



Could you be a Social Work Ambassador?

Who are Social Work Ambassadors?

Social Workers are qualified professionals who work with individuals and families to help improve outcomes in their lives. This may be helping to protect vulnerable people from harm or abuse or supporting people to live independently. Social workers support people, act as advocates and direct people to the services they may require. Social workers often work in multi-disciplinary teams alongside health and education professionals.

Social Work Ambassadors are enthusiastic practitioners who are passionate about working in the social work profession and want to share their experiences with those who are considering a career in the profession and those who do not understand the social work role. This is to support these individuals to gain a better understanding about what social work involves and to communicate the valuable and unique role of the social worker within our communities and wider society.

The **Social Work Ambassador Scheme** is part of a wider initiative already in place in Northern Ireland which aims to improve public awareness of social care and social work as rewarding, valuable and long term career options. A range of social work employers and education providers have come together with the NISCC to ensure all stakeholder perspectives are represented and to help identify potential Social Work Ambassadors.

Social Work Ambassadors will work to foster pride in their profession and to counter the negative myths which are often associated with the profession.



What is the role of Social Work Ambassadors?

As a Social Work Ambassador *your* main responsibility will be to raise the profile of the social work profession and to strengthen the social work identity. You will do this by engaging in one or more of the following activities:

- Giving formal presentations
- Providing information talks or discussions for example: at University Open Days
- Engaging in interactive group activities
- Supporting an information stand at events
- Supporting work experience placements
- Facilitating guided workplace visits
- Participating in publicity/media activities

What support will I receive?

When you first sign up to become a Social Work Ambassador you will receive training before you begin delivering ambassadorial activity.

You will learn about the role and responsibilities of an ambassador, what resources there are to help you in your role and to support you to plan your skills development.

Who benefits from Social Work Ambassadors?



How will this help Social Workers?

- It will help Social Workers develop their skills and foster pride in their profession.
- It will help Social Workers develop their unique identity within multi-disciplinary teams.
- It will help Social Workers develop leadership skills and become mentors for other Social Workers.
- **For those choosing to be Social Work Ambassadors, it can be used to accrue credits for a Professional in Practice submission and/or PRTL requirements.**

How will this help those who are considering a career in Social Work?

- The Social Work Ambassador provides a first-hand, current picture, of what it's like to work in social work.
- It provides the opportunity to ask questions and check understanding of social work.
- It offers valuable and up to date information that will help people to make informed career decisions.

How will this help Social Work education providers?

- It will help them attract more informed applicants who have a clearer understanding of what the role entails.
- It will help them attract applicants with the right value base.
- It will encourage wider representation across gender and ethnic minority groups.

How will this help Social Work employers?

- It will help employers promote the unique role of the Social Worker within multi-disciplinary teams.
- It will help develop Social Workers' skills and foster pride in their profession.

How will this help people who use social work services?

- They will be supported by professionals who have the right values and skills to provide high quality care services.
- They will be supported by professionals who clearly understand their unique role within the social care sector.
- They will be supported by individuals who are motivated and proud of their profession.

OK – I'm interested!

What's next?



Talk to your line manager/employer to find out if they want to join the Social Work Ambassador Scheme. They may already be involved as part of the Ambassador Scheme Employer Reference Group.

Then contact Mairead Harkin, Workforce Engagement Officer at the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) at mairiad.harkin@niscc.hscni.net who will tell you more about what's involved and assist you/your employer to get signed up.