.

I love my job.

Seeing or putting a smile on a child's face will make anyone's day.



**Jono McCulloch**

Playworker registered with the SSSC as a practitioner in a day care of children service.

## Professional registration with the SSSC

There are lots of different job titles. Employers and the children and young people you would support have their own preferences for what they use. Whatever your new job is called, finding out the SSSC registration category will help you understand the level of responsibility you'll have. Here's the list of the different SSSC registration categories.

### Day care of children, like early learning and out of school care settings.

- **Support worker**
- **Practitioner**
- **Lead practitioner or manager**
- **Childminders (who register with the Care Inspectorate so do not need to also register with the SSSC)**

### Residential childcare, providing a safe, loving home to children who live away from their families.

- **Residential childcare worker**
- **Residential childcare worker with supervisory responsibilities**
- **Manager of a residential childcare service**

### Residential school care accommodation, like residential special schools and boarding schools.

- **Workers in a residential school care accommodation service**
- **Supervisors in a residential school care accommodation service**
- **Managers of a residential school care accommodation service**

### Care inspectors.

The full title of this registration category is **Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS) authorised officer**.

### Supporting children and young people at home.

As a care at home or housing support worker you can support people of all ages. Some roles involve supporting the whole family. This type of work (and its qualification pathways) is included in the social services and healthcare section on page 15.

There's more information about registration in our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on page 32.



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I am extremely lucky to work with an amazing team of enthusiastic and committed practitioners and we work collaboratively to make sure our wee people's early experiences are of the highest quality.

”

**Gemma Paterson**  
Equity and excellence lead



## Qualifications for working with children and young people

You often don't need a qualification to start your career although you'll need to agree to work towards one. Don't worry because you'll have plenty of time and your employer will support you.

Qualifications are a way of formally recognising your skills and can help you progress in your career. Plus, the pathways are flexible so you can choose whichever type of learning suits you best.



I have an SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People) at SCQF level 7. I'm in the process of starting the SVQ at SCQF level 9. I enjoy doing qualifications because they provide me with an opportunity to learn and demonstrate my knowledge about the background of children and each child's development.



**Alex McBain**

Deputy lead practitioner in a day care of children service

On the next page we show you the recommended qualifications. They are linked to the SSSC registration categories and the level you start at will depend on your role and experience.

You should use the interactive qualification pathways online to find out:

- which qualification is suited to the job you want to do
- which registration categories are met by each qualification
- which type of learning will suit you best
- if a qualification has entry requirements
- how qualifications can help you to progress to new roles.

Find the interactive qualification pathways at [www.careersincare.scot](http://www.careersincare.scot)

## Which types of learning are there?



Volunteering and work experience



Apprenticeship



In work



College



University

**There's information about how you can get funding for your qualification in our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on page 35.**

## Volunteering and work experience

Volunteering and work experience can help you show employers that you are committed and understand what it's like to work with children and young people. Look at the online pathways for ideas and organisations you can contact about volunteering and work experience.

## Training as an apprentice

### Foundation Apprenticeship Social Services (Children and Young People)

at SCQF level 6

### Modern Apprenticeship Social Services (Children and Young People)

at SCQF level 7

### Technical Apprenticeship Social Services (Children and Young People)

at SCQF level 9

### Professional Apprenticeship Care Services Leadership and Management

at SCQF level 10

## Gaining a qualification in work

### SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People)

at SCQF level 6

### SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People)

at SCQF level 7

### SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People)

at SCQF level 9

### SVQ Care Services Leadership and Management

at SCQF level 10

### PDA Scrutiny and Improvement Practice (Social Services)

at SCQF level 10

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## Studying at college

If you're not ready to apply for one of the qualifications below, you can speak to the college. They can offer you a different qualification or introductory course to help you get started.

### NC Early Education and Childcare

at SCQF level 6

### HNC Childhood Practice

at SCQF level 7

### HND Childhood Practice

at SCQF level 8

## Studying at university

### BA Childhood Practice

at SCQF level 9

### A Professional Development Award (PDA) in Childhood Practice

is also available. It's the same level as a degree and is available at some colleges and training centres.

If you have a different practice-based degree like social work, teaching or nursing you may be able to use it for registration with the SSSC once you start working in a children and young people's service. Look at the online pathways for further information.

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To find out more visit  
[www.careersincare.scot](http://www.careersincare.scot)

**My name is Ben O'Farrell and I'm a residential childcare worker. I am employed by Nether Johnstone House Childcare Services and work in Johnstone. I'm registered with the SSSC.**

**I got to know a social worker back in 2004 and through a process of osmosis I became interested in social care as a potential career.** Before this I worked in engineering. My first role was as a volunteer helping people with alcohol issues in Easterhouse. This was all very different to the corporate world where the focus is always on profit, here I felt I was directly helping people which gave me enormous satisfaction. My career has changed a lot since then, now I'm very happy working in residential childcare.

**At Nether Johnstone House I build and develop meaningful relationships with all the young people in my care.** I make sure all their needs are being met and that their case files are up to date. I listen to them talking at length about their past as they come to terms with their traumatic experiences and I provide support as they make new meaning from them.

I enjoy taking them to the cinema, parks, football matches, other sports and swimming.

**I've had (and continue to have!) many life experiences that help me relate to the young people in my care.** Some of my experiences were hard or personally difficult, but I feel they help me prepare young people for the challenges that lie ahead once they leave care.

I love history, politics, reading and writing. These interests and skills help me inspire the kids and hopefully get them to realise the importance of continuous learning and personal development.

I've also started to use storytelling as a way to help young people make sense of their past and the important things that have happened.

**When I began working in social care I had no qualifications in the field, though I did have a certificate in mechanical engineering.** After a few years I went on to achieve an HNC Social Services and SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People) at SCQF level 7. These qualifications gave me an initial grounding that I found useful, especially knowledge concerning child protection legislation.

I am currently halfway through the masters in advanced residential childcare. I love doing this course and I feel I've learned so much that enhances my practice on a daily basis. I think continuous learning is key to developing your practice in social care; the challenges become harder due to increasing societal pressures and all the recent literature points to relational based practice being the future of good social care.

**I love seeing my relationships with the young people grow and develop over the years.** This career gives you an opportunity to develop the kind of meaningful relationships that give us a real platform to encourage positive change in young people. Seeing them achieve different milestones along the way is a huge source of pleasure and pride for me.

There are many positives. A negative is that I feel the political landscape, in terms of the financial resources available to social care, is a barrier to achieving the sector's full potential.

**This job is perfect for those who love to be challenged both intellectually and physically.** Working in residential childcare can be intense and no two days are the same. You learn exponentially if you embrace the idea that what you're doing isn't a job, but a vocation that places the needs of the kids above all else.

The rewards are many. If you care, and are committed to developing your craft, then I can't think of a better role within social care that will enable you to achieve your professional goals.



**My name is Stephanie Loughlin and I'm a supervisor at Murrayfield Nursery which is a private day nursery. I'm registered as a lead practitioner with the SSSC.**

**I started working in childcare in America.**

When we moved back to Scotland I wanted to continue because once I got started I really loved it. I realised I was quite good at it and I was making a difference for people.

**My job is challenging, rewarding and fun.**

Every day is slightly different. You're inside, outside and you're busy all the time. There's a lot involved but it all comes together and it's really fulfilling.

**We've got a great outside space at the nursery. Watching the children get muddy and giggling is fun.**

They are really funny and surprising – what they know and the things they think about. They surprise me and I learn new things from them every day.

**One of the things that some people find difficult especially with the younger children is that they can be quite upset.**

It's their first time away from home so you can have lots of crying babies at once which can be overwhelming. Relying on your team helps you manage this.

**There's also time when it's really quiet and you get to see them take their first steps.**

Babies have this amazing sense of wonder – everything's a surprise, you walk in a room and they have no idea where you came from and they'll just giggle uncontrollably at the smallest things. It's so infectious, you just can't help but giggle back.

**We have a lot of opportunities to train at our nursery.**

I was recently on forest school training because that's what I enjoy, but we also have online training courses. I haven't been on training yet where I didn't learn something new and I always bring that back. It makes me better at my job, I interact with the children better and it makes their experience in the nursery better. So, I find it really positive, I do lots of training through the year.

**I started in America and I did a degree in early childhood education.** Even though I had a qualification I learned lots about working in nurseries in Scotland. For registration with the SSSC I needed to gain a practice qualification so I studied for an HNC part time. I was recently promoted to lead practitioner.

**I'm working towards my BA degree at the moment and when I finish I'll have lots of options.** I can stay in my current role, continue to teaching if I do a Postgraduate Diploma in Education or follow a career as an inspector to help lead people in nurseries, offering them support based on the experience that I've gained over the last however many years - it's been so long!

**My best words of advice would just be to do it! Go into nurseries and volunteer.** If you can't find a nursery to take you (although a lot of the private nurseries will take volunteers) look for out of school clubs and football camps, places like that – anywhere working with children. I'd also suggest working with different ages of children because some people have a preference for which age group they like the best. Experience really looks good when you're applying for jobs. So yeah, just get out there and try it!



# Social services and healthcare



## Working together to make a difference

If you're compassionate, have a sense of fun and enjoy working with people you could be perfect for this career.

There are many types of services providing social care across the community like care homes, care at home and housing support services.

Most roles will involve supporting adults but you can support younger people too.

Your role would include helping people to plan their support, stay safe and well, and maintain and develop important relationships. To do this you'll work in partnership with others, including the National Health Service (NHS). Many services provide support with personal care which includes assistance with washing and dressing, food and nutrition and taking medication.

This work is about helping people to live well and achieve the things in life that really matter to them. You'll go home each day knowing you made a difference.

“

Working at Rubislaw feels like being part of a big family. People living here have so many stories and I've learned so much from them.

My motto is 'Find it in yourself to chase your dreams'. I'm so glad I did. ”

**Susan Gray**

Care home supervisor and Dementia Ambassador. Registered with the SSSC as a supervisor in a care home service for adults.

## Professional registration with the SSSC

There are lots of different job titles and employers and the people you would support will have their own preferences for what they use. Whatever your new job is called, finding out the SSSC registration category will help you understand the level of responsibility you'll have. Here's the list of the different SSSC registration categories.

**Care at home services support people to live well in their own homes.**

- **Support worker in a care at home service**
- **Supervisor in a care at home service**
- **Manager of a care at home service**

**Housing support services, where you would support people to live independently. This might include temporary accommodation like hostels for people experiencing homelessness.**

- **Support worker in a housing support service**
- **Supervisor in a housing support service**
- **Manager of a housing support service**

**Care homes services. Some care homes provide specialised support, like mental health support. Some provide support mainly to older people.**

- **Support worker in a care home service**
- **Practitioner in a care home service**
- **Supervisor in a care home service**
- **Manager of a care home service**

**Care inspectors.**

The full title of this registration category is **Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS) authorised officer.**

**Healthcare professionals working in care services.**

If you're a practising nurse or allied health professional you will register with your own regulatory body. If you are employed in one of the roles above you can choose to register with the SSSC.

There's more information about registration in our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on page 32.



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I inspect older people's care services including care homes, housing support and care at home services.

People share such interesting stories about their lives and what the care staff mean to them.

People are usually very supportive of the staff and care about them. They appreciate and value the work they do.

”

**Karen Mack**

Care inspector registered with the SSSC as a SCSWIS authorised officer



## Qualifications for working in social services and healthcare

You often don't need a qualification to start your career although you'll need to agree to work towards one. Don't worry because you'll have plenty of time and your employer will support you.

Qualifications are a way of formally recognising your skills and can help you progress in your career. Plus, the pathways are flexible so you can choose whichever type of learning suits you best.



I'm now completing a Technical Apprenticeship in Social Services and Healthcare at SCQF level 9 which I'm really enjoying. It's making me think a lot about what I do daily and the difference it's making to people's lives.



**Susan Gray**

Supervisor in a residential care home for older people

On the next page we show you the recommended qualifications. They are linked to SSSC registration categories and the level you start at will depend on your role and experience.

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## Which types of learning are there?



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Apprenticeship



In work



College



University

**There's information about how you can get funding for your qualification in our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on page 35.**

## Volunteering and work experience

Volunteering and work experience can help you show employers that you are committed and understand what it's like to work with people. Look at our careers website online for ideas and organisations you can contact about volunteering and work experience.

## Training as an apprentice

**Foundation Apprenticeship Social Services and Healthcare** at SCQF level 6

**Modern Apprenticeship Social Services and Healthcare** at SCQF level 7

**Technical Apprenticeship Social Services and Healthcare** at SCQF level 9

**Professional Apprenticeship Care Services Leadership and Management** at SCQF level 10

## Gaining a qualification in work

**SVQ Social Services and Healthcare** at SCQF level 6

**SVQ Social Services and Healthcare** at SCQF level 7

**SVQ Social Services and Healthcare** at SCQF level 9

**SVQ Care Services Leadership and Management** at SCQF level 10

**PDA Health and Social Care Supervision** at SCQF level 7

**PDA Scrutiny and Improvement Practice (Social Services)** at SCQF level 10

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## Studying at college

**HNC Social Services** at SCQF level 7

If you're not ready to apply for an HNC you can explore other social care courses available at your chosen college. This may include National Certificate (NC) courses at SCQF levels 5 and 6.

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## Studying at university

If you have a practice-based degree like social work or nursing you may be able to use it for registration with the SSSC in a social care service. Look online for further information.

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[www.careersincare.scot](http://www.careersincare.scot)

**My name is John McVeigh and I have a few different roles. I'm a lecturer and a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) assessor and verifier for City of Glasgow College. I also volunteer with Alzheimer Scotland.**

**I started in social care about 15 years ago and to be honest it was quite by accident as it was never something that I had thought of as a job.** I had worked in many different jobs including a postman, in building sites and ASDA, but then my friend's mum suggested I apply for the job of support assistant with The Richmond Fellowship Scotland (TRFS).

**I did apply, got the job and loved it from day one.** In my TRFS career I started in mental health services (both care homes and supported living services) then worked with young people with learning disabilities. I have also worked in a forensic mental health service and then with older people (including people with dementia). I was promoted a few times and finished up as a manager in dementia services. I then moved to education and I'm now a lecturer and SVQ assessor.

**Like all jobs in social care, a typical day isn't that typical.** I'm sometimes found in a classroom teaching different courses including HNC Social Services and PDA Procurement and Commissioning of Care Services. I am also lucky enough to spend quite a bit of my day outwith the college either giving training to companies in subjects like hidden disabilities, or assessing SVQ candidates in care services.

**I started off my career with no qualifications at all but now I have my SVQ Social Services and Healthcare at SCQF levels 6, 7 and 9.** I also have Professional Development Awards (PDAs) in both Teaching, and Leadership and Management. All of these qualifications were completed through workplace learning and I'm going to university this year to do my Masters in Leading People-Centred Integrated Care.

**I love my job as I feel I'm never stuck in the one place.** I get to meet loads of interesting people who I can support with qualifications, and other people who I meet on my journeys to different support services.

I never thought about a career in social care but I'm forever grateful that I ended up with one.

**I would suggest a career in social care to everyone that has even slightly thought about it.** I was really nervous when I first started but I soon realised I already had a lot of skills that I could use to support people with their daily lives. Everybody I have worked with in my social care journey has had one thing in common and that was they all had good personal and social values, everything else you can learn along the way including any qualifications needed for registration with the SSSC.



**My name is Natalie Mattheson. I'm a healthcare support worker employed by Cornerstone in North Ayrshire. I got this job after completing the Prince's Trust Scotland, Get Into Social Care programme. I have dual registration with the SSSC as a support worker in both care at home and housing support services.**

**For the last seven years I was both a stay at home mum and my mother's carer.** I moved to this area with my partner and I wanted to get back into work now that my daughter is older.

**My last job was in a bar.** I didn't have much work experience apart from that. I was applying for absolutely everything - bars, cleaning and care work. I just wasn't getting anything back from my applications.

**My brother told me about Prince's Trust Scotland.** He'd completed a 'Get Into...' programme several years ago and said it was perfect for me to gain experience in the workplace and to get that boost to my confidence. He told me that I could apply up to the age of 30. I had no idea I was even eligible.

**I cared for my mum and my mum's friend.** You know, one of your mum's friends that is like an auntie to you. I helped them both with the day to day things to make their life easier and I thought 'actually, I maybe like this'.

**When I got accepted on the course and started the training it confirmed that working in social care was for me.**

**There is so much to take in and learn in the five weeks working with the Prince's Trust.** We learned about health and safety, first aid, moving and assisting, child protection, adult protection. We completed one course a day, sometimes two, and we got mentoring and support throughout.

**After the training we started a placement shadowing another healthcare support worker.** I supported a woman who was in a wheelchair. She was actually quite independent. She made up her mind what she wanted to do, we were just there to help her with her needs. She had a better social life than I do and we became good friends. We even cried when I completed the placement, it was quite emotional. It really changed what I thought social care was about.

**The course ended on my 30th birthday with a celebration event and an interview with Cornerstone for a permanent job.** I found out the next day that I was successful. I now have a job in social care.

**There are all these different routes that I didn't know existed.** A few years ago I went to college and I did social sciences. Originally, I wanted to be a criminal psychologist but my relationship broke down, I went through a divorce and I dropped out of the course. There was just a lot going on and it was too much.

**Getting back into learning through the Get Into... programme, the hands-on element of the placement and learning about social care has helped me get back on track.** I know this could lead to other things but also I think I will be quite happy progressing in this career.

**If you're interested in social care and are thinking about applying to the Prince's Trust, I'd say just go for it.** Put your mind to it and just get it done. It feels like a career.





# Social work

# Anything is possible

We all face difficulties in our lives. Sometimes these difficulties are complex and can mean we struggle to move forward and make positive choices for ourselves. Skilled and compassionate social workers can help us do this.

This is a diverse career and you'll find social workers in a variety of places like criminal justice services, hospitals, adult or children's services and education.

It's impossible to describe everything you might do as a social worker but here are some key examples.

Social workers can:

- get to know us in the context of our lives, experiences and relationships
- make sure we are involved in decisions
- support us to manage and overcome complex issues
- exercise legal duties if we need help to stay safe
- promote human rights, equality and social justice across all parts of society.

## Professional registration with the SSSC

You'll register with the SSSC as either a **social worker** or **social work student**.

There's more information about registration in our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on page 32.

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I love that I get to build relationships with and contribute to the rehabilitation and social inclusion of people in the criminal justice system (some of whom are the most marginalised people in society) whilst also contributing to the protection of the public.

”

**Rania Hamad**

Senior practitioner in community justice registered with the SSSC as a social worker

# Preparing to study social work

## Work experience

We know that most students accepted to study social work at university in Scotland have work experience in social services for example in childcare or adult social care. This could be paid employment, volunteering or providing unpaid care to family or friends. If you don't have this experience you should consider how to gain it and make sure that it is of good quality, for example where you have held a range of responsibilities and can show you can manage complex issues. Look at [children and young people \(page 7\)](#) and [social services and healthcare \(page 15\)](#) sections for more ideas. When you write your university application, make sure you relate your experience directly to the programme and what you hope to gain from becoming a social worker. Show that you have done some research into what practising as a social worker is really like.

## Support with a disability or additional needs

You should speak to the university at an early stage to find out how they will support you if you have (for example) a physical disability, long term condition or learning difficulty that may impact on your study. Universities have a range of support available. Here is a useful page from UCAS (the universities admission service) about the support available [www.ucas.com/support-disabled-students-your-questions-answered](http://www.ucas.com/support-disabled-students-your-questions-answered).

## Meeting the entry requirements

The entry requirements depend on the university you are applying to. In general, for an undergraduate degree (where you don't already have a degree) you'll need some qualifications at SCQF level 6 (for example a Higher) or above. For some courses, you'll need numeracy at SCQF level 5 or above (for example National 5 Maths).

Useful subjects include English, psychology and sociology.

## Widening access (flexibility in entry requirements)

We all come with different backgrounds and experiences and if you are the right candidate universities can offer some flexibility in how you meet the entry requirements. This can include the offer of a numeracy test if you don't meet the minimum qualification requirement for numeracy.

Social work programmes want to attract candidates from diverse backgrounds so look for statements about this on their websites and contact them directly to find out more.



## Studying social work in Scotland

Social work programmes in Scotland prepare you to work with people of all ages. This will be of benefit if your career takes you to different settings or even different countries. After all, social work is a globally recognised profession.

Your study will be challenging and diverse and is designed to prepare you for the complexities of working as a social worker. You'll study the law, theory and ethics, and human lifespan development from a variety of perspectives. Other areas of study could include social policy, psychology, politics and social research methods.

During your study you'll complete 200 days of assessed practice in a social service setting. Assessed practice is where someone would watch and assess you while you are carrying out your work.

There are three routes to study social work in Scotland:

- part time distance learning for people already working in social services
- full time undergraduate study
- full time postgraduate study.



I was a young carer so missed a lot of school and left at 16 without qualifications. I set up my own business but in my late 30s I injured my back.

At that point I thought what am I going to do? I really wanted to do social work and if I had a chance when I was younger that's what I would've done.

I first of all did an HNC at college and the following year I applied for a social work degree.



**Stephen Horsburgh**

Mental health officer registered with the SSSC as a social worker



# Studying social work

## Part time distance learning for people already working in social services

You can study social work and stay in your current employment. This can be helpful if you're not able to attend university full time because of where you live, or financial and family commitments.

You'll need to work in a suitable social service role with a good level of responsibility, for example creating and implementing care plans. You should also be able to demonstrate that you have worked with and supported a range of different people. You might already work in social work services (for example as a social work assistant) or community justice (for example as a community justice support worker).

You may need to work a minimum number of hours each week and will need to stay in employment until the end of your study.

Qualifications and experience from social service employment can help you meet the entry requirements for these part time distance learning routes.

- Robert Gordon University | BA (Hons) Social Work (Blended learning)
- Open University | BA (Hons) Social Work (Scotland)
- Open University | Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work

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## Full time undergraduate study

The undergraduate honours degree is four years and you'll start in the first year. Being an undergraduate means you don't already have a degree.

Entry to second year is considered in some cases where appropriate qualifications (such as HNC Social Services or Childhood Practice) and work experience is held, and you would discuss this when you apply.

You'll need to meet entry requirements including for numeracy (usually SCQF level 5, like National 5 Maths) and literacy (usually SCQF level 6, like English) but remember you can also ask about widening access (flexibility in meeting entry requirements).

You can apply to study a postgraduate social work programme at these universities in Scotland.

- University of Dundee | BA (Hons) Social Work
- University of Edinburgh | BSc (Social Work)
- Glasgow Caledonian University | BA (Hons) Social Work
- University of the West of Scotland | BA (Hons) Social Work
- Robert Gordon University | BA (Hons) Social Work
- University of Stirling | BA (Hons) Social Work
- University of Strathclyde | BA (Hons) Social Work

## Full time postgraduate study

Postgraduate programmes are full time and take two years.

You'll need a first degree and some universities prefer this to be in a social science subject.

You can apply to study a postgraduate social work programme at these universities in Scotland.

- University of Dundee | BA (Hons) Social Work
- University of Edinburgh | BSc (Social Work)
- Glasgow Caledonian University | BA (Hons) Social Work
- University of the West of Scotland | BA (Hons) Social Work
- Robert Gordon University | BA (Hons) Social Work
- University of Stirling | BA (Hons) Social Work
- University of Strathclyde | BA (Hons) Social Work

## Funding for social work study

### Part time

If you're employed in a suitable role, and studying social work part time, your employers may pay your tuition costs.

For undergraduate routes you may be eligible for the part time fee grant from Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS).

### Full time

If you're studying social work full time as an undergraduate you can apply to SAAS to have your tuition fees paid.

Visit [www.saas.gov.uk](http://www.saas.gov.uk) for information about part time and full time funding.

We also provide funding information on our website at [www.sssc.uk.com/careers-and-education/qualifications/](http://www.sssc.uk.com/careers-and-education/qualifications/)

Funding is not guaranteed for postgraduate study although you may apply for a postgraduate bursary from the SSSC. The university can provide you with information about this when you apply.

**My name is Gary Dewar. I'm service manager for Children 1st. I'm registered as a social worker with the SSSC. I manage the Edinburgh Family Wellbeing Service which provides practical, emotional and social support to children and families.**

**Arriving at a career in social work wasn't a straight path.** I graduated as an illustrator from Edinburgh College of Art in 2004 and loved using art as an enabling process for others. A chance phone call from a friend led to volunteering with young people moving into supported accommodation or who were homeless. This continued into all manner of work with children, young people and families who were facing challenges.

**I became passionate about developing skills in listening and building relationships.** I aspired to help people have control and choice in their own lives.

**The Edinburgh Family Wellbeing Service is a busy city support team, so no two days are alike.** As manager I lead the service and make sure we're putting the voice of children and families at the centre of everything. I also supervise staff, arrange support from other agencies and even contribute to some of the more strategic decisions that the third sector help make around the city on issues of poverty or supporting children with additional needs.

**I studied social work by distance learning at Robert Gordon University which enriched how I work with people by deepening my understanding of theory and practice.** I already had a BA (Hons) in Visual Communication and a Postgraduate Diploma in Community Education. Community education and social work have commonalities and differences and I think both give me a good set of skills for working in a third sector (voluntary) setting, such as understanding the socio-political and structural issues that impact on people we work with.

**I enjoy learning.** It's an enabling force that provides people with skills to control their own lives. Juggling work, family and part time learning is a challenge and shouldn't be taken lightly but it gives back an ability to immediately apply theory to practice. Robert Gordon University and the staff developed a great course that was really supportive of students.

**My past experiences help me as a social worker.** Families come in all shapes and sizes and from all walks of life so every job and interest is relevant – be it bar work, factory work, shop assistant, youth worker or even bingo caller! I think sometimes 'experience' is framed as 'professional experience' but actually I learned as much from other roles as from children and families work. While you can't have experience in everything I've always found it really helpful for those we support to know that I have life experience.

**I love my job.** It requires me to be creative, responsive, organised and a strong leader and communicator. I love working for an organisation with such clear aims and values, and with a team of experienced and dedicated individuals. They spend their days busy working around the city, in living rooms, in nurseries and schools, and with families making what I call 'a million tiny miracles' happen.

If you're considering this career the first thing you should answer is 'why do I want this job?'

**You need to be clear about your own strengths, weaknesses and what you believe in.** For example, what's your opinion on the world, child poverty or inequality and discrimination?

**The job is a privilege.** To be part of someone's life and in their home is a privilege. Even when challenging this should be treated respectfully.

**Just like your own life, it's a long process so remember you're always learning.** Keep studying, keep putting your learning into practice, be prepared to make mistakes and learn from them: learn from colleagues and from children and families.

Finally, always keep hope that things can change and that people have the skills to change – sometimes with your help.



**My name is Oluwatoyin (Toyin) Adenugba-Okpaje. I'm a social worker employed by The City of Edinburgh Council at Captains Road, in the Health and Social Care Partnership. I work with other health, allied and social service professionals to meet the needs of people aged 16 and above. I'm registered with the SSSC as a social worker.**

**I worked in care at home for around 15 years in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and latterly Scotland doing different roles such as care coordinator, support worker and services manager.** I decided to change direction and pursue a career in social work. This was to build on my existing skills and make meaningful interventions in the lives of people facing complex and sometimes conflicting difficulties.

**There is no typical day in my line of work.** I adapt my day to suit the needs of the individuals on my caseload. It could be completing a needs assessment for someone with care and support needs, organising and taking part in an adult support and protection case conference or completing a care home review. I mostly have a 9-5 work pattern.

**My work experience in care at home helps me manage my workload in a way that allows me to have a work life balance.** Care at home could be quite stressful especially when trying to manage visits, staff availability and rotas but it gave me an opportunity to develop organisational skills which have been quite helpful in my current career. As a single parent of four teens, I have learned to work with strict timetables and routines. These continue to be of help in managing my daily to-do list.

**I qualified as a sociologist in Nigeria in 1989 and since then I have picked up other qualifications such as Postgraduate Diploma in Business Studies and Social Studies and a Master of Social Work (MSW) among others. I am preparing to start a PhD in social work in**

September 2019. I enjoy studying alongside practice and, despite always saying I won't do it again, I find that I get bored and then start looking at other qualifications I can acquire.

**As a Dementia and Carer Champion I am working on initiatives to improve support provided to those living with dementia, so they can have a life that does not restrict their hopes.** Walking alongside people on the dementia journey to remove the obstacles they face is important. They need empathic practice to recognise their difficulties without using these to further disable them.

**I like the ability to make a difference in people's lives especially when they are expecting the social worker to be an inconvenience.** It's always humbling when the walls come down and people share their fears. I enjoy the phone calls when a relationship of trust develops, and these individuals consult with me about personal issues they believe I can help with.

I like the varied nature of social work in the community.

I don't like the amount of time spent on trying to develop a budget that will meet a need.

**Social work is not as bad as you hear in the media.** It is rewarding and you get to make a big difference in the lives of people struggling with one difficulty or the other.

It is an honour to have the opportunity to help people achieve outcomes they might otherwise not be able to achieve.



## Enhanced pathways in social work

Social workers can use their social work qualification in other social service roles where you need to be registered with the SSSC. This includes support workers, practitioners and supervisors across children and young people and social services and healthcare settings.

Some roles will involve further learning but this can be done while working. Here are some examples and you can find out more online.

### **Mental health officer**

A mental health officer (MHO) is a qualified social worker with specialist training and experience in working with people who have a mental illness, learning disability, dementia or related condition. Social workers are selected by their employer (a local authority) to become an MHO and complete a postgraduate certificate at SCQF level 11.

### **Practice educator**

Social workers provide a valuable role in supporting, supervising and assessing students who are on placement. Social workers who want to become practice educators will complete a practice learning qualification at SCQF level 10 or 11.

### **Chief social work officer**

Chief social work officers (CSWOs) are the leaders of the social work profession in their local authority. Current and aspiring CSWOs can complete the Postgraduate Diploma Chief Social Work Officer at SCQF level 11.

### **Care service manager**

Care service managers lead care provision, promote best practice and manage strategy, policy and finances. Social workers in these roles complete the SVQ Care Services Leadership and Management at SCQF level 10.

### **Day care of children lead practitioner or manager**

Lead practitioners and managers support their colleagues to deliver best practice so that the best outcomes are achieved for children. Social workers in these roles need to complete part of a childhood practice leadership award (60 credits) for example BA or PDA Childhood Practice at SCQF level 9.

### **Care inspector**

Inspectors support improvement, innovation and change across social services. Once in this role, inspectors complete a Professional Development Award (PDA) in Scrutiny and Improvement Practice at SCQF level 10.



“ There is no doubt that having a qualification in social work and being registered with the SSSC opens up many career pathways, including my current role in a care home. I’d like other social workers to know that there are so many varied roles to choose from... I’ve loved the jobs I’ve done and have developed a good work/life balance. ”

**Margaret Butler**

Substance misuse recovery worker





# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Do I need work experience before applying for a job or qualification?**

Work experience, paid or voluntary, can help you get a job. It can also improve an application when applying to college and university. We've included some more help and ideas about this on the careers website.

Employers may employ you without work experience if you demonstrate strong values and a positive attitude. There's a great quiz called A Question of Care which you can use to test your values. You can even print off a personal profile to help you prepare for interviews. Find it at

[www.aquestionofcare.org.uk](http://www.aquestionofcare.org.uk)

## **Do I have to be 18 to volunteer or work in social services?**

No, however some employers may need to employ people who are over 18.

Modern apprenticeships are available for people from age 16.

If you are under 18 and want to volunteer there may be services which are more suitable because there will be staff available to guide you. For example, day care services, activity clubs and sports clubs. We've put some links to helpful organisations on the careers website.



### What else will help me apply for a job or qualification?

Whatever your role and level of experience our Learning Zone has apps and resources to help you develop your confidence. They're all completely free. Visit <http://learn.sssc.uk.com>

### What is the SSSC?

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) is the professional regulator for social service workers. We publish Codes of Practice and make sure people on the Register are trusted, skilled and confident.

We know that most social service workers are following the Code of Practice, however if they don't we may need to investigate and take action. We do this to protect the people who use services.

Find out more at [www.sssc.uk.com](http://www.sssc.uk.com)

### Can I register with the SSSC?

This will depend on your job, however most people who work in social services (including support workers, supervisors and managers) will register with us. Our website has more information about who can register, the benefits of registration and the responsibilities of registered workers and their employers. Visit [www.sssc.uk.com/registration/](http://www.sssc.uk.com/registration/)

The social service workforce is diverse and employers are looking for people with a range of lived experiences. Whatever your experience, to be on our Register you need to demonstrate that you currently meet the standards of character, conduct and competence necessary to do your job safely and effectively. You can find out more about Fitness of Practise at [www.sssc.uk.com/fitness-to-practise](http://www.sssc.uk.com/fitness-to-practise)

### Why do I need a qualification to work in social services?

Achieving a relevant qualification is a condition of registration with the SSSC. Registration and qualifications show the public that care is provided by professionals who are trusted, skilled and confident.

Qualifications are beneficial to workers too and can lead to career development and promotion opportunities.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **How long will I get to achieve my qualification?**

If you start work without a qualification we will normally ask you to achieve one in the first period of your registration which is five years. This gives you plenty of time to develop your knowledge and skills before you start a qualification.

This does not apply to social workers who must hold an entitling qualification before they register.

## **I've already got a qualification but it's not one shown on the careers website. Will the SSSC accept it?**

You can check our main website to find out if we accept your qualification [www.sssc.uk.com/registration/help-with-register-parts-fees-and-qualifications/](http://www.sssc.uk.com/registration/help-with-register-parts-fees-and-qualifications/)

If you're studying in a different country but want to work in Scotland we strongly recommend you get in touch with us to find out if your qualification will be accepted.

If we don't accept your qualification please be reassured that there are opportunities to gain an accepted qualification while you are working. If your knowledge is up to date it will help you as you complete a Scottish qualification like an SVQ.

## Can I get funding for my qualification?

### Studying at college

You may not need to pay fees and you might be entitled to other financial assistance to help you study, for example for childcare and travel expenses. The college will discuss this with you when you apply.

### Studying in the workplace

You can apply for a part time fee grant from SAAS. If eligible, you can use it towards the cost of an SVQ at SCQF level 7 or above, or an HNC if studied part time. Visit [www.saas.gov.uk/part\\_time/index.htm](http://www.saas.gov.uk/part_time/index.htm)

Employers will often help meet the costs of qualifications. Some employers will mention this on their job adverts.

Our main website has some more information about funding. Visit [www.sssc.uk.com/careers-and-education/qualifications/](http://www.sssc.uk.com/careers-and-education/qualifications/)

### Studying as an apprentice

If you apply for a modern apprenticeship vacancy you will not pay towards your qualification.

If you're already in work you could ask your employer to help you find a modern apprenticeship centre as you may be able to complete your SVQ with them. This would reduce the cost to you or your employer.

There is funding for technical and professional apprenticeships for those who want to develop in their career.

### Studying at university

Funding for undergraduate degrees is managed by SAAS. Read their funding guide at [www.saas.gov.uk/\\_forms/funding\\_guide.pdf](http://www.saas.gov.uk/_forms/funding_guide.pdf)

If studying social work part time (for example a distance learning route with Robert Gordon University or Open University) you may have fees paid for by your employer, or you could apply for a SAAS part time fee grant.

If studying a postgraduate social work course you may be able to apply for a postgraduate bursary. For further information email [bursaries@sssc.uk.com](mailto:bursaries@sssc.uk.com)

### I've just moved to Scotland, can I get funding for a qualification?

If you have recently moved to Scotland and have started a job or apprenticeship in social services you should ask your employer about modern apprenticeship (MA) funding. MA funding is available for anyone with a right to work in Scotland. Eligibility criteria is described by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) in their MA Programme Specification <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/45514/ntp-ma-spec-2019-20.pdf>

If you are legally resident in Scotland you can also apply for an Individual Training Accounts of up to £200. You can find more information at <https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/learn-and-train/sds-individual-training-accounts-ita>

If you are studying for a qualification at SCQF level 7 or above (at work, college or university) you may be able to access funding from SAAS. To access either full or part time funding you will need to meet the residency requirements. Funding is also available for particular groups of people, including people granted asylum who live in Scotland. You can find out if you meet the requirements for SAAS funding in this guide [http://www.saas.gov.uk/\\_forms/residence.pdf](http://www.saas.gov.uk/_forms/residence.pdf)

# More careers resources to support recruitment in social services

If you're an employer looking to recruit the right people we hope these career resources from SSSC will help you.

## Careers website

We recommend employers share this website during recruitment activity to help applicants understand SSSC registration, qualifications and the many directions their new career might take.

## SSSC careers and education guidance

The main SSSC website has a dedicated careers and education section containing guidance for employers and learning providers.

[www.sssc.uk.com/careers-and-education](http://www.sssc.uk.com/careers-and-education)

## Right values, right people

It can be difficult to recruit and retain workers with strong social care values. We've put together a toolkit to help.

<http://learn.sssc.uk.com/rvrp>

## Communication skills for caring

Communication skills are important in this career and this website points you to some online, local and national resources. Many of the resources shown can help improve English language skills.

<http://learn.sssc.uk.com/communication>

## Open Badges

Anyone can create an Open Badges account. It's a great to demonstrate new knowledge and keep a digital record of learning.

[badges.sssc.uk.com](http://badges.sssc.uk.com)

## A Question of Care

This resource was made in partnership with other social care sector skills councils in the UK. Employers in Scotland are using A Question of Care as a tool in interviews to help them recruit the right people.

[www.aquestionofcare.org.uk](http://www.aquestionofcare.org.uk)

## The common core of skills, knowledge and values

The Common Core outlines key attributes that everyone working with Scotland's people should have. This website links the Common Core to National Occupational Standards which form the basis of social service qualifications and training programmes.

<http://learn.sssc.uk.com/ccnos>



# The Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers

The Codes set out the behaviours and values expected of social service workers and employers. They are an important way of making sure people receive high quality care.

Learning the Codes can help you write job applications, prepare for interviews and complete qualifications. You can download The Codes in different formats and languages at

[www.sssc.uk.com/codes](http://www.sssc.uk.com/codes)

“ I will speak to you openly, honestly and clearly ”

A trusted, skilled and confident workforce

Code 1

“ I will listen to you and protect your rights ”

A trusted, skilled and confident workforce

Scottish Social Services Council

**Codes of Practice**  
for Social Service Workers and Employers

Revised 2016

# Where will your career take you?

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