

A Career in Housing

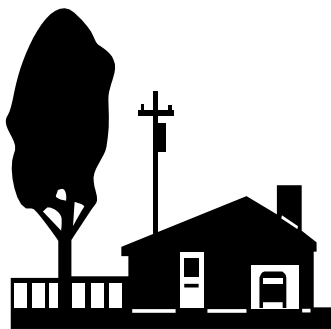
What is Housing Work?

Many people who live in a house they own themselves (or their parents own) think 'housing' is only about house prices, mortgages and estate agents. But for a start, one third of the population live in rented housing, and will be concerned about rents, how secure they are and what obligations their landlord has. In Britain there are over five million homes owned by housing associations and local councils. They are often rented to people on low incomes, the elderly, or people with special needs. Rented housing like this needs people who will manage it and provide the services that its customers need. This is where the housing professional comes in.



More than 150,000 people are employed in housing and housing management within the UK. Most of these work for local authorities and housing associations. However, housing jobs can also be found with housing trusts, co-operatives, voluntary organisations, the private sector and commercial bodies and in other public service departments such as social services and health authorities.

But what is housing work? It takes many forms, from giving advice to homeless people on how they can go about getting a house, to collecting rents, assessing repairs on a house, allocating houses to tenants and even to running a multi-million pound organisation responsible for thousands of houses in one area. The work will vary depending upon the particular functions of the housing organisation, its size and location. Housing stock and social conditions vary from one city to another and between urban and rural areas, which affects the nature of housing work.



There have been many changes in the housing sector over the last few years – growing owner occupation, the rise in homelessness and repossessions, the increasing importance of housing associations, the growth of tenant managed housing and recently, a recognition that housing professionals need to work with other public services to regenerate the communities in which people live.

If you choose to work in housing, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that your contribution really matters, because everyone needs somewhere decent to live. This is why many people are attracted to housing work from

other fields, as well as when starting a career. The work is not easy and often challenging, but the rewards in terms of fulfilment are high.

What sort of People work in Housing?



All kinds! But you are more likely to be suited to the work if you have the following skills and attributes:

An interest in people's living conditions; strong communication and negotiation skills; organisational skills; flexibility and adaptability to a variety of different situations; ability to work on your own initiative and under pressure; a desire to take on responsibility; an interest in developing new skills; an understanding of people from diverse cultural backgrounds and with different needs.

Do I Need to be Qualified to Work in Housing?

More and more organisations require or encourage staff to acquire housing qualifications. As the professional organisation for people who work in housing, the Chartered Institute of Housing offers a flexible and accessible range of housing qualifications for housing workers at all levels and a variety of membership grades to reflect study and experience.

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