

Public Sector Careers



There are 5.4 million people working in a public sector role in the UK. Jobs within the public sector span a huge range of careers, from central and local government, to those in teaching, health and social care and the police force. The public sector is widely regarded as a secure and well trusted job.

As the sector is so varied there is no one “ideal” candidate and depending on the role you are applying for you may find that you need some specialist knowledge or relevant experience in order to make a successful application. However, what is true is that any person applying for a position in the public sector must be determined, strong-willed, and most importantly of all, passionate about what they do.

The people who work in the public sector actively shape the world we live in and by choosing a career in the public sector you'll get to work on issues that have a real impact on society.

Types of roles

Broadly, opportunities within the public sector can be categorised into three main areas;

Central Government

Civil Service; there are opportunities for employment across all departments within central government although the five largest government departments, the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Defence, and Home Office, Department for Work & Pensions and Revenue and Customs employ approximately 85% of all civil servants. Most civil service graduate schemes accept any undergraduate degree although some departments such as legal or finance may require specific degrees. Some civil service roles also have strict nationality entry requirements

There are opportunities within the civil service in most regions of the UK. Working conditions are generally good and secure employment and a generous pension and benefits package make this a attractive career choice for many people. You can build your skills and develop your career through continuous professional development. (CPD) At a more senior level, some roles are more stressful and you may have to work to tight deadlines and carry a high level of responsibility.

The civil service runs its own graduate scheme [Civil Service Fast Stream](#) . The scheme rotates graduates through departments, training them in leadership skills to work in high level roles to support the government of the day to implement its policies across the UK. The scheme is highly competitive, especially the places within the diplomatic service. Most candidates are unsuccessful in their first application and some choose to spend a period of time working in the civil service in other roles to

improve their chances in future applications. The [Civil Service jobs listing board](#) contains all the roles available. Many positions within the civil service are only open to people who are current employees, so a strategy of taking an entry level position to get in to the organisation and moving on to a different one shortly afterwards could be used to good effect.

Parliament; there are many vacancies for people who wish to be involved in the [running of parliament](#) or job vacancies and internships [working directly for an MP](#).

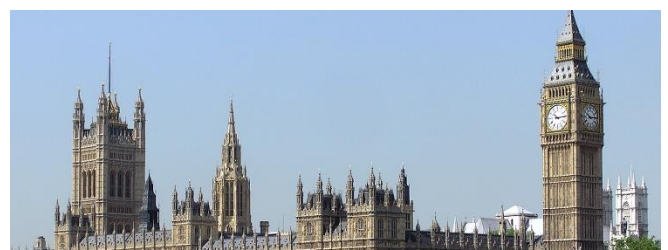
Science and Engineering students can apply to the [Defence Engineering and Science Group \(DESG\)](#), part of the Ministry of Defence, which seeks to improve the technology used by the UK's armed forces.

For law students The Government [Legal Trainee Scheme](#) offers legal trainee places in the following departments:

- Government Legal Department
- HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC)
- National Crime Agency (NCA)
- Competition & Markets Authority (CMA)

For Maths and Business Students The [HMRC graduate programme](#) needs people with the potential to become part of the highly trained cadre of tax professionals who tackle the most challenging aspects of tax work in HMRC.

Local Government



Local government provides services such as education, housing, and environmental services within designated regions. It is responsible for services across a whole county, for example; Education, Transport, Planning, Fire and Public safety, Social Care, Waste Management. Roles can also be found in areas including:

- architecture, heritage and housing
- environmental health
- media and communications
- social services
- surveying and town planning
- Trading Standards
- Youth and community work

Within local government there are opportunities to work more directly with front line services and have a direct and positive impact on your local community. There are lots of regional and local opportunities. Opportunities are listed on <https://www.lgjobs.com>.

The [National Graduate Development Programme](#) is a two year graduate scheme run by the Local Government Association. It fast tracks graduates into management roles and trains them to lead critical projects and services. Example projects include reducing homelessness, caring for vulnerable children and regenerating areas characterised by crime and poverty.

Other Public Services

The NHS is the largest employer of healthcare professionals. Roles include paramedics, administrators as well as healthcare managers and other allied professional services. There are a number of graduate schemes including [NHS Graduate Management Training Scheme](#) which introduces you to health service management and supports you to develop your management skills and provides hands on practical experience through structured work placements.

The [NHS Graduate Digital, Data & Technology Scheme](#) which is a fast track for STEM graduates interested in the field of health informatics.

The [NHS Scientist Training Programme](#) for Science and Engineering graduates interested in working in a senior healthcare science role in clinical bioinformatics, life sciences, physical sciences, biomechanical engineering or physiological sciences.

Law Enforcement & Security roles are wide and varied from Border Force Officer to Environmental Health Practitioner. Not all roles offer graduate

schemes but those that do look for a strong history of relevant work / volunteering experience.

There are a range of graduate schemes and roles for analytical and technical graduates within the [security services](#).

The [Unlocked Graduate Programme](#) is a two-year leadership development programme aimed at training graduates as prison officers. You'll build skills through a bespoke training programme, alongside working with prisoners to identify and implement actions and strategies that will help them break the cycle of re-offending.

[Police Now](#) offer two graduate programmes.. The [National Graduate Leadership Programme](#) and The [National Detective Programme](#) Competition can be fierce and the entry requirement exacting. Evidence of leadership skills and a high level of resilience are required.

Social Care: jobs within this sector span a range of careers. The services the social care sector provides to society are vital and it is in constant need of qualified, skilled graduates. You can work with individuals, groups or communities in diverse settings such as schools, hospitals, care homes, prisons and youth clubs. Roles include:

- Child Psychotherapist
- Drug and alcohol worker
- Family Support Officer
- Diversity and Inclusion Officer
- Probation Officer
- Social Worker
- Housing Policy Officer
- Educational Psychology
- Play therapists

Social Work: Emotional resilience patience and a passion for helping others are essential qualities for anyone considering a career in social work. Jobs often carry high levels of responsibility and so experience of working with diverse groups is key to a successful application. Formal work experience can be difficult to find however, volunteering within the local community can help build relevant skills and experience. Social Work is a graduate profession and there are various routes into qualification. There are a number of [postgraduate masters courses](#) available through universities. There are two graduate schemes. [Frontline](#) focusses on children and families and [Think Ahead](#) is focussed on mental health social work.

Teaching and Education

There are wide range of opportunities across primary and secondary settings for graduates to work as teachers. Passion for your subject, resilience and enthusiasm as well as a genuine desire to work and help young people are key requirements for success in this field.

The [Teach First Graduate Scheme](#) gives you a internationally recognised qualification and helps to develop strong leadership skills to help you progress in your career.

There are also routes into teaching through schools direct and university PGCE courses. For more information visit the [Get into teaching](#) website.

Work Experience

Finding relevant work experience can be difficult for roles within the public sector. However, there are a number of ways that you can build your skills and experience.

Volunteering is something that most organisations within the public sector will look for on a successful application. Through volunteering you can demonstrate your ability to work with diverse groups and develop strong communication and leadership skills. Getting involved in student societies taking a committee post or being a course representative or student ambassador will also help you develop relevant skills especially around communication, problem solving and collaborative working. You can find out more about volunteer opportunities at Royal Holloway by signing onto the [RHUL volunteering portal](#).

The Civil Service also offers the six to nine-week, paid **Summer Diversity Internship Programme (SDIP)**, aimed at disadvantaged, disabled and ethnic minority students and graduates. The **Early Diversity Internship Programme (EDIP)** offers a week of work experience for first-year students hoping to find out what a Fast Stream placement is like.

Further Resources

- [Target jobs.co.uk](#)
- [Prospects.ac.uk](#)
- [Civil Service jobs](#)
- [NHS Jobs](#)

