

CARING FOR PEOPLE

Youth worker



More than 500,000 volunteers each year give up their time to work with young people, free of charge. But you could get paid. If you care about young people and feel you can relate to their problems, you could be a youth worker helping teenagers fulfil their potential. Youth workers are active in youth clubs, village halls, churches and schools, as well as on the streets, finding ways to get young people involved – be it to meet friends or simply escape to somewhere they won't be judged. You'll need to be a good listener, someone young people will trust, and to do a course in youth and community work.

Degree needed

Youth workers generally have a qualification validated by the National Youth Agency. Approved higher education courses in youth work or youth and community work are offered by a host of universities and colleges of higher education.

It is possible to become a youth worker without a degree or HND, but full-time youth workers will normally have completed an initial qualification.

Work-based foundation degrees, either full-time or part-time, are available at many universities. Students can also take the Diploma in Higher Education in Youth and Community Work with the option of going on to BA (Hons). Traditional three-year degrees and one-year master's qualifications are also available, on either a full-time or part-time basis.

Good courses

- Foundation Degree in Youth Work (Brighton University)
- BA (Hons) Youth and Community Work (University of East London)
- MA/Postgraduate Diploma in Youth and Community Work (Manchester Metropolitan University)
- BPhil/DipHE Youth and Community Work (University of Birmingham)



Bex Horton at work
Youth Worker, Leicestershire County Council



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Facts and figures

Starting salary

Just over £13,000.

Working hours

Long and very flexible hours.

Days' holiday per year

Around 25 days.

Skills and experience

Youth workers need to understand teenagers, have sensitivity and respect for individuals and an open mind.

Would suit

If you have the welfare of young people at heart and feel you can relate to the problems they face, this could be your type of job.

Likely employer types

- Local authorities, normally in the education department but increasingly within leisure, recreation or social services
- Voluntary and charitable groups also employ youth workers

How many jobs available?

There are 2,000 vacancies with local authorities, but no statistics for the voluntary sector. Local authorities have nearly 1,500 people on training schemes waiting to enter the service, but there is a shortage of volunteer leaders across the voluntary sector.

Number of people employed in this field

There are 4,000 full-time youth workers employed by local authorities, with a further 7,000 estimated to be working full time in the voluntary sector. There are more than 14,000 part-time youth workers with local authorities.



Meet the expert
Bex Horton,
Leicestershire
County Council

Visit AskWhatIf.co.uk to watch video diaries and get opinions from other real people doing real jobs.



“Young people are naturally mistrusting, so we work to build up a trust and get them to think for themselves. I might take them to Tesco to teach them some basic life skills.”

Did you know?

Over 500,000 volunteers each year give up their time to work free of charge with young people.

More information

- The National Youth Agency promotes quality and training in youth work www.nya.org.uk
- The Improvement and Development Agency aims to support best practice in local authorities www.lgcareers.com
- The General Social Care Council regulates social care workers www.ggcc.org.uk
- Youth Link provides information about youth work in Scotland www.youthlink.co.uk