Social, Caring and Advisory Services

Do you want to help and support people with their physical and mental wellbeing? Do you want to make a difference to the lives of people who are experiencing social and emotional problems? Do you like working with children and want to help support them emotionally as well as promote their development?

If you love working with people and are caring, calm and patient, then you might find working in the social, caring and advisory area a rewarding career.

What areas can I work in?

You could be working in advisory services, childcare and education, community education, psychology and counselling, social work or social care. You might specialise in working with adults or children, or help and support people of all ages.

To see the routes to getting into each of these sectors, take a look at our Career Pathway.

What kind of companies can I work for?

You might work for:

- advice centres and services
- playgroups or nurseries
- community education centres
- the National Health Service (NHS) or private health companies
- local authorities
- health and welfare charities.

What's the job market like?

It can be quite difficult to get a job in advisory and counselling services, although there are lots of voluntary opportunities.

Community learning and development work includes adult learning, youth work and a wide range of other community support and development jobs.

Job prospects are good in social care services, with an ageing population leading to more demand. In 2024 there were 52,400 people employed in care homes for adults. [2]

Between July 2024 and June 2025 there were 15,490 job postings for care workers and home carers. [3]

The largest three sub sectors are still housing support/care at home, care homes for adults and day care of children. Collectively these account for 80% of the social services workforce. [2]

The increase in free childcare hours has meant the Scottish Government has been increasing training opportunities and routes into Early Learning and Childcare: 970 early years workers have been recruited in 2024

taking the total workforce to over 42,250 people. [2]

In 2023 there were 1,650 men in day care of children roles, accounting for around 4% of the workforce. Men in Childcare (MiC) promotes training and recruitment for men in early years in an effort to increase the number of men working in the sector. [4]

The Scottish Government aims to increase the childminder workforce in Scotland by 1,000 through a recruitment drive with 16 local authorities. A £1 million funding scheme will offer £750 start up grants for new childminding businesses, as well as support and training to encourage people into the business. Find out more at childminding.org/getstarted. [1]

Housing Associations and cooperatives are major Scottish employers, employing 13,000 people across 133 housing associations and cooperatives. They provide around 286,000 homes to 1.2 million tenants who live in homes provided by social landlords. [5]

Facts and figures

- The care sector accounted for 7.7% of the workforce (207,600 people) in Scotland in 2025. [3]
- The private sector was the largest employer for social services at 41%, followed by the public sector at 35%, and the voluntary sector 24%. [2]
- The overall workforce has a greater proportion of female staff with only 1 in 6 being male. In some areas such as criminal justice and residential children's services, it is 1 in 3. [2]
- The average working age in public sector employment is 46, and in the private sector it is 39. The average age of early years workers in public sector employment is 40, and in the private sector 28. [2]
- In Scotland in 2025 there were 2,558 centres providing funded early learning childcare. [6]
- There were 214,750 employed in social services in Scotland in 2024, up 0.9% from 2023. [2]

Want to find out more?

The Scottish Social Services Council website has a section called 'Careers and Education', with lots of resources, including downloadable careers leaflets.

The Sector Skills Council, Skills for Care and Development, has the A Question of Care website with information on careers in care.

Sources

[1] Recruiting and retaining childminders, Scottish Government (July 2025)

[2] Scottish Social Services Sector: Report on 2024 Workforce Data (November 2025)

[3] Sectoral Skills Assessment: Social Care, Skills Development Scotland (October 2025)

[4] Men in childcare funding, Scottish Government (July 2025)

[5] Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (July 2025)

[6] Funded Early Learning and Childcare Statistics 2025, Scottish Government (December 2025)