

Social Work Together Campaign

Frequently Asked Questions for Candidates

1. The website says ‘vacancy’ - am I applying for a specific role or just expressing my interest in supporting the coronavirus (COVID-19) effort?

You are expressing your interest in the COVID-19 effort, letting local authorities know about your skills and experience. You are not applying for a specific vacancy.

2. I’ve entered my details – what happens now?

By expressing your interest for Social Work Together, you have given yourself the opportunity to share your skills with employers and discuss where your expertise is most needed. However, please note that we cannot guarantee employment with councils.

Councils can use our online portal to search for social workers in their areas and contact them if a suitable role becomes available. With the local response to coronavirus (COVID-19) constantly evolving, this may take some time and we thank you for your patience.

In the meantime, you will soon receive instruction on how to access our online ‘green room’, where you can access continuing professional development (CPD) materials.

3. What sort of role will I be offered? What if I am offered a role I don’t want to do?

If a local authority reviews your details and matches them to their needs, they will be in contact with you for a discussion about potential roles. Entering your details does not commit you to taking on a role - you do not have to take a role you don’t want to do.

4. I have specialist social work skills and experience – will I be matched to a suitable role or specialism?

Employers will discuss this with you to ensure you are matched to a suitable role.

5. Will I have a choice about where I work/how far I have to travel?

We expect local authorities and employers to work together through their local and regional structures, to ensure that those who are offered roles are placed in areas where there is the greatest need.

You are not required to take a role that is offered, and the employer will endeavour to provide a role which is right for you.

6. What is the difference between the temporary and permanent register of social workers?

The Coronavirus Act 2020 gave Social Work England the power to temporarily register additional social workers to create extra social worker capacity.

Social Work England have written to social workers who left the register within the previous two years. This temporary register is part of the Social Work England 'permanent' register of social workers. For more information on the temporary register, please [visit Social Work England's website](#).

7. I'm registered as a social worker but not currently working on the frontline. Is this the best way for me to get engaged?

Yes. Local authorities may need your support, and this is the best and easiest way for you to share your skills and expertise with them. However, please note that we cannot guarantee employment with councils.

Councils can use our online portal to search for social workers in their areas and contact them if a suitable role becomes available. With the local response to coronavirus (COVID-19) constantly evolving, this may take some time and we thank you for your patience

8. I'm a social work student – can I register?

Students on placements make an important contribution to local social work services' teams and are considered key workers.

We do not currently think the emergency registration of students, allowing them to take up social worker roles before they have completed their training, will be necessary but will keep this under review. More guidance is available from [Social Work England](#).

9. Will I get paid if I take on a role?

Yes. There is no expectation that you will undertake a social work role as a volunteer. Government is working to provide as much support as possible to local government at this time.

If you are offered a role, you will become an employee of the local authority that you have agreed to work for and will be able to access all your employer's employee benefits.

10. If I am offered a role, how long will the employment last?

This will be dependent on each local authority's need and we expect that individuals will work directly with the local authority to agree a suitable period which benefits both parties.

11. Will I get protective equipment (PPE)?

The government is prioritising working with partners to get the required equipment to frontline staff as quickly and effectively as possible.

12. What if I no longer want to take part or become unavailable during this process?

Should you no longer be available for work you can withdraw your interest by logging back into your account, accessing your application and selecting the “withdraw” button. Alternatively, you can let us know via SocialWork.TOGETHER@education.gov.uk.

Should this change at a later point you can email SocialWorkTogether@local.gov.uk to re-instate your availability.

13. If I am offered a role, what will be the impact on my pension?

Although technically the rules for most pension funds indicate that pension payments would need to be reduced in the event of a return to work, local government pension scheme administrators have made it clear that they will not abate pensions in circumstances where you return to work to help deal with the pandemic emergency.

14. If I am offered a role, what terms and conditions will I return under?

This is part of the discussion between you and the local authority about what role you could best help with and what the practicalities are, including hours to be worked and terms and conditions.

15. I have dependent children. Will I be considered a key worker?

Yes. The Department for Education’s [guidance on maintaining educational provision](#) states that if your work is critical to the coronavirus (COVID-19) response, or if you work in one of the critical sectors listed and you cannot keep your child safe at home, then your children will be prioritised for education provision.

For the education and childcare sector this includes childcare, support and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who must remain active during the coronavirus (COVID-19) response to deliver this approach.

Dependent children will be offered a place at school if there is no other adult available in the household to look after them. Once your employment status is reinstated you will need to contact your child’s school to reserve a place for them.

16. I’ve been out of practice for over a year - is there any training and development available?

Yes. Once you express your interest for Social Work Together, you will be sent details of how to access our online ‘green room’, which includes webinars, training and resources to support your continuing professional development (CPD).

17. I’ve been out for more than two years; can I express an interest?

Yes. Please enter details about your role and experience, and local authorities will review what you can offer and how this can best match their needs.

18. I'm not a registered / qualified social worker but keen to help. Can I register my interest here too?

The Social Work Together campaign is designed to support social workers to return to work.

If you have experience of working in a caring capacity and wish to support the local response to coronavirus (COVID-19), please register with the Department of Health and Social Care's ['Care for others. Make a difference'](#) campaign.

19. If I'm furloughed, can I get another job?

You can work somewhere else if your contract with your current employer lets you. Getting a new job won't affect your furlough pay.

If you get a new job, you should make sure you can go back to work for the employer who furloughed you when they decide to bring you back.

20. Do I need a DBS check?

For those who have recently left the profession, you may already have a valid DBS check. For those returning to work and who have not had a recent DBS check, there are arrangements in place to expedite the DBS check for re-registration and waive the fee.

Employers will be leading the DBS checks and if you are approached about a role, you should notify them if you need one.