WORKING IN
RESIDENTIAL CARE
FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

A POSITIVE CAREER CHOICE
www.ccwales.org.uk
This can be an extremely rewarding area of work which involves supporting children and young people mainly between the age of 11 and 21, to bring normality and stability back into their lives, whilst providing a safe and supportive home for them to live in.

A young person may be placed into residential care on a short, medium or long term basis, with the length of placement and the level of support required dependent on their needs and circumstances. They may have no family to care for them due to bereavement, family breakdown or instances of neglect, or they may have suffered trauma or abuse. As a result they may be experiencing a variety of issues, including emotional difficulties, low self esteem and lack of self worth, leading to behavioural problems and possible risk taking and offending.

As a residential support/care worker or practitioner you will provide positive opportunities for children and young people to overcome their difficulties and helping them achieve their full potential in life. It is a job where you will use a wide range of interpersonal skills and a range of acquired professional knowledge and skills to ensure that placement plans are followed successfully and achieve the best possible outcomes for children, young people and their families.
TYPICAL DUTIES INCLUDE:

- Encouraging development of self esteem and confidence. Supporting children in increasing life and social skills through work based/leisure activities and mentoring;
- Setting appropriate boundaries and limits around behaviour based on clear expectations;
- Participating in talking and listening activities and conducting individual/group discussions to address and manage issues;
- Liaising and maintaining regular contact with social workers, relatives and other interested parties to discuss welfare and progress;
- Writing regular progress reports and maintaining accurate records;
- Assisting with transportation to and from school and attending various appointments;
- Providing support to complete homework and other related educational activities;
- Sharing leisure activities and encouraging the development of interests and hobbies; and
- Assisting with routine tasks such as food shopping, meal preparation and general tidying of the home.
TO WORK IN THIS SETTING YOU'LL NEED:

- Excellent communication skills and the ability to form positive trusting relationships with young people and their families;
- Emotional resilience and the ability to work calmly in challenging situations;
- To be non-judgmental and deal with conflicting behaviour in a caring and consistent manner;
- Flexibility in working hours, available to work shifts including 'sleeping in'; and
- To register with the Care Council and abide by the Code of Practice for Social Care Workers. You will need to complete 15 days (90 hours) of Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL) over a period of 3 years in order to renew your registration.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- A minimum qualification of QCF Level 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care (Children and Young People) Wales and Northern Ireland;
- Ideally, some experience of working with children and young people or working in a residential setting; and
- To normally be at least 21 years of age with an up to date enhanced CRB disclosure.
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**SALARY AND CAREER PROGRESSION**

With over 100 registered children’s homes across Wales owned by local authorities, private and voluntary organisations, plenty of potential employers exist. Average salaries start around £14,000 per annum which can increase with experience and qualifications. Employers may also offer overtime, additional allowances and contributory pension schemes as part of their remuneration package.

Training and development is provided by employers. Initially you would be expected to complete a compulsory induction programme and then undertake a work-based QCF qualification. Additional professional development opportunities would also be available to keep you up to date with changes in your profession and to support your career development. You will also receive supervision on a regular basis. With experience and training you could either progress to the role of senior residential practitioner or alternatively to management level as a residential home manager or deputy manager.

**NEXT STEPS**

- Consider undertaking voluntary work to obtain relevant experience, such as volunteering at a local youth centre, day care centre or for a voluntary organisation such as Action for Children or Barnardo's.

- If you do not meet the age requirement to work in this setting or would like to plan your career and start learning more about social care, consider studying towards a QCF Level 1 Award/Certificate Introduction to Health and Social Care, early years and childcare (Wales and Northern Ireland). This is a knowledge based qualification available within schools and colleges for people over 14 years of age.

- Consider looking for an Apprenticeship in Health and Social Care in conjunction with an employer. Careers Wales offer an Apprenticeship Matching Service.

**VIDEO CASE STUDY**

CERYS JONES, SUPPORT WORKER

CASE STUDY
KELLY ROWELL, RESIDENTIAL CARE WORKER
PROSPECTS, WREXHAM

My role involves looking after young people in a residential setting who have been placed in care on short or long term placement. The home I work in is primarily for young people aged 13-18 years old, who are with us on long term placements. We support all family contact where applicable and also support through education.

We run the home as if it was our own, of course with routines and boundaries. The young people come from a variety of backgrounds, each with their own individual needs. They are treated with the respect and care they deserve.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS JOB?
I previously worked in the care sector with the elderly. I felt that working with children and young people would be more rewarding for me and was looking for a new challenge. My friend worked for Prospects and thoroughly enjoyed it and suggested that I give it a go. I applied and have never looked back.

WHAT TRAINING HAVE YOU RECEIVED?
We receive on-going training and professional development within the home and outside on a regular basis. This enables us to engage with the young person more effectively, on a therapeutic basis, and to manage behaviour so that a sense of stability and normality is brought back into their lives.
MY TYPICAL DAY GOES SOMETHING LIKE THIS:

08:00 Take over from staff going off shift and receive update regarding any issues from the previous day and information required for the day ahead e.g. appointments, tasks/chores to be completed and any paperwork to be handed to parents or social workers. After ensuring that breakfast is available, we assist with the school run. The morning is filled with various tasks such as updating social workers and family, general cleaning of the home, including the young people’s bedrooms, ensuring we respect privacy. We then shop for food and record expenses in the log book.

12:30 I pick up the young people from school and bring them back for lunch, whilst the other staff member prepares lunch.

12:45 We sit together to eat and discuss how their day is going. This is not always possible as young people are not always the most forthcoming, but we don’t push them, they will chat when they’re ready.

13:20 Back to school again. We will support them at school if necessary or we will return to the home. This time gives us an opportunity to update paperwork and plan with colleagues activities for the evening or discuss transportation to appointments.

15:10 Pick up from school. Speak with teachers to see how the young people have engaged in lessons, any issues, and to collect homework ensuring we have clear instructions to enable us to offer support.

15:30 Arrive back. This time is used for homework, to attend any appointments, including clinical or therapy appointments, or just chill!

17:00 We all sit together for dinner as you would do at home, thus creating a friendly and comfortable environment. The young people will help prepare the evening meal as they have a daily chore to complete, cooking being one of them. Completing chores is the start of preparing them with the basics of independent living. One of these chores is to complete a weekly menu and compile a shopping list to teach them about budgeting.
THE EVENING can be filled with a variety of things - going to the cinema, bowling, pursuing hobbies and interests or maybe just a night watching the soaps or socialising with friends, which can be in the local community or in the home.

BEDTIME is dependent on age, but whatever age can be easy or sometimes a struggle. We ensure a bedtime snack is offered and that they have a drink to take up to bed with them. The young people can have individual staff time to chat in private, which can be anything from a general chit chat to a serious discussion. I believe we never judge, always listen!

After the young people are settled, this is the staff’s chance to complete the daily paperwork. Each young person has their own individual set of paperwork, everything from what they’ve eaten to medication they take and a daily observation sheet, which is a subjective overview of the day. The house is then cleaned, ready for the next shift in the morning. House is locked, alarms set and off to bed.

WHY I ENJOY MY ROLE:
“I really enjoy working with young people - each day is different, you never know what to expect, they can definitely keep you on your toes! You know you can make a difference and enable a child to have a better chance in life.

The young people inspire me - they have come from such difficult backgrounds and been through so much that you can't imagine, yet they are always willing to give things a go. They put their trust in us and just get on with their lives.”

Kelly Rowell