

Guide to...

‘Helping People’ Careers

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Introduction

Choosing a career can seem overwhelming. There is no ‘crystal ball’ to tell you your perfect career, in fact there are likely to be a number of careers that might suit you. Making career decisions is about understanding yourself and having an awareness of the type of opportunities out there.

If you are reading this guide then presumably you have already considered you want a career that involves ‘helping people’. This guide aims to assist you in defining what ‘helping people’ means to you and considers a spectrum of ‘helping careers’.

Please also refer to our ‘**Guide to Career Direction**’ to assist with further career decision making and planning.

‘Helping People’ – what does this mean?

Part of making a decision about a career that helps people is to define what ‘helping people’ means to you. We could argue that the majority of careers help people in some way. For example, an ecologist conducting surveys to monitor species and their habitats is helping people to understand more about ecology through their research; a curator is helping people to engage with an arts or museum exhibition; or an accountant is helping people in business manage the finances.

To help define what ‘helping people’ means to you, consider asking yourself the following questions:

When have you helped?

- When have you been involved in helping others before (if applicable)? (*this could include helping family members, friends, as part of a volunteer role, within a job*)
- What did you enjoy about helping others?
- What aspects of your previous experience of helping others might you want to see in your future career?

Regardless of whether or not you have had any personal or professional experience of helping others, **in your future career...**

Who are you helping?

- Are you helping colleagues or people you work with?
- Are you helping people who work in businesses or other organisations?
- Are you helping members of the public who might be accessing a service?
- If you want to help members of the public in some way, are there types of ‘client groups’ you want to help (*e.g. young people, older people, carers, offenders, disabled people etc*) or do you want to work in a role where you could be helping people from a range of backgrounds and with a variety of personal circumstances?

Why are you helping?

- What are your personal motivations to help others?
- Why do the people you are helping need help?
- Do the people you help need support because of their personal circumstances or do they need support within their professional lives?

How are you helping?

- Are you helping by taking action and doing something on someone's behalf?
- Are you helping by giving advice and/or guidance?
- Is the way in which you help on a 1:1 basis or a group basis?

Where are you helping?

- Are you helping while working for a private company, a public organisation or a charity?
- In what types of settings might you be helping?
- Are you based in the same setting, or might your role involve travel or moving to different locations?
- What types of organisations might you see yourself working for, or could you be helping people on a self-employed basis?

What does your helping career look like?

- Do you envisage a career in which you are working in *one role* that is focused on 'helping' others or might you consider a 'portfolio' career where you have a *number of different roles* at any one time, of which one is a helping role? (*for example, you might work three days a week as Furniture Designer and two days a week helping with teaching design in a college*)
- Could your helping career be a volunteer role (alongside other paid employment)? (*for example, you might be working full-time as a Marketing Executive but volunteer for St John Ambulance helping people at large events and festivals*)

Spectrum of 'helping people' careers

As mentioned above, given that the majority of careers could be considered to be helping people in some way, it might be beneficial to think of 'helping careers' as being along a spectrum. **Which parts of the spectrum interest you and why?**



(Image source: Far left image from <http://gratisography.com/> with all other images sourced at <https://unsplash.com/>)

'Helping' Careers

We have looked at a spectrum of what it could mean to work in a 'helping career'. The spectrum above is grouped into broad career areas that might involve direct public contact and those unlikely to involve direct public contact.

In considering this spectrum, many might typically think of a helping career as one which is working directly with members of the public in some way. Often individuals might consider a 'helping career' one that *directly supports individuals or specific client groups* in their personal lives, with the added notion that without that support the individual or specific client groups would struggle.

A helping career that focuses on supporting individuals or specific client groups in their personal lives might span a range of industries/sectors. Here are some examples of industries/sectors, along with examples of job titles or job areas that could be considered 'helping' careers (note: this is **not an exhaustive list!**);



Please be aware that job titles may vary according to the individual organisation or sector you wish to work for. It is important you do your own research and make use of the '**Guide to Career Direction**' to help with your career decision making.

For further ideas and resources:

- Target Jobs 'I want a career helping people': <https://targetcareers.co.uk/careers-advice/choosing-your-career/385829-i-want-a-career-helping-people-what-are-my-options>
- Prospects Job Sectors: <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/browse-sector>

Further Support from Bath Spa Careers

If you would like further support from Bath Spa Careers & Employability go to **bathspa.ac.uk/careers** to see the ways in which you can access our service, including workshops and events, appointments and to access our extensive range of resources.

You can also contact Careers Reception on 01225 875525 or at careers@bathspa.ac.uk.

Please note that Bath Spa Careers does not endorse particular organisations.

(This guide was last updated in Summer 2019).

GET A HEAD START

We're here to help you get a great start to your career. We're open all year round, so come and visit us in the Careers Space, book an appointment, or get in touch.

Careers Space, SL.G04
Steward's Lodge

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www.bathspa.ac.uk/careers

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Every effort has been made to ensure the information in this leaflet is accurate but we recommend that you check all details carefully.

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