

RETURN TO SOCIAL WORK EMPLOYER INFORMATION PACK



INTRODUCTION

This employer guidance pack has been developed to support prospective employers who are considering signing up to the Return to Social Work programme.

WHAT IS THE RETURN TO SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMME?

The Return to Social Work programme is an initiative developed by the **Local Government Association** (LGA) and the **Government Equalities Office** (GEO). It will provide free, high-quality training to 200 social workers who have been out of practice for between two and 10 years, supporting them to get re-registered with the official regulatory body.

The experienced social workers carefully selected to join the scheme, will be offered a **free** gateway back into the sector.

As well as providing the necessary training, our programme is uniquely designed to mentor, coach and rebuild the confidence of these individuals. In doing so, the programme will increase their resilience, harness the wealth of their experience and knowledge, and ultimately bring them back up to speed so they are ready to join your organisation today.

Our programme includes work placements and supervised training, which gives our candidates the chance to get back into the workplace. By using real life case studies and work-based situations to develop their skills, candidates can refresh their knowledge of today's social work theory, policy, legislation and best practice.

The aforementioned placements will take place within councils that have signed up to the programme. Candidates will then have the opportunity to apply for permanent or temporary positions with participating councils in their chosen location/s, subject to available vacancies.

This programme is free of charge for councils to sign up.



MAY - JULY 2020

STAGE 4 – Candidates Complete Placements

During this time, candidates will complete placements with participating councils. The specific dates are dependent on the availability of councils and candidates, and the social care specialism offered.

Placement length will differ depending on how long a candidate has been out of practice for, but as a minimum all candidates must complete 10 days. If possible, we would like councils to offer between 10 and 20 days.

Longer placements can be negotiated with individual candidates.

JULY 2020

STAGE 5 – Submit Employment Vacancies

Councils will be contacted in July and asked to submit the number of vacancies they have available, which our candidates can interview for. They will also be asked to specify what social care area they would like to recruit into.

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2020

STAGE 6 – Interview Candidates

Councils will receive expressions of interest from candidates, accompanied by covering letters and CVs. They will then have the opportunity to shortlist the candidates and arrange interviews with those that best fit their criteria.

Following successful interview, councils can make candidates an offer of employment and fill their social worker vacancies.

SEPTEMBER 2020

Stage 7 – Attend Returners' Ceremony (Optional)

Councils will be invited to a returners' ceremony where they can network with other councils that have taken part in our programme.



PLACEMENT PROCESS

Social Work England has taken over from HCPC as the specialist regulator for social workers. They require returning social workers to undergo basic retraining for a **minimum of 10 days**, including supervised practice.

Our programme caters for candidates who have been out of practice for between two and five years, and five and 10 years. Some candidates, therefore, may benefit from more supervised days than others.

Placement periods are set by the availability of councils and candidates, with both parties offering a degree of flexibility where possible.

THE PLACEMENT PROCESS

- The placement period for this programme will take place between 18 May and August 2020. We ask councils to offer a minimum of ten days for each candidate. Councils can offer multiple placements and more days if they wish.
- Within the application form to sign up to the programme, councils will be asked to provide their available dates and desired length of placement in advance.
- Candidates will be matched to councils based on their location and preference. As our candidates will not be paid travel expenses to attend their placements, matching them with their preferred councils will help to alleviate, as much as possible, any financial burdens related to travel.

- Once the matching process has been completed, councils will be given a candidate's personal statement and contact details. The council will then need to contact the candidate to arrange the logistics of the placement.
- Some councils may wish to informally meet candidates before the placement begins. We are happy for councils and candidates to work together to make the placement process as comfortable and beneficial for all as possible.

Councils who sign up to the Return to Social Work programme do not have to offer placements; however, we strongly encourage councils to do so.

The benefits of offering a placement to a returner are listed below. Offering a placement:

- Allows you as an employer to assess the returner's skills, experience and motivation on the job before considering their suitability for any vacant posts.
- Creates a learning environment for returners to assess whether the fit and timing is right for them.
- Gives the returner the opportunity to assess what flexibility options and type of work would suit them in the long term.
- Provides the opportunity for experienced practitioners in your council to provide supervision and mentoring to the returner, thus developing their own careers at the same time.



VACANCY PROCESS

Once our candidates have completed their placements, councils will have the opportunity to interview and recruit them into their vacant social worker positions.

Re-entering the workplace after a career break can be daunting for candidates, especially for those who have been out of work for 10 years. The Government Equalities Office has developed a useful **toolkit** with guidance for how employers can best support returners during this process.

THE VACANCY PROCESS

Step 1: From July, we will ask all councils who have signed up to the programme to provide:

- The number of vacant roles they have available in social care
- A document that provides the following information for each vacancy:
 - Job description
 - Contract duration: permanent or fixed term
 - Job specifics: full-time, part-time or negotiable
 - Salary
 - Location/s
- A document outlining the benefits of working for your council

We will then condense this information into regional packs for the candidates to select from.

Step 2: Candidates will be given a form to select the vacancies they wish to be put forward for. They will then compose a CV and a generic cover letter, outlining their suitability for a role in social care and what they can offer councils as a social worker.

Step 3: In August, the Return to Social work team will send councils a list of interested candidates, with their CV and covering letter.

Step 4: The council will review the list of candidates and coordinate interviews directly with their shortlisted individuals.

Step 5: The council will proceed with their internal process for recruiting and on-boarding. In the event that a candidate is unsuccessful at interview, councils are asked to provide them with constructive feedback in order to support their development and the next steps of their journey back into work.





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