

# Transcript: Career Options with a Health and Social Care Degree

## Getting Started

Hello, welcome to this careers podcast: career options with a Health and Social Care degree. I'm Catrin, one of the Open University's Careers and Employability Advisers.

We'll be covering today the range of career options in the health and social care field; why spotting appropriate jobs can feel more complex than in some related fields and ways to explore some of the career options for you; some concrete jobs you might be interested in, and others you could look at when you've got more experience.

But what we won't be looking at in this first podcast is the whole range of other graduate opportunities that you can apply for with your degree. You may not know that some 70% of graduate jobs are open to graduates of every discipline, from Maths and Health and Social Care to Law and German Studies. I hope that might be a topic for another podcast.

This is the first in a series of our careers podcasts and it's my first podcast, so I'm really keen to get feedback; whether you listen to the end and act on all the suggestions or if you leave in the first two minutes, it would really help to just have brief feedback. How was this for you? Was it too long, too garbled? Was the topic pitched wrongly? And also what other topics might be useful? So whenever you leave the podcast please do take a minute just to give me some feedback, because that would make a big difference.

As you'll know, the situation in the health and social care sector is different in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, England, so what I've chosen to do here is to give some broad messages which are applicable everywhere. But beware: a note that of course you're going to personalise and contextualise this for your own situation.

And I know lots of people listen to podcasts to go to sleep! Hopefully this isn't one of them. It could be good to pause at regular intervals; maybe to stop and think, where does this apply for me? So I will be suggesting breaks for a pause, but obviously do pause it wherever it feels best for you.

So: what is the situation? What are the career options with a Health and Social degree? As you know, the degree is preparing you for non-clinical roles in a health and social care setting. And I know students say – as do students on loads of other degrees – that it's not so easy when you don't have a clear job title like 'Nurse' or 'Solicitor' or 'Social Worker' that you're aiming for.

But briefly, the picture is positive. If you're wanting to work in these sectors, they are very, very major sectors. For example, in England 1.5 million people work in adult social care. That's more people than work in the National Health Service. And its requirements are projected to grow by 50% by 2025 because, as you know, of the ever-more complex needs of the population.

So the sector is very clear: it's going to need good, experienced staff with graduate-level skills to manage these more complex issues, to develop services, to monitor what's going on, to act as team leaders, and managers and senior managers.

Similarly, there are 2.7 million people in England working with children and young people. That's 10% of the English labour market. And again, whether your interest is support to the most vulnerable children and their families, looked-after children, support to mental health needs of children and young people, there will be a need for colleagues and leaders to support and develop this work.

So, I hear you ask, why is it difficult to find these jobs advertised? Well, similar to many other degrees, health and social care graduates are really versatile. Your skills can be applied in lots of different ways, and depending on your interest you can feed into work in several different sectors.

So for example, just to highlight it a bit: in the National Health Service, in social care, in the children and young people's sectors, in community settings, in wider social settings; for example working in criminal justice, probation, and the NGO sector; from mental health issues to homelessness.

So unlike the single National Health Service jobsite for nurses, you're potentially feeding into thousands of employers from tiny residential care homes, small firms, charities, organisations recruiting in your local setting. And they're all recruiting in different ways and they're calling the same job by different names, and because of the values issues which are really, really key in these sectors, lots of the jobs are hidden if you're not already in the networks, because there's a bit of a sense that where you need this kind of expertise to be able to do this job well.

I know from career guidance interviews that many students from different degrees where the jobs are initially hidden to the first view, carry an unspoken fear that that means there aren't jobs out there for them, or not jobs out there for them if they're not a superstar. And I really want to reassure you that's not the case.

There are jobs out there, but as for graduates in marketing, media, journalism, all the other areas where this is also the case, you may need to be more active initially in the creative job search and in making the case for what you offer. And again that will be a topic for a different podcast.

So I now I've hopefully reassured you there are interesting, varied, graduate-level jobs out there for you, take a deep breath with me and let's get on with this work-in-progress, which is looking at what would interest you and what range of opportunities there are out there.