

Return to Social Work Programme

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Candidates

1. I have not practised as a social worker for over two years. How do I get back on the register?

In order to return to the register, social workers need to meet the following requirements, depending on how long they have been out of practice:

- **Under two years:** no requirements
- **Two to five years:** 30 days of training to update their skills and knowledge
- **Five to ten years:** 60 days of training to update their skills and knowledge

The HCPC has [more guidance](#) on returning to practice.

2. I haven't practised or registered for over 10 years, can I still apply?

Unfortunately, we aren't able to provide training if you have been out of practise for over 10 years.

3. I have qualified but not practised, can I still apply?

No, unfortunately this programme is for candidates who have practised and gained experience of working in a statutory role for circa 2 years.

4. What is the difference between statutory and non-statutory social work?

In the UK, social workers are distinct from social care workers. Social care workers provide personal care, support individuals with everyday tasks, and encourage people to engage with their communities. In some cases, they may also support teams to create care plans. While social care and social work are similar, those who work in social care cannot carry out the statutory duties expected of social workers.

Social workers operate within legal frameworks to protect and support vulnerable people. For example, they can use protection policies to intervene in families to protect children and ensure the rights of vulnerable adults are upheld. Registered social workers work for statutory bodies such as local authorities, NHS Trusts or officially-recognised organisations.

Only those who have completed two years of statutory social work are eligible to apply for the Return to Social Work programme.

5. I was investigated by the HCPC a few years ago, and was suspended from practice. Will this affect my application?

As we want to ensure that you're fit for practice and you can get back into a working environment as soon as you finish the programme, we can only accept applications from candidates who have registered status with the HCPC. We cannot proceed further with any applications from candidates who have currently got conditions of practice on their registration as this will affect their abilities in the course.

6. I am still HCPC registered, but have not practised since my last renewal. Can I apply to this programme?

Every time you renew your registration you will be asked to sign a document proving that you have continued to practise your profession or met any return to practice requirements that apply to you.

This means that you will need to have practised at some point in the previous two years of your registration cycle. If you have not practised in the last two years since your renewal, you cannot sign the declaration and you will need to complete an updating period before you can renew your registration.

You can complete this updating period as part of the programme, and are therefore eligible to apply.

7. I have not worked since I left social work. Can I still apply?

Yes. We recognise that there may be some people who have taken a career break and not worked for all sorts of reasons, and now wish to come back to work. This programme is to help support you back into social work. It will provide you with opportunities to meet the HCPC return to practice requirements.

8. I have not completed any training since I last practised, can I still apply?

Yes. As you will have access to some training and development opportunities as part of this programme.

9. What does the programme include?

The programme will provide an overview of the **knowledge and skills sets** for social work and the **Professional Capabilities Framework**. It will also cover current legislation and policy, social work values and ethics, managing risks, and safeguarding.

Practice educators will be facilitating group action learning sets, where you will work on case scenarios, problem solving and reflective supervision. You will also receive

coaching from professional coaches and be asked to complete a personal development plan and a critical reflection, as well as online learning.

10. Will I have to complete a placement as part of the programme?

As the HCPC suggests former social workers complete supervised practise, a placement will be included as a part of the programme. We are working with councils across England to secure these opportunities.

11. What if I can't attend all the dates in the programme?

In order to re-register with the HCPC you will need to complete the specified number of days they require. If you do not complete them on this programme, you will need to complete them independently.

All candidates on our programme must complete all the course training by 31 August 2020.

12. Will I get a job at the end of the programme?

As part of the programme, we will coordinate a number of interviews for you with councils that have vacancies.

We will offer you 1-2-1 coaching to help prepare you for applying for roles within the programme, and also independently. As each council has different requirements and benefits as an employer, we cannot guarantee you a job in social work at the end of the programme. However, what we can guarantee is support and guidance in assisting you in this process.

13. Where is the programme taking place?

The training is offered nationally across England and you will be able to do most of the training online at home, with some attendance at workshops in a region near you.

14. Will I get financial help with travel if the programme is far away from home?

Unfortunately, we are not able to reimburse you for the cost of travel to the training and placements. We are aiming to deliver most of the training via virtual methods so there will be limited need to travel for the training workshops. Successful candidates on the programme will only need to fund their travel to the workshops and placement council.

If you have any further questions please email returntosocialwork@local.gov.uk