

Are you a free-range worker? Does the thought of being tied to a desk and talking to a computer all day just fill you with fear? How about helping people to live independently in their own homes whilst receiving the support they need? Domiciliary jobs may be just the solution for you. This specific form of care work will have you travelling in your community and working with those who want to stay living at home, despite their particular difference in needs.

So just what is a domiciliary job and what will I do in one?

Fundamentally, domiciliary jobs are those where you provide health care and support to people who still live in their own homes. If you want to get more specific, it all depends on the focus of the organisation you work for and your personal professional interest.

Domiciliary jobs are available to nurses, support workers, health care assistants and other health care professionals too. If an individual has health care needs, you can guarantee they'll need one or more of the above to visit. Furthermore, there are the administrative and managerial positions to consider – someone's got to make it all happen and tell the team which houses to visit!

If you choose to work in domiciliary care administration, your daily duties will be similar to any administration job. Confidentiality and safeguarding will be even more crucial than in other jobs as it concerns vulnerable people; you may also find that there is quite specific software to get used to (like rota compilation software).

Manager and director domiciliary roles are, again, similar to the managerial or director work you'll find in any business but you need specific, demonstrable and high-quality care sector experience. On top of standard business management, your day-to-day competencies will include communication with health care professionals, strong theoretical understanding of social care and the legislative understanding to match it.

Should you choose to apply for the domiciliary jobs that involve you visiting houses, your duties are very different.

Entry-level support work is the meat and bones of domiciliary care – these jobs are some of the most important as these workers are the one who actually go and support people. You'll be given a rota of places to visit within a certain shift and each individual will have specific support needs. You might visit them in the morning to help them with their getting-up routine; at lunch-time to help cook a meal or in the evening to support them with hygiene and settling down for bed again. Constant needs are nourishment, hygiene, household work and medication. Other needs may involve support for family visits, trips out for shopping or socialising and visits to health care providers.

Finally, there are the domiciliary jobs for health care professionals. Nurses are needed for support with specific issues (like diabetes) or for more general health care needs (like catheterisation, wound dressing, alternative feeding methods and injections). Other health care professionals (sometimes known as the Allied Health Professions) are also very much needed for domiciliary care jobs. Trained chiropodists are needed to provide foot care; occupational health therapists are needed to make sure that an individual's house is safe and supportive; prosthetist workers help individuals who need medical aids and opticians and audiologists are needed for home hearing and sight tests.

If you are specifically trained for a certain job, there's no guarantee that there will be a domiciliary care job ready and waiting for you – these kinds of jobs will be found with the bigger organisations that cover a large area!

Is there much career progression in a domiciliary job?

There is some to be found – progression is always a clear path in care and support work but competition can be an issue. After all, you may have anything from ten to eighty support workers, or even more! If all your co-workers are jockeying for position, this could be a problem.

However, on the other hand, many people work support roles because it's a convenient mesh with the rest of their life needs, leaving you space to move up to senior or team leader work. After a few years at the level and completion of an NVQ3 or similar, you can consider taking a managerial position with more responsibility.

Once you've gotten several years experience at *this* level, the care world can give you a few options. Either you take over as a general manager for an organisation (or area manager for a bigger, national organisation) or you consider opening your own service.

Some support workers also find that their experiences inspire them to retrain as a health care worker. You might consider working as a nurse, occupational therapist, physiotherapist or psychologist – it all depends on what catches your fancy!

Finding that domiciliary vacancy

If you're ready to start looking now, just scroll up to the top of this page and start having a look at our vacancies. There's plenty out there and bound to be one just right for you – good luck!