Reaching Out

Changing Lives
With more than 10,000 people working in over 400 Voluntary Welfare Organisations in Singapore, the Social Service industry prides itself as a meaningful and vibrant sector to work in. The careers featured share a common aspiration: to make a positive difference.

But how exactly do they make a difference?
The diverse professions in social services strive towards ensuring people have the opportunities to live a life of dignity to his or her fullest potential.

In their own special ways, social service professionals bring renewed hope, dignity and confidence back to communities in need.

Read on to find out what it means to bring out the special in people...

...And if you have the passion and commitment to do the same.
Social Workers work with clients to evaluate possible options and to develop a plan of action to help people through issues of poverty, domestic violence, crime, drug abuse, divorce, problem gambling etc. Social workers spend their time working with not only individuals, but also with their families, local authorities and relevant institutions to come up with solutions that help individuals live better.

As a Social Worker, you will learn proper case management techniques to actively assist individuals who are dealing with complex social, health or psychological issues. Often, you will be put through situations where your patience and tact are required, as you assess and evaluate their problems using analytical frameworks. You will need to earn their trust in order to help them.

The truth is, it can be disheartening seeing people who are lost and scared every day. But if you are passionate about helping those in need, your reward will be knowing the lost and the scared have found hope in your assistance.

**Minimum Qualification**

Bachelor or Graduate Diploma in Social Work from:
- The National University of Singapore (NUS)
- SIM University (UniSIM)
- Social work qualifications that are obtained from overseas must be accredited by a recognised accrediting body in the year in which the qualifications were awarded. Please refer to the Social Work Accreditation Board website for more information - [http://accreditation.sasw.org.sg/](http://accreditation.sasw.org.sg/)

**Accreditation for Social Workers**

All Social Workers in Singapore are encouraged to be accredited through the Social Work Accreditation Board ([http://accreditation.sasw.org.sg/](http://accreditation.sasw.org.sg/)).

Through accreditation, the Board aims to ensure the professional standards of Social Work practice, promote continuing education and improve the professional image of Social Workers.

If you are a mid-career executive looking to switch to Social Services, you can do so through the Professional Conversion Programme! Learn more about how you’ll be funded, trained, and re-skilled at [www.socialservicejobs.org.sg](http://www.socialservicejobs.org.sg)
Social Workers are empowered to help the marginalised people in our society and make an impact in their lives.

Jean Koh
Senior Social Worker
What can I look forward to as a Social Worker?

As Social Workers, you work with diverse population groups such as children, youth, families, elderly and people with disabilities. You also get to work in varied practice contexts such as child protection services, community-based family services, special schools, residential homes etc. Social Workers can also find themselves contributing in different capacities from ground work with individuals, families and communities to policy-making, administrative roles or in research, advocacy and training.

You are also encouraged to keep your skills relevant through various professional training and development schemes available. For those interested in furthering their education, the VWO-Charities Capability Fund (VCF) provides training grants for postgraduate training in Social Work [http://www.ncss.org.sg/VWOcorner/pcg_supportacq.asp](http://www.ncss.org.sg/VWOcorner/pcg_supportacq.asp).

Social Workers with leadership potential are identified and groomed for higher responsibilities through the Professional and Leadership Development Scheme (PLDS). Social Workers who have been working for over 5 years can take advantage of the Sabbatical Leave Scheme (SLS) that offers 10 weeks of paid leave and support of up to $30,000 for professional development.

For Social Workers with potential to hold senior leadership roles, the Social Service Talent Development Scheme (SSTDS) provides a comprehensive development programme to hone either their specialist skills or leadership readiness.
Progression Pathways for a Social Worker

Possible Specialisation Areas:
- Children, Youth and Families
- Eldercare and Welfare
- Disability
- Rehabilitation and Protection
- Psychiatric and Mental Health

ITE NITEC in Community Care and Social Services
→ SSI Diploma in Social Service
→ SSI Higher Diploma in Social Service
→ SSI Diploma in Disability Studies

A Levels
→ Polytechnic Diploma

SIM University (UniSIM)
Bachelor of Social Work
or
Bachelor of Social Work (Honours)

National University of Singapore (NUS)
Bachelor of Arts (Social Work)
or
Bachelor of Social Science (Honours) (Social Work)

First degree in any discipline with relevant experience

NUS
Graduate Diploma /Masters in Social Work
or
UniSIM
Graduate Diploma /Masters in Social Work

Social Worker
Social Work Associate
Nurul Syarryzan bte Suhaimi

I look forward to continuing my work in this sector and build up on my foundation skills and knowledge towards helping others.

Nurul Syarryzan bte Suhaimi
Social Work Associate
Social Work Associate

Working closely with Social Workers, Social Work Associates also work in varied practice contexts where they offer support in welfare, case co-ordination and counselling to the community.

As a Social Work Associate, your knowledge and skills will be put into use to co-ordinate and implement programmes for clients and volunteers. Whether carrying out home visits with Social Workers, following up on cases, or giving referrals, your greatest value comes from being the first point of contact for many who are helpless and unsure. Like Social Workers, you will get to interact with a wide range of population groups and your patience and understanding will be the key in helping you understand your clients’ needs.

**Minimum Qualification**
- Diploma in Social Sciences (Social Work) by Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP)
- Higher Diploma in Social Service by Social Service Institute (SSI)

**What can I look forward to as a Social Work Associate?**
Social Work Associates may also take up positions in other roles like programme executives, volunteer co-ordinators and community development executives.

Those aspiring to work their way up to become a Social Worker can receive funding support to study for a Social Work degree at approved institutions. ([http://www.ncss.org.sg/VWOcorner/pcg_supportacq.asp](http://www.ncss.org.sg/VWOcorner/pcg_supportacq.asp))

You can choose to work with children, youth, families, people with disabilities, or the elderly. At Social Services, your employment opportunities are plentiful!
Social Service Assistant

Social Service Assistant is a term covering a number of job titles, including House Parents, Welfare Officers, Therapy Aides, Health Care Attendants, Nursing Aides and Home Care Workers. They team up with professional staff in their respective work and provide assistance which cannot be done without.

As a Social Service Assistant, where you work will depend on your interest. If you enjoy working with children, you could be a Houseparent at Children’s Home. Some of your responsibilities with the children would include supporting the childrens’ physical care and ensuring their social and emotional development needs are met.

If you are more comfortable working with adults or the elderly, you could choose to be a Therapy Aide, Nursing Aide or a Health Care Attendant. These careers will put you in places like Community Hospitals, Nursing Homes or Day Care Centres. As a Therapy Aide, you will assist Therapists in the performance of specialised exercises. Or if you choose to be a Nursing Aide, you will support Health Professionals by performing routine duties like serving medicine. As a Health Care Attendant or Home Care Worker, you will provide administrative support to Health Professionals and also serve clients by attending to their nutritional needs and ensuring their safety and well-being.

The lives you are caring for need your assistance because they cannot do so themselves. If you wish to help these people, this career could be right for you.

**Relevant Qualifications**

- NITEC in Community Care and Social Services (ITE)
- Diploma in Social Service by Social Service Institute (SSI)
- GCE O / N level

Social Service Assistants who aspire to move on to professional positions can upgrade their qualifications and further their careers. Admission to programmes to acquire relevant qualifications will depend on one’s performance, aptitude and also meeting the necessary admission criteria to the relevant institutions of higher learning. For instance, Social Service Assistants who aspire to professional positions can upgrade their qualifications as shown in the following page.

The Social Service industry supports four key causes;

- Helping People with Disabilities Lead Independent Lives
- Dignifying the Lives of the Elderly
- Nurturing Children to Succeed
- Keeping Families Together
The greatest joy that I receive in my job is when I see my elderly clients smiling with happiness.

Ng Gek Peng
Care Staff
Progression Pathways for a Social Service Assistant
People require counselling for many reasons like relationship problems, family issues, depression or death of a loved one. But contrary to beliefs, Counsellors are not there to tell others what they need to do. Counsellors are there to help people with their problems, needs and difficulties, by encouraging clients to explore their options and eventually make their own decisions for a positive change.

A big part of being a Counsellor involves active listening and helping clients discover their strengths to overcome the difficulties. At times, a Counsellor has to teach clients some strategies or skills to increase their capabilities and problem solving skills. As a Counsellor, you will need to build trust and help clients feel comfortable enough to open up about their problems and feelings. Your job involves providing a safe and confidential space for discussion, without letting your accumulated experiences affect the way you work with the client, nor allowing the client’s difficulties affect your personal life. This can be a personal and professional challenge because it means having to confront your own feelings such as sadness, fear, etc. But if you are up for it, the satisfaction is tremendous when your time and dedication has resulted in putting a person’s troubled life back on track.

Registration
Counsellors are encouraged to register with the Singapore Association for Counselling (SAC). Requirements as recommended by the SAC can be found at www.sac-counsel.org.sg

What can I look forward to as a Counsellor?
In most cases, you would counsel people individually, but you could also work with couples, families or groups. Counsellors can also specialise in various branches of counselling, such as solution-focused therapy, cognitive-behavioural therapy, educational counselling, addiction counselling, and more. These areas of specialisation serve as platforms for professional development or identification of new areas of therapy and the provision of such treatments.

Weave the career path you desire! With promising job prospects, you could rise through the ranks to senior positions if you demonstrate the required performance, potential and expertise.
It gives me a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction when I see others have a positive change in their life.

Chen Sheue Ling
Assistant Director
Psychologist

Psychologists, like Counsellors, work towards the goal of mental and emotional wellness for their clients. The differences lie mainly in their training, qualifications and approaches. Psychologists provide scientific assessments, as well as prevention and intervention measures to enhance the functioning and well-being of both individuals and organisations.

As a Psychologist, you would get to see and work with people for a variety of reasons including addictions, phobias, trauma and even loneliness. Through your expertise in the human mind and behaviour, you can help these individuals better comprehend the problems, and assist them in creating positive changes for a better quality of living.

Psychologists are one of the rare professions qualified to help people establish new ways of behaving or to provide practical support to help individuals overcome issues.

Your significance comes from your valued ability to identify, evaluate, and provide intervention within the community where you practise, such as counselling centres, family service centres, social service agencies, special schools, hospitals or rehabilitation agencies. If you have a genuine desire to help the everyday people make sense of the chaos in their lives, this could be the career for you.

Minimum Qualification
A basic degree in psychology would enable you to start off in this profession but you will need a postgraduate degree to be a registered Psychologist. Degrees from the following universities are accepted:
- National University of Singapore (NUS),
- Nanyang Technological University (NTU)
- Singapore Management University (SMU)
- An accredited foreign tertiary institution

Registration
To become a Registered Psychologist with the Singapore Psychological Society, you will need to obtain a post-graduate degree in Applied-Psychology and appropriate practical training from an accredited university. For more information, please visit www.singaporepsychologicalsociety.org.

What can I look forward to as a Psychologist?
As a Psychologist, you can specialise in an area of interest like clinical, educational and counselling psychology. Postgraduate educational opportunities such as master’s and doctoral programmes are also available locally and overseas.
My greatest satisfaction as a psychologist is when, through providing intervention and supporting their needs, I see my students grow and fulfil their potential.

Bernice Lee
Psychologist
Early Intervention Teacher

Not all children in this world are born equal—some are born with special needs that slow them down from keeping up with society. Fortunately, Early Intervention (EIPIC) Teachers are here to help children with special needs, aged six years and below, in their development during their critical early years.

EIPIC Teachers are a specialized group of educators trained to help young children with physical, sensory, developmental and intellectual disabilities manage and overcome their shortcomings. As an EIPIC Teacher, you will work with parents, caregivers and other specialists to map out Individual Education Plans for the children. You will also plan class curriculum and conduct learning activities that will enhance their development and maximize their potential for eventual integration into the community.

Extraordinary children do not happen by themselves. If you strongly believe that young children with special needs deserve the guidance and support in their formative years, this life-changing career could be perfect for you.

Minimum Qualification

- Advanced Diploma in Early Childhood Intervention (Special Needs) by Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP)
- Diploma graduates from the following relevant disciplines start off as teacher trainees:
  > Diploma in Early Childhood Education or Child Psychology and Early Education by Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP)
  > Diploma in Early Childhood Studies by Temasek Polytechnic (TP)

What can I look forward to as an Early Intervention Teacher?

As an EIPIC teacher, you can look forward to prospects for promotion to supervisory and planning roles in early intervention centres if you possess the required competencies, experience and performance.

“\nIt is wonderful to see the progress my students make. In fact they sometimes teach me more than what I teach them.

Felicia Ng
EIPIC Teacher

The social service sector has a workforce of over 10,000 and grows at an average of 1-3% annually.
Like EIPIC Teachers, Special Education Teachers are trained to work with children with disabilities like autism, dyslexia, and other forms of physical and intellectual disabilities. After six years old, some of these children may progress to Special Education Schools, where Special Education Teachers are there to lead them on their learning paths.

Special Education Teachers develop specialised training programmes to help students learn according to their individual needs and pace. Other than reading and learning, you will also be planting basic but essential life skills like hygiene and safety so they can be self-sufficient when they grow up.

In your life, there was probably one teacher who taught you more than homework. Maybe that teacher encouraged or motivated you. More importantly, they made you feel you were worth every bit the time and effort as your peers. The right teacher can make a huge difference in a student’s motivation. If you believe these disabled children and youth deserve equal opportunity to reach their highest potential, be a Special Education Teacher and help them along on their journeys.

**Minimum Qualification**
- Diploma in Special Education by the National Institute of Education (NIE)

**What can I look forward to as a Special Education Teacher?**
You are encouraged to keep abreast of current knowledge through continuing courses and seminars available. Special Education Teachers can look forward to progression as senior teacher, Head of Department and Principal of a special education school with the requisite qualifications, experience and performance.
This sector gives you the opportunity to use your creativity to make a difference to the less fortunate in our society.

Keith Lee
Director, Elderly Services
Managers and Executives

The Social Service industry needs their Managers and Executives as much as their Psychologists or Therapists. The smooth running of any organisation requires the knowledge and experience of capable people from a diverse field like finance, human resources and other operational areas.

Uncertain of how you can contribute?
Your proficiency in numbers will keep accounts transparent for stakeholders.
Your talent in public relations will ensure that the much-needed awareness for the organisation is built.
Your forte in marketing will help non profit organisations raise vital funds for sustainability.
Your motivation will come from knowing every task performed is towards improving the lives of individuals in need. If you are seeking deeper meaning in your job, the Social Service sector could be suitable for you. Depending on interests and experience, the following management and executive opportunities await you:

Managerial Positions
- Executive Directors
- Centre Managers
- Principals/ Vice-Principals of Special Schools

Executive Positions
- Marketing/ Fundraising Executives
- Finance Executives
- Human Resources Executives
- Communications/Public Relations Executives
- Administrative Executives

Qualifications
- A Level or Diploma Holders
- Degree or post-graduate qualification in the relevant discipline

By 2030, 19% of our total population will be of the elderly. This means one elderly in every five persons!
Physiotherapist

There are many reasons why a person may have limited physical functioning and mobility. For example, patients who have suffered a stroke may require physiotherapy to help them relearn normal movements such as walking, standing or sitting. Or athletes with injuries may need rehabilitation before they can return to their sport in the shortest time possible.

Physiotherapy helps people of all ages, from newborns to the elderly, to improve or restore their physical movements after it has been affected or lost due to injuries, illnesses or disabilities. Physiotherapists assess and treat a variety of conditions associated with the cardiovascular, musculoskeletal, neuromuscular and respiratory systems of the body.

Losing the ability to do basic things like sitting up or walking can be upsetting and highly frustrating. As a Physiotherapist, you will provide customised treatments, and person-centred rehabilitation that addresses individual, social and environmental factors. With your patience and encouragement, clients will regain more than just movement; they will get their confidence back.

Meaningful, action-packed, diverse, challenging and interesting- these are just some words to describe the Social Service experience. Your work will never be monotonous as Singapore’s social landscape continues to transform.
Physiotherapy is not just a job, it is a vocation. There is a sense of fulfillment knowing that I played a part in someone’s road to recovery.

Pauline Koh
Senior Physiotherapist
Following an injury or illness, a person’s ability to perform self-care, leisure or work tasks may be impaired. By assessing the client’s general health, medical history, and even visiting the client’s home or workplace, the Occupational Therapist figures out how to help clients increase independence in their daily living and working environment.

Occupational Therapy is about helping people develop, recover, or maintain daily living and work skills. As an Occupational Therapist, you could be working with your clients in places like early intervention centres, special schools, rehabilitation and residential programme for people with disabilities.

You would devise treatment programmes based on their individual needs and lifestyles. Your work could include teaching stroke patients how to bath and dress themselves; how to use a computer or to prepare and eat food. If you think getting people back on their feet is a worthwhile challenge, then maybe being an Occupational Therapist is for you.

If you think Social Service professionals are poorly paid, think again! Since 2012, the government has poured in an additional $6 million a year to ensure salaries of the professionals are comparable to their peers in other sectors.
As an Occupational Therapist I can do something meaningful and make a positive impact in the lives of others.

Tay Hwee Lin
Principal Occupational Therapist
Communication is not just important; it is absolutely necessary in all aspects of life. Other than being able to understand what the other person is saying, communication also helps you express what you need and feel. Speech-Language Therapists are concerned with the various speech, language, communication and swallowing disorders in children, adults and elderly.

People who require Speech-Language Therapy could be people born with or have developed speech related disabilities or speech impairments such as delayed development, autism, hearing loss, intellectual disabilities, brain damage or emotional problems. In this job, you would treat and support people with communication problems, swallowing problems and reading and writing difficulties by first assessing their specific difficulties and later developing specialised therapy programmes for them to cope.

Usually you will be working on a one-on-one basis, or in groups, at places such as early intervention centres, special schools and rehabilitation centres. You may also get to work at therapy hubs which provide therapy support to a wide range of social services across the island. If you have interests in language and communication methods, you could possibly do well as a Speech-Language Therapist where you will help people maximise their ability to be heard.

In Singapore, an astounding 1,800 social service programmes are being offered by over 400 Voluntary Welfare Organisations to help the needy.
As a Speech Therapist, I aim to make a difference and improve the quality of life for people with communication difficulties.

Rajeev Ranjan
Speech Therapist
Registration
Therapists (OT/PT/SLT) who are practising for the first time in Singapore must be registered with the Allied Health Professions Council (AHPC) before commencing work. More details on the registration process can be found here: http://www.healthprofessionals.gov.sg/content/hprof/ahpc/en/leftnav/becoming_professionals.html

Minimum Qualification
Physiotherapist
- Diploma in Physiotherapy by Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP)
- Degree from an accredited foreign university

Occupational Therapist
- Diploma in Occupational Therapy by Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP)
- Degree from an accredited foreign university

Speech-Language Therapist
- Master of Science – Speech and Language Pathology by National University of Singapore (NUS)
- Degree from an accredited foreign university

What can I look forward to as a Physiotherapist?
You can choose to specialise in diverse areas of practice such as geriatrics, paediatrics, neurological rehabilitation, musculoskeletal physiotherapy and health care management. Senior Therapists could be involved in clinical supervision, provision of consultation services or embark on community education or outreach projects. They may move on to management positions or take on teaching and research roles.

What can I look forward to as an Occupational Therapist?
You can develop a niche and specialise as a clinical specialist in physical rehabilitation, community healthcare, paediatrics or psychosocial rehabilitation. Like senior Physiotherapists, Senior Occupational Therapists may occupy management positions or take on teaching and research roles.

What can I look forward to as a Speech-Language Therapist?
You can specialise in different areas of practice, such as, speech disorders, language disorders, swallowing disorders, voice disorders and fluency disorders among children and adults. You can also move on to management roles such as running services, forming policies and conducting research or take on a teaching role.
Extensive Professional Development & Continuing Education Opportunities

Funding support is available for local and overseas training to build competencies necessary to improve management and governance in the social service sector. Social service professionals can look forward to extensive professional development through local courses, external accredited courses and industry attachments.

Extensive continuing education opportunities are available at various levels through NITEC, Diploma, Degree and post-graduate qualifications. Scholarships are also offered for studies in key professions required by the sector.

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The term making a difference may take different forms for different people, but over at social services, it is simply about empowering individuals and improving the quality of lives.

If you are excited and passionate about being part of a transformative sector, we want you.

If you can recognise how valuable your own experience and knowledge are, and decide to let others benefit generously from it, we want you.

It takes someone special to see the special in others - it takes conviction, passion and plenty of heart. With your expertise and innovative thinking, you have the potential to help create a community where people feel supported in times of need.

Are you ready to get involved?
Great! Because there is no way we can do this alone.

Find out more about social services, its careers, remuneration, and available positions at www.socialservicejobs.org.sg

Acknowledgement
NCSS wishes to thank the following agencies for their kind participation in the development of this booklet:

Asian Women’s Welfare Association
Care Corner Family Service Centre (Queenstown)
Cerebral Palsy Alliance Singapore
NTUC Eldercare Co-operative Ltd
Singapore Children’s Society
St Luke’s ElderCare Ltd – Hougang
The Society for the Physically Disabled
National Council of Social Service (NCSS) is the leading and coordinating agency for the social service sector in Singapore. We work in close partnership with member voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs), to identify service gaps, enable them to pioneer new programmes and set best practice guidelines. Our aim is to continually enhance the quality of social services for the disadvantaged. We work closely with VWOs for better management and delivery of social service programmes. The objective is to stretch the charity dollar so that more people can benefit from the quality services provided.

**Purpose**

To ensure that every person has the opportunity to live a life of dignity to his or her fullest potential within society.

**Mission**

To provide leadership and direction in social services, enhance the capabilities of social service organisations, and promote strategic partnerships for social services.

We will continue to build our own capability, including strengthening the research component, to equip the sector in the areas of operational readiness, quality enhancement and assurance, enabling the VWOs to fulfill their roles as service providers with more effective reach and better outcome for their clients.

NCSS also recognises the importance of investing in human capital to build a strong social service sector, with resources being allocated for the continuous growth, training and recognition of manpower.

For more information, visit [www.ncss.org.sg](http://www.ncss.org.sg)

**Community Chest**

Community Chest raises funds to support VWOs in programmes to help the disadvantaged and distressed. Visit [www.comchest.org.sg](http://www.comchest.org.sg) for more information.

**Social Service Institute**

As the appointed Continuing Education & Training (CET) centre, the Social Service Institute takes on the strategic and leadership role in driving training efforts for the social service and non-profit sector. Visit [www.socialserviceinstitute.sg](http://www.socialserviceinstitute.sg) for more information.
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OUR OPERATING HOURS
Mon – Fri: 9:00am to 6:00pm
(extended hours on Tue & Wed to 8:00pm)
Closed on Sat, Sun and Public Holidays

Visit www.socialservicejobs.org.sg for more information.