

HELPING PEOPLE LIVE TOGETHER

Community worker



Community workers help people to develop the skills they need to improve their quality of life. They'll work with individuals, families or whole communities, sometimes with specific groups like the homeless, long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities and families with young children, or they may specialise in public transport, mental health or drugs action. The point is to empower people who wouldn't otherwise have a voice. Some community workers have degrees, some don't. Skills they share are being able to deal with a diverse range of people and manage projects. It's a good idea to get experience and show your commitment by volunteering for a local charity or community group.

Degree needed

Most voluntary and community organisations do not actively recruit graduates, although they do sometimes advertise posts that require a degree. In such cases, a degree in youth and community work, or a foundation degree that confers a recognised youth work qualification, are useful.

Good courses

- Foundation degree in Youth and Community Work (Ruskin College, Oxford)
- BA (Hons) Youth and Community Studies (Liverpool John Moores University)
- Foundation degree in Individual and Community Empowerment (London Metropolitan University)

Facts and figures

Starting salary
15,000 to £19,000.

Working hours
An average working week will be 37 hours.

Days' holiday per year
Usually 25 days.



Jonathan Pace at work
Community Development Worker, Port Vale FC



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what if?

Your career - our future

Skills and experience

The skills needed for work in the voluntary sector include being able to deal with people at all levels, communicate effectively, and manage projects.

Would suit

If you're interested in empowering people in your community and giving a voice to those who don't have one, then this is the job for you.

Likely employer types

- Large national charities such as Cancer Research UK, Oxfam or the British Red Cross
- Smaller charities which help their local community
- Sports and recreation groups
- Other non-profit organisations, including social enterprises
- Voluntary sector staff also frequently transfer to or from public sector organisations such as local authorities

How many jobs available?

The demand for community workers remains consistent. Jobs are advertised frequently in the local and national press.

Number of people employed in this field

There are between 6,000 and 8,000 community workers in the UK.

Did you know?

If you become a community worker, you could take the first steps to running your own charity by going on one of the leadership courses that are becoming increasingly available in the voluntary and charity sector.

More information

- Find out about working in the voluntary sector, as well as details of careers fairs and charity recruitment agencies at www.voluntarysectorskills.org.uk
- The National Association for Voluntary and Community Action is a good source of information and has a list of regional networks www.navca.org.uk
- Resources and advice for anyone wanting to volunteer are at the Volunteering England website www.volunteering.org.uk
- More information on working in the voluntary sector and links to advertised vacancies are at VolResource www.volresource.org.uk
- Working for a Charity runs courses for people wanting to enter the voluntary sector www.wfac.org.uk



Meet the expert
Jonathan Pace,
Port Vale FC



"By pulling people together, we want to make the football club part of the community. It's about getting everyone involved."

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