

Make a difference

Social work in West Berkshire



WestBerkshire
COUNCIL

Thank you for considering working in West Berkshire

Now is a great time to be thinking about pursuing a social worker career in West Berkshire and joining our Children and Families Team to make a difference.

There is a Council-wide commitment to our service being good in the quality of our child and family centred practice, good in our impact on children and families and good as a place to work.

We are serious about supporting our social workers- our new enhanced support package includes a paid sabbatical, a £15k retention bonus after three years service and access to supervision among other benefits.

We have a strong vision in our Children's Services for our most vulnerable children including those looked after by the local authorities itself to achieve outcomes that are every bit as good as their peers across all areas of their lives. We don't just want to recruit people to fulfil a function but select those who share our values and our vision. We believe that relationships are at the core of social work and as we see people invest in West Berkshire we believe in investing in them to develop their skills and knowledge to achieve their full potential. We offer a range of career pathways including progression as a practitioner or manager, and we also have a great track record of developing our own workers.

If you are in the least bit interested, take the time to come and meet with us- people who do are usually keen to be a part of our team!

Dr Mac Heath
Head of Children and Family Services



Our Benefits Package for Social Workers

Offering the best possible support to social workers

We want our social workers to feel valued, secure and supported so that they in turn offer the best possible service to children and families in West Berkshire.

To help us achieve this, we've put together a generous and wide-ranging benefits package for our social workers in Children's Services.

Our new offer to Social Workers in our Contact, Advice and Assessment Service, Locality, Looked After Children's and Disabled Children's Teams:

- A retention bonus of £15,000 after three years of service
- Three months paid sabbatical leave after three years of service
- Access to supervision
- Free car parking
- Access to car loan scheme
- Essential Car User status (including a monthly lump sum allowance and free parking at council offices)

Our further offer to all social workers, including Family Placement Team, Family Resource Service, Leaving Care Team, Youth Offending Team and Short Breaks Service:

- Relocation expenses of up to £8,000
 - Generous annual leave package
 - Fully supported first year in practice as part of our Academy for Newly Qualified Social Workers
 - Good quality and regular supervision
 - Access to a range of relevant training
 - Opportunities to develop and become a Senior Social Worker
 - Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)
 - A range of discounts offered to staff by local shops, cafes and health clubs
 - Family friendly policies and processes
 - Long Service Awards
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Working in Children and Family Services

Testimonials from our managers and social workers about working with West Berkshire Council

Rashida Baig, Principal Social Worker

I have been in West Berkshire for two years. Although the nature of my role has been translated in many different ways in different local authorities, it's a testimony to West Berkshire that supporting social workers and first and second line managers is seen as key. This allows us to thrive and grow in our professional roles, and more importantly improves outcomes for the children and families we work with. The messages from frontline practice are fed back to the Senior Management Team on a continual basis. This feedback, in turn, influences strategic planning and the vision for West Berkshire as the best place to work and practice our professional craft, with children and families at the centre of what we do.



Clare Fox, Assistant Team Manager



I've been with West Berkshire for nearly four years now, in the Contact, Advice & Assessment Service, where no two days are the same. There is a great focus on career development here, and I've had management support and encouragement as I moved from social worker, to senior social worker to my present role. We have access to good training opportunities above and beyond statutory training. Senior managers are very visible here and you can always access a service manager. We also have really good links with other services which helps joint working.

As a mother of two children I have found West Berkshire Council to be flexible as an employer, helping me balance home and work.

I would encourage people to apply and to take a look at our new retention package, which is excellent.

Kim Gibson, Newly Qualified Social Worker

I've been here about eighteen months, and qualified last year. Since then, I've been in the West and Central Locality Team. During my supported year in practice I've had lots of different learning experiences. It's a really supportive team and we all help each other; no-one is left to struggle on their own. We really do have good management support and senior managers who are really interested in good practice and our cases. On top of that we have great multi-agency working and services provided to support us.



Natalie Morgan, Assistant Team Manager

I've been working here at West Berkshire Council since June 2015 in the West and Central Locality Team. I really enjoy being part of a team where there's a high value placed on working together and on peer support; everyone is friendly, and there are plenty of opportunities to socialise together away from the day job. I also really appreciate our supportive and approachable senior management team.



The structure of the way we work enables our social workers to produce quality assessment work, and there's a good training programme available for workers to promote our continuous professional development. We're also focussing on developing Newly Qualified Social Workers via the assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE) scheme that's benefiting a number of employees, and we're excited about our new retention package which makes us feel very valued.

On top of these things, West Berkshire is a lovely area to work in. Our team is based in Newbury, an old market town, five minutes from a lunch-time look around the shops, and these things do add to your enjoyment of your work!

Our role

West Berkshire Council provides important local services for around 155,000 people across the district. We provide education, housing and social services; we're responsible for roads in the area and we provide rubbish, recycling and other waste services. As well as these critical services we also make sure there are other local amenities such as libraries, leisure centres, a museum and our Grade II listed Shaw House.

Our people

Choosing to work for West Berkshire Council gives you the opportunity to work in your community, for your community. It can give you a real sense of achievement and the satisfaction that you're able to make a difference to local people. Here's what our staff tell us:

- More than 70% of our staff feel a sense of personal achievement through their work
- Around 70% of staff are motivated to do the best they can
- Around 66% are proud to work for West Berkshire Council

In a large, sometimes complex and fast-changing working environment, these are figures we're really proud of.

What is it like to work for West Berkshire Council?

Managers and elected members take employees' views seriously. We conduct an anonymous staff survey every two years to find out what our employees think about the organisation and its management. This survey helps us to compare ourselves against other local government employers, as well as looking at how our actions have changed the way staff feel about their work.

In 2015 71% of our staff responded to the survey, telling us that two thirds were proud to work for the council, would recommend it as a good place to work, and felt that working here motivated them to do the best work they could. Over 85% of people felt well-informed about what we're trying to achieve as a council. Managers are seen to communicate openly and honestly and to provide motivation to achieve at work, which shows that our employee appraisal system is working effectively. Employees appreciate the training that is provided for them to do their jobs. There is also a good team ethic at the council with 86% of staff telling us that their colleagues co-operate well to get the work done. Cooperation between teams is seen as good too. Three quarters of staff consider that health

and safety is taken seriously, and well over two thirds tell us that they are able to strike a good work-life balance.

We hold an annual celebration event each June to recognise the achievements of individuals and teams in the council. At this event, we also present awards (certificates and gift vouchers) to long-serving members of staff, and celebrate the achievements of those who have gained academic and professional qualifications during the year. Hosted by the Chief Executive and Councillors, it's a very enjoyable and positive way to celebrate the hard work that everyone puts in.

We take equality and diversity seriously, and all our staff receive training in this area as part of their induction programme. Our recruitment and selection processes can be adjusted to take account of any adjustments needed to allow individual applicants to take part. We guarantee an interview to any applicant with a disability who meets the minimum skills, qualification and experience requirements for the job as part of the Two Ticks scheme. In our staff survey, 80% of employees felt that the council was good at respecting individual differences, such as culture, background, working styles etc.

How to Apply

Application Forms

All applications must be made using a West Berkshire Council application form. You will receive an automatic confirmation to your email address that your application has been received once you have submitted your application form to us.

We do not accept applications by CV.

Use the search facility **www.westberks.gov.uk/workforus** to find a role that interests you.

Read the job description and person specification carefully before deciding whether the opportunity is right for you.

Select "apply online" in order to apply for the vacancy. If you haven't already registered you will be asked to register an account with us.

Children and Family Services Social Care Recruitment

Information and advice on working for
Children and Family Services Social Care

e-mail: CSCrecruitment@westberks.gov.uk

Telephone: 01635 519785

Join our family at **www.westberks.gov.uk/socialwork**



Children and Family Services

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