

Finding out about community learning and development

The community learning and development industry is part of the lifelong learning sector, represented by Lifelong Learning UK Sector Skills Council, which also includes: further education; higher education; libraries, archives and information services; and work-based learning. The sector as a whole currently employs over 1.2 million people in a range of educational institutions, as well as public and private sector organisations.

The community learning and development industry comprises staff working in community based settings, in for example: community based adult learning; community development; community education; development education; family learning; working with parents; and youth work. Much of the activity in the industry is voluntary.

Key facts:

- There are 334,041 people working in the community learning and development industry across the UK.
- In England, 7% of the workforce is employed full-time, 45% are seasonal/hourly paid, 40% work part-time.
- In England, 91% of the workforce described 'teaching' as their main activity.

Jobs in the industry include: community development worker, community education officer, youth worker, youth support worker, youth work manager, family learning practitioners; parenting practitioners

Entry and progression

Entry requirements and progression in the industry are varied. To become a community development worker or youth support worker, applicants need practical experience of working in the community or voluntary sector. Volunteers do not require any qualifications, as training will be available on-the-job or gained through work-based (or college based) qualifications. Youth support workers can go on to complete professional training part-time or by distance learning.

Community education officers, depending on the job, will usually need: a further education teaching qualification and experience; a youth and community qualification and experience; or to have gained paid or voluntary community education or development experience. A higher education degree in, for example, educational studies, community education or communication studies can be an advantage.

Most youth workers in England have a qualification validated by the National Youth Agency and from 2010 all new qualifications in youth work are at degree level or higher in England. Entry without a higher level qualification is possible, but applicants must commit to a programme of training.

There are a range of industry endorsed courses (at foundation, undergraduate and post-graduate), apprenticeships, training schemes and vocational qualifications.

For job specific entry requirements, job profiles should be consulted.

Workforce statistics

Number of UK employees: 334,041

[N.B. The following data are for the community learning and development industry in England.]

Gender: 24% male, 76% female

Age: 22% of the workforce is 40 years or under

Employment trends and future prospects

It is estimated that the size of the lifelong learning workforce as a whole will increase from 2008 to 2015, so significant recruitment will be required during this period.

As the lifelong learning sector relies on voluntary workers and a high proportion of publicly funded positions, the recession is unlikely to impact the estimated demand for the workforce as severely as the private sector. However, it is expected that there will be an overall decrease in available funding, which will affect employment figures.

Skill requirements and shortages

The main skills required in the industry are:

- Management and leadership
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills
- Other constituency specific skills, including partnership working, outreach skills and the ability to promote social inclusion and empower communities

Some skills shortages are around the professionals and support staff.

Occupational trends

In some areas, there is a demand for ethnic minority youth workers, male youth workers and parenting practitioners. More qualified staff are required for certain jobs, including:

- Community development workers

- Community education officers
- Youth worker and youth support workers

National and regional data

East Midlands – There are an estimated 17,391 people in the community learning and development workforce (including youth workers) in the region.

East of England – There are an estimated 16,890 people in the community learning and development workforce (including youth workers) in the region.

London – There are an estimated 33,223 people in the community learning and development workforce (including youth workers) in the region.

North East – There are an estimated 10,239 people in the community learning and development workforce (including youth workers) in the region.

North West – There are an estimated 21,499 people in the community learning and development workforce (including youth workers) in the region.

South East – There are an estimated 35,528 people in the community learning and development workforce (including youth workers) in the region.

South West – There are an estimated 20,081 people in the community learning and development workforce (including youth workers) in the region.

West Midlands – There are an estimated 17,914 people in the community learning and development workforce (including youth workers) in the region.

Yorkshire and the Humber – There are an estimated 25,810 people in the community learning and development workforce (including youth workers) in the region.

Northern Ireland – There are an estimated 27,212 people in the community learning and development workforce, of which over 72% are female. Around 23,305 are in youth work, of which 91% are volunteers (37% of the volunteers are male). 20% of paid staff in youth work are employed full-time. There is a shortage of women at senior levels.

Scotland – There are an estimated 58,802 people in the community learning and development workforce (including youth workers) in the region.

Wales – There are an estimated 49,452 people in the community learning and development workforce (including youth workers) in the region.

Salary levels

Pay scales in this industry are variable, so the following only provides an indication of the average annual salary levels:

- Community development worker £15,000 - £30,000 depending on experience
- Community education officers £20,000 - £23,000, senior posts up to £30,000
- Youth worker £18,000 - £35,000 (depending on experience)
- Youth support worker £13,000 - £16,000

- Youth work manager £35,000 - £60,000

Career paths

Job profiles from [Next Step](#) and case studies from [LLUK UK](#)

Further sources

[Lifelong Learning UK](#)

[Standards Verification UK](#)

[Third Sector jobs](#)

[National Youth Agency](#)

[National Council for Voluntary Youth Services](#)

[Community care jobs](#)

[Jobs 4 Youth Work](#)

[National Academy for Parenting Practitioners](#)

[Do it – volunteering](#)

[National Council for Voluntary Organisations](#)

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