

CARING FOR PEOPLE

# Community health worker



Community health worker is a catch-all term for people working to improve health and prevent sickness at grassroots level. You could be a GP, district nurse or midwife, or someone working with drug and alcohol abuse. Lots of exciting new jobs have recently been created too, like working with parents to improve their families' health and wellbeing, and helping people with mental health problems adapt to ordinary life in the community rather than be institutionalised in a hospital or hostel. Whatever the job, people will look to you for information and education, so you need to be a good listener who's committed and caring.

## Degree needed

The need for a degree varies greatly in community health.

To become a registered nurse it is necessary to hold either a degree or Diploma of Higher Education in Nursing (DipHE), specialising in the adult nursing branch.

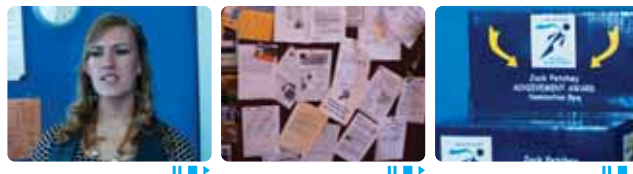
A mental health outreach worker should have an NVQ Level 3 in Care, or be working towards an NVQ relevant to this area of work.

## Good courses

- DipHE in adult nursing – full time (Leeds University)
- DipHE in adult nursing – part time (University of Surrey, Guildford)



Nathalie Carter at work  
Positive Parenting / AIDS Trust for young people and women



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## Facts and figures

### Starting salary

Mental health outreach workers start on £12,618. A newly qualified nurse (from November 2007) will earn £19,600.

### Working hours

Normally 37 hours a week.

### Days holiday per year

On average 25 days per year.

### Skills and experience

This varies widely, but all types of community health worker should have a commitment to working with people at grassroots level.

### Would suit

People with a strong commitment to working within a community and the ability to listen and communicate well.

### Likely employer types

- Primary care trusts
- Local authorities
- Health initiatives linked to regeneration projects

### How many jobs available?

NHS Careers is receiving more and more enquiries from people interested in taking up a career in community health. Statistics for the number of job vacancies are not available.

### Number of people employed in this field

No national statistics for the whole sector are available, but the Community Practitioners' and Health Visitors' Association, which represents health visitors, school nurses and community nurses working in primary care, has over 11,000 members.



### Meet the expert

Nathalie Carter,  
Positive Parenting /  
AIDS Trust for young  
people and women

Visit [AskWhatIf.co.uk](http://AskWhatIf.co.uk) to watch video diaries and get opinions from other real people doing real jobs.



## Did you know?

Community health centres, allowing a range of health professionals to have a base in the communities they served, were a major innovation when the NHS was founded in 1948.

## More information

- You can find out more about community health careers from NHS Careers [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk)
- Trade union Amicus represents community health workers [www.amicus-cphva.org](http://www.amicus-cphva.org)
- The Improvement and Development Agency has information about health-related jobs in local authorities [www.lgcareers.com](http://www.lgcareers.com)

"I work with people living with HIV and AIDS, and other health problems, and give them social opportunities so they don't feel so isolated. I love talking to people on the ground. There's such a spirit of community."

Some careers are more than just a job... Find out more at [AskWhatIf.co.uk](http://AskWhatIf.co.uk)