

About the Social and Community Services sector

“I wanted to do something with animals and now I’m looking after kiwi.”

Josh, DOC worker



What’s the work like?

This sector is all about enabling and support. It can be exciting, personally very rewarding, and physically and emotionally demanding. The range of jobs is huge – from monitoring and protecting people and property (as in corrections, defence, or fire fighting) to caring for people in need (as in health care, community and social work, medicine, or therapy). You may be working for the Government or the private sector. You may work outdoors or inside, or moving around from place to place. Wherever you are, you’ll be dealing with people of all ages and walks of life, sometimes working with them very closely indeed. There will be times where you’ll find yourself in fast-changing, challenging situations where you may have to make quick decisions under pressure. Wherever you work you’re likely to be part of a strong, active, and committed team and many of them may be volunteers. Your working hours can vary – people need care 24/7. So depending on your role, you might work in shifts or be on call.

What’s great about this sector?

This is a sector that’s essential for community well-being and safety. You’re helping people at the most critical times in their lives. What you do, and how you do it, matters deeply to them and makes a huge difference to their quality of life. It’s a highly social sector. Even if you work alone you’ve generally got a strong team behind you that supports and depends on you. You’ll make good mates here. This sector is also a really big employer. Your skills can be highly transferable from one workplace to another (in New Zealand or overseas) and even from one career to another.

Why is this sector important?

This is a large and growing sector with jobs and services that are essential for community well-being and safety. It’s a high-employment, high-growth sector and demand workers in these industries is expected to continue in future years. New Zealand’s ageing population will need to be housed, managed, and cared for. There’s a constant demand for more police, corrections, and security officers. The need for immigration, customs, and quarantine officers is also increasing as more people and goods move in and

out of the country and biosecurity threats increase.

Will this sector suit me?

“I’m making a difference for future New Zealanders.”

Andrea, training manager



What qualities will I need?

You’ll need to be able to manage and be responsible for yourself and others. Because the work can be demanding, a level of emotional maturity is required. You’ll be expected to be able to keep cool in a crisis and make quick decisions under pressure. A sense of humour helps as does a good dose of common sense. Because of the physical demands, you’ll do well with a good level of physical fitness. You’ll need to be able to work with and relate to a wide range of people from different cultures and backgrounds. A sense of adventure and courage will serve you in some industries. You’ll need to be comfortable with detail and procedure and happy to document and record what you’re doing so others can follow. You’ll be willing to go the extra mile, will be motivated by personal and not just financial rewards, and willing at times to “live the job”.

What key competencies do employers look for?

Employers will be matching your key competencies to their work place and expect you to be capable of:

MANAGING SELF

- You’ll be expected to be responsible about being on time, have good personal hygiene, and high ethical standards.
- You’ll have the confidence to make decisions, sometimes under pressure, within the guidelines of the job.

RELATING TO OTHERS

- You’ll work well as part of a team, be aware of others’ safety, have good listening skills, be caring of others, and be willing to help, sometimes in difficult situations. Empathy and people skills are really important and you need to be able to relate to people from other cultures and backgrounds.
- You’ll also become more aware of and sensitive to non-verbal communication, reading body language and picking up cues from people who aren’t talking.

PARTICIPATING AND CONTRIBUTING

- You'll have the skills to contribute to team development and team meetings outside of your specific job.
- You'll be able to put the needs of others before your own. You may go the extra mile by taking on additional volunteering activities, such as membership in St John New Zealand or other service organisations.

USING LANGUAGE, SYMBOLS, AND TEXT

- You'll be able to communicate well with people from all walks of life. You will also record observations, make notes, complete audit reports, and measure and calculate accurately.

THINKING

- When you start you'll be able to follow instructions and follow basic procedures. As you move on, you'll be expected to work out how to apply procedures to new and different situations.

Jobs in Social and Community Services

“If you want to get into this sector, show that you’re committed by volunteering for St John or a service club.”



WHAT WORK COULD I DO? »

Find out what type of work you could do, and what roles you could end up in if you took the Social and Community Services pathway.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Careers adviser, community worker, counsellor, psychologist (clinical, criminal justice, educational), funeral director/embalmer, home aide, life coach, early childhood educator, social worker, teacher, support worker, therapist (art, music, occupational therapy, psychotherapy).

DEFENCE

Combat/warfare specialist, communications operator, driver, engineering officer, fire-fighter, gunner/ rifleman, medic, mapmaker, pilot, steward, technician/specialist (aircraft, avionics, electronics, hydrographic, ICT, logistics, supply and others).

EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PROTECTION

Ambulance officer/paramedic, animal control officer, border protection/bio-security officer, corrections officer, criminologist, customs officer, conservation worker/manager, emergency management officer, environmental health officer, fire-fighter, fisheries officer, health and safety inspector, immigration officer, loss prevention officer, parking warden, personal protection officer, police officer/detective, private investigator, probation officer.

HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Nurse (community, district, hospital, mental health, plunket, practice, public health), nurse aide, midwife, health and safety officer, health care assistant, health promoter/educator, caregiver, rest home manager.

What industries could I work in?

Public sector, education, healthcare and medicine, community and social services, defence, emergency services, protection and security, Whānau Ora.

Where might I end up?

This is a sector where you’ll get continual development if you want it. No matter what level you enter, you can progress quickly if you are committed to your job and willing to take on further study. You could start off as a support worker or recruit and work your way up to being a team leader, crew leader, or manager. Or start working as a hospital orderly and study and work your way to becoming a nurse. With core skills and experience in one industry you will be able to change careers by moving into a related industry.

JOB PROFILES FOR THE SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SECTOR »

Browse listings of jobs, link to information on the Careers New Zealand website, and see what level of qualification you might need for different jobs in this sector.

There are a huge number of roles and occupations available in this sector, ranging from entry level through to high level.

NCEA level 2 is the minimum you need for entry level jobs or apprenticeships. This gives you a good foundation in the skills and competencies you will need to go further. For other roles, you'll definitely need to further your education after school by undertaking tertiary study or training on the job.

More information about all the roles listed here can be found on the [Careers New Zealand website](#), along with key information about the job, what it pays, and current opportunities.

To find out the pay, prospects, and study costs of a number of jobs you can also check out the [Occupation Outlook](#).

The asterisks in the following table show the level (or levels) of qualification usually associated with the role.

Sometimes you need a specific qualification to get into a job, but in many areas you can work towards higher qualifications by learning on the job. Check out the [job profiles on Careers NZ](#), or talk to your careers advisor to find out more.

	2	3–4–5	5–6	7	8–10
	NCEA LEVEL 2	CERTIFICATE	DIPLOMA	DEGREE	POSTGRADUATE DEGREE
Acupuncturist				*	
Air Force Airman/Airwoman	*	*	*	*	
Air Force Officer	*	*	*	*	
Ambulance Officer			*		
Anaesthetic Technician			*	*	
Anaesthetist				*	*
Animal Attendant	*	*			
Army Officer	*	*	*	*	
Army Soldier	*	*	*	*	
Audiologist/Audiometrist			*	*	*
Biomedical Engineer				*	*
Biomedical Technician (Mechanical and Electronic)			*	*	
Biosecurity Officer			*	*	
Building Inspector	*	*		*	
Cardiac Technician			*	*	

Chiropractor				*	
Clinical Coder	*	*			
Community Karitane		*			
Community Worker	*		*		
Conservator					*
Corrections Officer					
Counsellor			*		
Curator					*
Customs Officer	*		*	*	
Dental Assistant	*	*			
Dental Hygienist				*	
Dental Technician				*	*
Dental Therapist				*	
Dentist				*	*
Diagnostic Radiologist				*	*
Dietitian				*	*
Dispensing Optician		*			
Diversional Therapist	*	*			
Early Childhood Teacher			*	*	
Education Adviser				*	*
Elected Government Representative	*	*	*	*	*
Emergency Management Officer					
Environmental Health Officer				*	
Environmental Scientist				*	*
Firefighter	*	*			

Fishery Officer	*		*		
Foreign Policy Officer				*	*
Forensic Scientist				*	*
General Practitioner					*
Gynaecologist/Obstetrician					*
Health and Safety Inspector		*		*	
Health Promoter	*		*	*	
Health Services Manager				*	*
Immigration Officer	*			*	
Interpreter	*		*	*	
Judge					*
Kaiwhakaako Māori				*	*
Librarian			*	*	*
Library Assistant		*	*		
Medical Laboratory Scientist				*	*
Medical Laboratory Technician		*			
Medical Radiation Technologist				*	*
Medical Radiation Therapist				*	*
Midwife				*	
Minister of Religion	*		*	*	*
Nanny/Child Carer	*	*			
Natural Health Therapist	*	*	*		
Navy Officer	*		*	*	
Navy Sailor	*	*	*		
Nursing Support and Care Worker	*		*		

Occupational Therapist				*	
Optometrist				*	
Osteopath					*
Parking Warden					
Pathologist					*
Pharmacist				*	
Pharmacy Technician		*			
Phlebotomist	*		*		
Physician					*
Physiologist					*
Physiotherapist				*	
Podiatrist				*	
Police Officer	*		*	*	
Policy Analyst				*	*
Primary School Teacher			*	*	
Private Teacher/Tutor				*	
Probation Officer	*		*	*	
Psychiatrist				*	*
Psychologist				*	*
Quarantine Inspector				*	
Radiation Oncologist					*
Ranger					
Recreation Co-ordinator	*		*	*	
Registered Nurse				*	*
School Principal				*	*
Secondary School Teacher				*	*

Security Officer/Guard	*	*			
Social Worker			*	*	
Special Education Teacher				*	*
Speech-Language Therapist				*	*
Statistician				*	*
Sterilising Technician		*			
Surgeon					*
Teacher Aide			*		
Teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)			*	*	
Tertiary Lecturer				*	*
Translator		*	*	*	*
Urban/Regional Planner				*	*
Veterinarian				*	
Veterinary Nurse			*		
Youth Worker	*	*	*	*	
Zookeeper		*			
Zoologist				*	*