**Social Care Job Prospects**

**in Ireland**

**Social Care Worker in Ireland**

**Social Care Workers** plan and provide professional **care** to vulnerable individuals and groups of all ages who experience marginalisation, disadvantage or special needs. In **Ireland**, the minimum per-requisite qualification to practice as a **Social Care Worker** in the publicly funded health sector is a 3-year Level 7 degree.

**Qualifications:**

Social care practice differs from social work practice in that it uses shared life-space opportunities to meet the physical, social and emotional needs of clients.

Social care work uses strengths-based, needs-led approaches to mediate a clients’ presenting problems.

As undergraduates, students study a wide range of subjects; Psychology, Sociology and Social Policy, Legal Studies, Principles of professional practice and Creative skills (Art, Drama, Music).

The four years of the degree course are hard work, as there are a lot of placements working full-time hours. In the first year there is a six-week block of placement, second year there is a ten-week block, and in third year there is a twelve week block.

The final year deals with completing a dissertation in your chosen area of interest. The placements are very interesting and allow you to gain experience of a wide variety of people.

You learn a great deal about many different ethnic groups, and also about a variety of mental illness.

There is training provided before starting placements such as Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) and Management of Actual or Potential Aggression (MAPA) so one can deal with any matters that arise while on placement.

In Ireland, the minimum pre-requisite qualification to practice as a Social Care Worker in the publicly funded health sector is a 3-year Level 7 degree, but a level 8 can get you into management level in these organisations.

Currently, social care workers do not have to apply for CORU validation, though this is likely to change in the near future.

**Job role**

Social care workers are a very important member of the healthcare team.

Social care workers plan and provide professional, individual, or group care to clients with personal and social needs.

As social care workers, we advocate for the most vulnerable in our care and empower them to make choices and decisions in their life, building trust and relationships.

Social care workers support vulnerable people in their daily living to achieve their wider life goals.

**Who should consider social care?**

The social care profession gives you the opportunity to help a person to pursue their vision of a desirable future, support them to acquire a skill required for increased independence, or simply to support them in a daily task like cooking or housekeeping.

You also support people through major life transitions like bereavement, leaving home, illness, or starting a new job.

If you're good at relating to others, have a sound value base and ethics, can empathies with others easily, believe in social justice and understand that empowerment is key, then social care could be an option for you.

To support people viewed as vulnerable living the life they want can be rewarding for both the person and the social care worker.

**Skills**

* Strong communication and interpersonal skills to build professional relationships with clients.
* Empathy and the ability to relate to and understand others.
* Self-awareness and critical reflection. Being able to evaluate one’s own performance and work towards improving it whilst also taking valid criticism and praise into account.
* Teamwork and interdisciplinary work. The ability to negotiate, compromise and work well with others is essential to the coordination of efforts required in social care work.
* Empowerment. To enable clients to achieve their full potential.
* Non-judgmental attitude. Be accepting and supportive of others.
* Adherence to and knowledge of policies and procedures, child protection, health and safety etc. Concise report writing skills.
* Behaviour management, patience, and coping skills help to de-escalate a situation before it gets much worse.
* Advocacy. To speak on behalf of a client who may not be able to ensure their rights are being upheld and they are treated with dignity.
* Active listening skills. The ability to listen carefully, ask pertinent questions and retain information is very important. It helps establish trust.
* Maintain the capacity to set boundaries and accept the limits of what can be accomplished.
* Debriefing/Destress. The ability to unwind and leave work at work.

**Career opportunities in Ireland**

A degree in social care work is definitely a good base for further training and study. After graduating with a B.A. (hons) in Social Care (Level 8) there are opportunities to work in many different areas of social care.

Social care is diverse and provides lots of flexibility and a wide range of different options.

Client groups and care roles are varied and include:

* Children and adolescents in residential care
* Young people in detention schools
* People with intellectual or physical disabilities
* People who are homeless
* People with alcohol/drug dependency
* Families in the community
* Older people
* Adoption/Fostering agencies
* Probation & Welfare Agencies & Travellers Centres
* Women’s refuges
* Early School Leavers
* School Completion Programme
* LGBT support services
* Sexual health projects Gaining a postgraduate qualification brings many benefits.
* It equips you with more specialised knowledge and skills, and can allow you to seek a wider range of career opportunities. There are also opportunities to specialise in certain areas within and beyond social care.
* Graduates sometimes pursue Masters programmes in:
* Youth and Community Studies
* Addiction Studies
* Child Protection
* Therapeutic Childcare
* Social Work
* Child, Family and Community Studies
* Counselling and Psychotherapy
* Guidance Counselling
* Play Therapy
* Occupational Therapy