

## BUILDING PLACES AND SPACES

Town  
planner

Town planners are in greater demand and shorter supply than ever: we need thousands of new homes but we don't want them at the expense of our environment. So, if you're interested in making decisions on how the space in towns, villages, cities and the countryside is used, now is a great time to get into the profession. You don't have to work in housing. You could specialise in conservation, economic development, environmental education, recreation, sport, tourism, transportation, or community development. Whatever you choose, it's your job to assess local applications and make sure they will preserve the character of the area or help make it a better place.

## Degree needed

Entry to the profession is usually via a degree accredited by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). Those without an RTPI qualification need to gain a recognised postgraduate degree. The following degrees are good gateways to postgraduate study: land/estate surveying; environmental science; landscape architecture/design; politics/government/public administration; architecture; economics; geography; geology; sociology; surveying; statistics; transportation; or ecology.

## Good courses

RTPI accredited degrees and postgraduate courses are available at the following institutions:

- Anglia Ruskin University
- Cardiff University
- Heriot Watt; Kingston University
- Leeds Metropolitan University
- Liverpool John Moores University
- London South Bank University
- Newcastle University
- Oxford Brookes University
- Queens University Belfast
- Sheffield Hallam University



Niamh Boyle at work  
Senior Planner, Peterborough City Council



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And also at the universities of:

- Aberdeen
- Central England (Birmingham)
- Dundee, Glasgow
- Hong Kong
- Liverpool
- Manchester
- Reading
- Sheffield
- Strathclyde
- West of England (Bristol)
- Westminster

For details of accredited courses [www.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.rtpi.org.uk)

## Facts and figures

## Starting salary

Average salary of around £20,000.

## Working hours

35-37 hours a week.

## Days' holiday per year

Usually 25 days a year.

## Skills and experience

Planners need good oral and written communication skills, an ability to produce detailed and accurate work and good analytical and problem-solving skills.

## Would suit

Good all-rounders who are interested in the social, economic, environmental and cultural issues in their environment.

## Likely employer types

- Local authorities and government offices
- Planning consultancies
- Large development companies



Meet the expert

Niamh Boyle,  
Peterborough  
City Council

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?

Hippodamus of Miletus, the Greek town planner from the 5th century BC, is thought by many to be the father of western planning. He believed in an ideal city inhabited by 10,000 citizens, divided into three classes (soldiers, artisans and 'husbandmen'), with the land also divided into three types – sacred, public and private.

## How many jobs available?

Now is a good time to be embarking on a career as a town planner. Demand is high, thanks to a shortage of planners, particularly in southeast England.

## Number of people employed in this field

There are 10,000 chartered planning officers in the UK.

## More information

- Find out more about careers in planning and download a brochure on the profession from the Royal Town Planning Institute [www.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.rtpi.org.uk)
- The Planning Officers Society represents senior planning officers. Their website contains in-depth reports and consultations on the issues planners face [www.planningofficers.org.uk](http://www.planningofficers.org.uk)

"If we didn't have planners we wouldn't have control over our surroundings. We need to make our cities more attractive and nicer to visit - regeneration is really where my interest lies."