Education Welfare Officer

Introduction

Education welfare officers identify and deal with problems that prevent children from attending school or making the most of their education. They are employed by local education departments and social services departments.

Also known as

- Welfare Officer - School Attendance
- School Attendance Officer
- Social Worker - Education Welfare
- Truancy Officer

Work Activities

Education welfare officers identify and deal with problems that prevent children from attending school, or making the most of their time there. They deal with a range of problems, including under-achievement, behavioural problems, exclusion from school and truancy.

There are many reasons why a child doesn't go to school. They may be the victim of bullying, or they could be having family problems. Perhaps the child cannot cope with schoolwork, because of a difficulty such as dyslexia.

Education welfare officers attempt to make sense of what can be complicated reasons for pupils' problems at school. Officers and teachers discuss the history and possible causes of problems, such as non-attendance or challenging behaviour.

Officers are often responsible for several schools within an area. As well as pupils and teachers, they work with social services, educational psychologists, and school health and careers services. Education welfare officers also visit pupils' homes to talk with their parents.

Officers try to solve problems through encouragement and advice, rather than by taking an authoritarian approach. However, if there is no other option, they may have to use education supervision orders and parenting orders. If these orders are ignored, parents/carers are at risk of prosecution.

By working with doctors and educational psychologists, officers find out whether a child has special needs. This could be due to a physical, learning, emotional or behavioural problem, for example.

If a child is absent for a long time through illness or exclusion, education welfare officers help to arrange alternative education.

Being able to read, write and speak Welsh may be an advantage when you're looking for work in Wales.

Personal Qualities and Skills

As an education welfare officer, you need:

- Good communication and interpersonal skills.
- Patience, empathy and tact.
- An investigative mind.
- Thorough knowledge of issues in education, such as bullying, special needs, disaffection and exclusion.

You should be able to:

- Organise your caseload.
- Monitor and prioritise your own work.
- Support and advise pupils and parents.
• Work closely with teachers, social workers and other professionals.
• Find the cause of problems such as truancy, under-achievement and challenging behaviour.
• Implement creative solutions to these problems.
• Work to deadlines and targets.

Travel throughout the local area is usual, therefore a full driving licence can be a requirement of the job.

Pay and Opportunities

Pay
Pay rates for education welfare officers vary.

The pay rates given below are approximate.

Education welfare officers earn in the range of £17,000 - £22,500 a year, rising to £27,500 - £32,000. Higher earners (team leader and management roles) can make around £35,000 - £41,000 a year.

Hours of work
Education welfare officers work around 40 hours from Monday to Friday. However, there may be early starts and late finishes. Part-time opportunities are also available.

Where could I work?
Opportunities for educational welfare officers occur throughout the UK.

Employers are local authority education departments or social services departments.

Where are vacancies advertised?
Vacancies are advertised in national newspapers, on job boards, on employers' websites, at Jobcentre Plus and on the Universal Jobmatch website.

Entry Routes and Training

Entry routes
Many entrants are trained social workers. Entry to social work is via a three-year degree in social work. Some entrants have qualifications and experience in a related area such as teaching, youth work or counselling.

For most posts, you also need at least one year's experience of working with children and families or in a related field.

An Advanced Level Apprenticeship is also a great place to start.

Training
Education welfare officers usually undergo further training as part of their professional development. This could include completing the degree in social work, if not already held.

Progression
With experience, education welfare officers may progress to supervisory and management positions. Some move into related areas, such as social work, youth work or the probation service.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act
This career is an exception to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that you must supply information to an employer about any spent or unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings, if they ask you to. This is different from other careers, where you only have to reveal information on unspent convictions if you are asked to.

Qualifications
For entry to a degree in social work, the usual minimum requirement is:

- 2/3 A levels
- GCSEs at grade C/4 or above in 2/3 other subjects. Maths and English are often required.

To get onto an Advanced Level Apprenticeship, you'll usually need 5 GCSEs at grade C/4 or above, including English and Maths, or to have completed an Intermediate Level Apprenticeship.

Other qualifications, such as a BTEC Level 3 qualification or the International Baccalaureate Diploma could also be considered. However, course requirements vary, so please check college/university websites very carefully.

Some universities accept the Welsh Baccalaureate as equivalent to 1 A-level.

**Adult Opportunities**

**Age limits**

It is illegal for any organisation to set age limits for entry to employment, education or training, unless they can show there is a real need to have these limits.

**Courses**

If you don't have the qualifications needed to enter your chosen degree course, a college or university Access course could be the way in. No formal qualifications are usually required, but you should check individual course details.

**Distance learning**

Oxford Brookes University offers, by distance learning, a postgraduate certificate, diploma and MSc in Children, Young People and Family Wellbeing.

**Funding**

Funding is normally available from social services departments for existing staff to take further training or research. Bursaries, administered by the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA), may be available for full-time and part-time students who are not funded by their employer.

**Statistics**

- 32% of those in occupations such as education welfare officer work part-time.
- 32% have flexible hours.
- 8% of employees work on a temporary basis.

**Further Information**

Professional institutions have the following roles:

- To support their members.
- To protect the public by keeping standards high in their professions.

For more information on the institution(s) relevant to this career, check out the contacts section.

**Contacts**

- **LGjobs**
  Local government vacancies
  Website: [www.lgjobs.com](http://www.lgjobs.com)

- **myjobscotland: Scottish local government vacancies**
  Scottish enquiries
  Website: [www.myjobscotland.gov.uk](http://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk)

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• **Skills for Care & Development (SfC&D)**  
  Skills for social work, social care and children's services  
  Address: 2nd floor, Westgate, 6 Grace Street, Leeds LS1 2RP  
  Tel: 0113 2411240  
  Email: sscinfo@skillsforcareanddevelopment.org.uk  
  Website: [www.skillsforcareanddevelopment.org.uk](http://www.skillsforcareanddevelopment.org.uk)

• **Caring Careers**  
  This site is a 'Skills for Care and Development' initiative  
  Website: [www.caringcareers.org.uk](http://www.caringcareers.org.uk)

• **NHS Business Services Authority**  
  Website: [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk)

• **Local Government Chronicle (LGC)**  
  Publisher: EMAP  
  Website: [www.lgcplus.com](http://www.lgcplus.com)

• **British Association of Social Workers (BASW)**  
  Address: 16 Kent Street, Birmingham B5 6RD  
  Tel: 0121 6223911  
  Email: england@basw.co.uk  
  Website: [www.basw.co.uk](http://www.basw.co.uk)

• **Careers Wales - Welsh Apprenticeships**  
  Tel: 0800 028 4844  
  Website: [ams.careerswales.com/](http://ams.careerswales.com/)

• **Local Government Careers in Wales**  
  Website: [www.lgcareerswales.org.uk](http://www.lgcareerswales.org.uk)

• **Welsh Local Government Association**  
  Website: [www.wlga.gov.uk](http://www.wlga.gov.uk)

**Related Careers**

• Nursery Nurse  
• NVQ Assessor  
• School Lunchtime Supervisor  
• History Teacher  
• Geography Teacher  
• Modern Foreign Languages Teacher  
• Teaching Assistant  
• Music Teacher  
• English Teacher  
• Maths Teacher  
• Science Teacher  
• Playworker  
• Special Educational Needs Teacher  
• Art and Design Teacher  
• Design and Technology Teacher  
• Early Years Teacher  
• Physical Education Teacher  
• Primary Teacher  
• Secondary Teacher  
• Training Officer  
• Further Education (FE) Lecturer  
• Higher Education (HE) Lecturer  
• School Business Manager  
• Teacher of English as a Foreign Language  
• Lecturer  
• Teacher
• Welsh Teacher