

Making a Difference: Start Your Career in Youth Work



Are you passionate about enabling young people to develop their life skills and unlock their potential? Becoming a youth worker is an exciting career option if you are interested in a role where you get to work with young people outside of traditional childcare professions, a teaching career or social care roles.

Youth workers build young people's confidence, develop their life skills and provide them with safe space and the necessary support to explore their identity and values. Through this relationship of trust, young people's self-confidence grows and they gain the life skills needed to overcome challenges and take control of their lives.

Every day is different as a youth worker. Qualified youth workers are employed by local authorities, charities or social enterprises and can be based in schools, hospitals, youth clubs or outward-bound centres. Some youth workers might work in each of these settings in one day!

Explore the Routes into Youth Work

Level 2 or 3 qualifications Youth Support Worker

Typical duration:

6-12 months for L2 or 18 months for L3

Age requirement:

Study L2 from age 14 or L3 from age 16

Cost:

Study free with funding through a bursary (for either level) or apprenticeship (for Level 3).

Costs vary by provider when funding is not available.

The introductory Level 2 and more in-depth Level 3 (equivalent to an A level) qualifications build confidence and skills in those relatively new to working with young people in different settings. They cover the values, core principles and current policies relating to youth work.

Courses are widely available through training providers across the country, via classroom and online learning.

Level 6 Youth Work Degree Professional Youth Worker

Typical duration:

3 years full time or 4-6 years part time

Age requirement:

Study from age 18

Cost:

See individual providers – often funded by a student loan.

The gold standard in youth work, this qualification will develop your professional practice expertise. You will learn about safeguarding and legislation, trauma informed and inclusive practice.

Entry requirements vary across universities, but you generally need three A-levels at grades CCD or above to apply. Some providers welcome applications from those without academic qualifications providing they have relevant experience and interest in working with young people.

Level 6 Youth Work Degree-Apprenticeship Professional Youth Worker

Typical duration:

3 years

Age requirement:

Study from age 18

Cost:

Study free as funded by the government and the employer.

Perfect for those wishing to learn (and earn) on-the-job and often delivered through training one day per week at a university or training provider, apprentices spend 20% of their time dedicated to lectures, activity-based seminars, online study and tutorials. The remainder is spent in the workplace.

To be eligible, you will need GCSEs at grade 4 (C) or above, or Functional Skills Level 2 in English and Maths or be willing to complete during your apprenticeship.



Have you considered volunteering in youth work?

Have you thought about volunteering to gain experience in youth work? It can help build your CV, skills and confidence and can be good to include in your 'Personal Statement' when applying for university.

Most youth work training providers and employers look for some experience, paid or voluntary, of working with young people before you can enrol on a youth work course.

Visit www.regionalyouthunits.com to find out about volunteering opportunities in your area.

Find out more about qualifications and training at: nya.org.uk/for-learners



What's the role and workplace like?

Youth work is a hugely rewarding job offering variety, the chance to work in a range of settings, alongside other professionals working with young people and in different specialist areas. The qualities which make a good youth worker include good interpersonal skills, integrity, patience and tolerance. You also need to be good at planning as well as be flexible to respond to young people's needs in the here and now. A sense of humour goes a long way too.

“ Youth work is a joy to be a part of, no matter what gets in the way, spending time with people that they will treasure forever, is priceless.”

– Clare Alderson, Youth Development Worker,
Nottingham University Hospital Youth Service

Levi's story

Levi Hodge, 28, is studying for a Level 6 degree in Youth Work at Plymouth Marjon University, thanks to apprenticeship Levy funding from our corporate partner, NatWest Group.

Levi combines his study with supporting young people at Youth Moves, the youth club in Bristol which he attended as a young person himself. In his early teens Levi often played truant and participated in anti-social behaviour, but his youth worker Denise, helped him gain the self-belief he needed to see a different path.

“I genuinely think if I hadn't gone to Youth Moves, I probably would have ended up in prison. But instead, I got my head down, got GCSE's and went to college.”

After working as an attendance and student support officer and subsequently, pastoral head of year at a secondary school for three years, Levi realised his vocation was in youth work.

Now on his way to achieving a Level 6 youth work qualification, Levi reflects on his journey from troubled teenager to university student.

“I'm the first in my family to go to university which I've always wanted to do, but thought it was out of my reach. Things are very different to how I saw my life 15 years ago.”

“ Youth work worked for me. It's being that one person who is going to be around and not give up.”

