

RESEARCH & ADVICE



How to get your first job in social work

Social work trainer and consultant **Serge Paul** gives his top tips

- 1 Think about what you want from your first job.** What kind of organisation do you want to work in? What kind of social work do you want to do and with which client group?
- 2 Plan your social work career and work out where you want to be in the next five years.** Then think about what to look for in an employer and which organisations will employ you. You need to work out where you can look for work, where you should be located and when you will need to be at work (important if you have care responsibilities).
- 3 Write a CV which you can adapt to an application form.** Never attach this to an application form – fill in the form, unless CVs are specifically requested.
- 4 This is your first job, so it is you that is making enquiries.** The prospective employer is the one marketing themselves, you should be in control. Get all the information you need about the job, see if it seems challenging enough and can help you develop. Look at how people are assisted, how you will be expected to work and what you are expected to do. Is the pay suitable?

‘Come fully informed about the organisation’

- 5 You have to meet the job specification so there is no point in applying for a post that has a requirement, say, for two years minimum post qualifying practice.** Maybe your plan is to go into a speciality, but you need to be realistic. Look for posts that give you experience of frontline work, meet the challenges of direct client service and integrate your knowledge of policy and procedure with advancing your experience.
- 6 If you are shortlisted for an interview, remember that the prospective employer is there to appoint the best candidate on the day.** Come fully informed about the organisation and post, answer the questions you are asked so they perceive you as a social worker in terms of how you work with clients and represent the agency. This is a time for presenting yourself as a professional so behave appropriately.
- 7 Keep an eye on the horizon.** In terms of policy development and new ways of working and skills that will be needed in the future.

See BASW's Jobs Board: www.basw.co.uk/home/vacancies. Visit the COMPASS Jobs Fairs on 5 November, 2018: www.compassjobsfair.com

THE KNOWLEDGE By Pat Toulmin

Key research from the knowledge hub on BASW's website (see www.basw.co.uk/resources)

Beyond barriers: How older people move between health and social care in England

Most older people, particularly those with complex needs, will receive care at some time. Their experience will often depend on how well different services work together for them, their families and carers.

A Woman-Centred Approach: Freeing vulnerable women from the revolving door of crime

Much of our female prison population can be traced to state failure and social breakdown. Government has failed to firmly grip the issue of female offending yet it's the sort of social problem it should address.

Loneliness: How do you know your council is actively tackling loneliness?

There is a growing body of research showing that loneliness is a serious

condition which can have a harmful effect on individuals' physical and mental health, as well as bringing costs to public finance, particularly health and social care, and to the economy.

Children living in families facing adversity: NSPCC helplines report

Many parents or carers who are going through challenging circumstances are able to provide safe and loving care for their family. But if problems mount up, everyday situations can become harder to cope with. This can leave children more vulnerable to abuse and neglect.

The lives we want to lead: The LGA green paper for adult social care and wellbeing

The continued absence of a sustainable, long-term solution has brought care and support to breaking point. It now also means

that, across the country, local government is struggling to sustain universal local public services like roads and waste collection as it has to prioritise statutory duties like social care for children and adults, and support for the NHS. Failure to address this creates a deeply uncertain future for people who use social care services

‘Realistic Positivity’: understanding the additional needs of young children placed for adoption, and supporting families when needs are unexpected

Most adopted children have been in the care system, having become ‘looked after’ by a local authority following abuse or neglect. With the right support, adopted children and their families may thrive, but many experience distress and occasionally adopted children leave the family home prematurely.