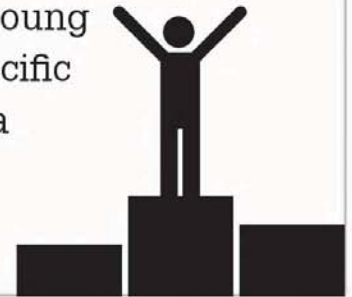




YOUTH WORKER

JOB DESCRIPTION

Youth workers support and empower young people—often from disadvantaged or at-risk backgrounds—to improve their personal and social development. They may act as a mentor or counselor, organize activities, or run a drop-in center. Youth workers may specialize in working with young people in a local area or with specific needs, and may be employed by a nonprofit, faith-based group, or government body.



SALARY

Newly qualified youth worker ★★★★★
Youth service manager ★★★★★

INDUSTRY PROFILE

Increasing employment opportunities • Most youth workers employed in the public sector, but jobs also exist in nonprofit and voluntary sectors

AT A GLANCE



YOUR INTERESTS Social work • Sociology • Psychology • Physical Education (PE) • Languages • Team sports • Performing arts • Music



ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS A good secondary education and a degree or graduate qualification in social work or community services are useful.



LIFESTYLE Working hours vary, with evening and weekend duties often required. Part-time and self-employed work is available.



LOCATION Most of the work is office-based, but many youth workers visit clients in their homes, at school, in the community, or in prison.



THE REALITIES Working with disadvantaged young people requires resilience, and may occasionally involve conflict or threats to personal safety.

CAREER PATHS

Most youth workers are graduates, with many courses including both academic study and practical work to allow students to gain hands-on experience while studying. You can specialize in a number of areas and will be able to apply for more managerial and senior roles after around five years of experience in the job.

ASSISTANT YOUTH WORKER

You can work as an assistant by volunteering for a local authority or nonprofit. You can then study for a degree.



GRADUATE You will need an undergraduate degree in a relevant subject—or a graduate conversion course—and professional accreditation to apply for a job as a youth worker.



▼ RELATED CAREERS

- ▶ **FAMILY SUPPORT WORKER** Works with at-risk families to provide practical and emotional support, such as caring for children whose parents are divorcing or apart due to a prison sentence.
- ▶ **HOUSING OFFICER/MANAGER** Works for social housing associations and rehabilitative housing projects, providing on-site advice and support to residents and specific vulnerable groups, such as the homeless, minority groups, ex-offenders, or disabled people.
- ▶ **LIFE COACH** Provides impartial and confidential advice to individuals suffering from a variety of social, financial, legal, and employment problems. Life coaches can also mediate on behalf of a client, for example by writing letters or attending tribunals.

SKILLS GUIDE

-  Excellent interpersonal skills and emotional maturity for relating to young people and their problems.
-  The ability to work closely with other professionals, such as police, teachers, and probation officers.
-  Creative skills for organizing activities that build young people's self-esteem and personal skills.
-  Good written and verbal skills for producing reports for funding, regulatory, or community groups.
-  Strong self-management skills for handling a number of different cases at the same time.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE WORKER

Supports individuals seeking to overcome a dependency on illegal, prescription, or over-the-counter drugs and alcohol. Also provides referrals to other professionals, such as social workers, to plan a recovery and treatment program.



STUDENT COUNSELOR Provides support and structured therapy to help young people overcome emotional and social problems that may affect their studies. Counselors usually work in a student-services department at a school, college, or university.



YOUTH/COMMUNITY CENTER LEADER Organizes sports, arts, drama, and other activities at a local youth club, community center, or faith center. Leaders also develop and run projects that help young people deal with issues such as bullying or drug abuse.



YOUTH WORKER You may work with teenagers and young adults in areas that suffer from high unemployment and limited opportunities. With experience, you can move into management roles.

