A Career in Social Work

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What comes into your mind when you think of Social Workers?
Any of the following?

- Counselling
- Help people, fix their problems
- Take your children away
- Do-gooders
- Bleeding hearts
- Work with poor people
Social Work recognises the complexity of interactions between human beings and their environment, and the capacity of people to be affected by multiple influences upon them including bio-psychosocial factors. The social work profession draws on theories of human development and behaviour and social systems to analyse complex situations and to facilitate individual, organisational, social and cultural changes.
Social Work Values

- Empathy – ‘putting yourself in other person’s shoes’
- Respect for client’s right to self determination – what the client wants is most important, not what I want as a social worker
- Strengths focused
- Trust building
- Non-judgemental attitude
- Anti-discriminatory practice – doesn’t matter who you are or what you have
Social Work Skills

- Communication & Counselling skills
- Problem solving skills
- Organisational skills
- Advocacy skills
- Self-awareness of own life experiences
- Political analysis of poverty and marginalisation
Social Work Activities

- Interviewing / Meeting people
- Making assessments
- Co-coordinating services
- Counselling
- Child welfare & protection
- Multi disciplinary working
- Risk assessments and safety planning
- Groupwork
- Regular supervision
Specialist Areas

Child and Family Services
Probation and Welfare
Mental Health
Addiction Services
Social Work with the elderly
Medical Social Work
Disability Social Work
Domestic Violence Services
Some typical cases....

- Medical SW running a group for diabetes management for teenagers
- Learning Disabilities SW supporting new parents with a diagnosis of Downs Syndrome
- Child and Family Social Worker assessing a family where the children are reported by school to be dirty, have no lunches and are frequently bruised
- Probation Officer doing a report for a judge to determine if someone is suitable for community service rather than a prison sentence
- Fostering Social Worker training foster carers in management of challenging or violent behaviour
- Medical Social Worker doing assessment of a family where child has received an unexplained burn
Limits to Social Work

- The work is stressful
- Lack of resources is frustrating
- Social work is at risk of becoming like ‘social policing’ rather than a ‘helping profession’
- Media and public perception is very negative
What professional qualification do you need?

Social Workers must be registered with CORU, registration body for the profession. To be registered as a Social Worker you must have a National Qualification in Social Work. It is a widely recognised qualification allowing Irish social workers to work in many different countries. It is an integrated academic and professional training, including practice placements.
How to Apply

- **School leavers** must apply through the CAO system. There is one undergraduate Bachelor in Trinity College Dublin. Otherwise a Masters in Social Work can be obtained from Trinity, UCD, UCC, NUIG. A common pathway to the Masters in Social Work is a Bachelor in Social Studies or in Social Care.

- **Mature students** (23+ years) with no third level qualifications must apply both through the CAO form and through individual application forms to the individual colleges. Interview/Experience relevant.

- **Applicants with relevant third level qualifications and practice experience** may be eligible to enter the courses at a later level. Eligibility is dependent on availability of places on courses, applicants' qualifications and interview.
Further course information available from:

- **TCD**: School of Social Work and Social Policy.  
  T: 01 608 2001 / Website: [www.socialwork-socialpolicy.tcd.ie/](http://www.socialwork-socialpolicy.tcd.ie/)

- **UCC**: Dept. of Applied Social Studies, Cork.  
  - T: 021 4902 228 - Website: [www.ucc.ie](http://www.ucc.ie)

- **UCD**: School of Applied Social Science.  
  T: 01 716 8511 / Website: [www.ucd.ie/appsocsc/](http://www.ucd.ie/appsocsc/)

- **UCG**: Dept of Political Science, Galway.  
  - T: 091 524411 ext 2027 - Website: [www.nuigalway.ie](http://www.nuigalway.ie)
More Information

Irish Association of Social Work
www.iasw.ie

The Irish Association of Social Care Workers.
www.iascw.ie

CORU – Regulating Health & Social Care Professionals
www.coru.ie
What is Social Care?

Social care practice is a profession where people work in partnership with those who experience marginalisation or disadvantage or who have special needs. Social care practitioners may work, for example, with children and adolescents in residential care; people with learning or physical disabilities; people who are homeless; people with alcohol/drug dependency; older people; or recent immigrants to Ireland.
The money bit ......

- Professionally Qualified Social Worker
  €38,819 - €51,200 approx

- Social Worker, Team Leader
  Up to €65,506 approx

- Social Worker, Principal
  Up to €78,500 approx

- Social care worker (with qualification)
  €29,993 - €39,875
Is it for you? Can you see yourself as having the ability to....

- Establish relationships with a wide range of people?
- Engage people in solving their own problems and help them to build on their own strengths?
- Address problems by taking all factors into account to set and achieve goals?
- Work as part of a multidisciplinary team?
- Manage stressful situations?
- Adapt to a variable work environment/schedule?
Summary

✓ Social work is a varied, challenging & rewarding career.

✓ You must be aware of how your own life experiences have affected you.

✓ A political analysis of disadvantage is important.

✓ Good ‘people skills’ are essential. It is important to empathise with people and be non judgemental.

✓ Try some voluntary work & see how you get on.
Thank you!

Ask me any questions you like….today or at a later stage….

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