

NSW Department of Community Services

Helpline Caseworker

WHO WILL I BE WORKING FOR?

The NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS) promotes the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and works to build stronger families and communities across a continuum of care. We provide child protection services, parenting support and early intervention, foster care, adoption services and help for communities affected by disaster through more than 85 Community Services Centres across NSW.

WHAT IS THE HELPLINE?

DoCS' Helpline is a telephone contact centre located in western Sydney. It employs 140 caseworkers and operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

It is the first point of contact for enquiries, reports and requests for assistance. It provides a consistent way to screen and assess reports received where someone believes a child or young person is at risk of harm.

WHAT TYPE OF WORK WILL I BE DOING?

You will be taking initial reports from people with concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, and will assess what further actions should be taken. Calls come from professional people – doctors, teachers, social workers, or from family members or other people who are concerned about children they know. Around 500 assessments are carried out by Helpline staff per day.

Being a Helpline Caseworker is rewarding and provides an excellent opportunity to expand on assessment skills. It also provides a good basis for transition into face-to-face contact with clients and a long-term career with the Department.

WHAT SORT OF SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE DO I NEED?

You should have skills in:

- solving problems
- planning and organising
- working in a disciplined way
- building rapport
- gathering and analysing information
- working with children and young adults.

WHAT QUALIFICATIONS DO I NEED?

Caseworkers (except Aboriginal caseworkers) require a degree in social work, social science, welfare or a related discipline.

While the majority of DoCS new caseworkers are recent university graduates, the nature of the work means that maturity and life experience (combined with a relevant degree) are also highly valued.

WHAT ARE THE EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS?

Employment as a Caseworker offers a variety of career prospects, training opportunities and excellent conditions including:

- salary range from *\$51,784 - \$71,546 with salary package up to \$78,951 p.a.
- rostered shift work – 140 hours a month which is an average of 35 hours a week
- shifts are seven hours long with two paid breaks and a one hour unpaid meal break. Penalty rates are paid for some shifts
- four weeks annual leave
- fifteen days paid sick leave per year.

*effective from 1 July 2007

WILL I GET ON-THE-JOB TRAINING?

Entry level training is provided to all permanent caseworkers at commencement of work. Satisfactory completion of DoCS' entry level Child Protection Caseworker Development Course is compulsory for all new recruits. Helpline caseworkers can complete additional modules over time to complete the full course.

HOW DO I APPLY?

DoCS regularly advertises for staff in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, on www.jobs.nsw.gov.au (look under "C" for Community Services) and on www.seek.com.au

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

For more information about DoCS and career opportunities please visit our website www.community.nsw.gov.au

People from culturally and linguistically diverse and Aboriginal backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

"You never know what you'll be dealing with from one shift to the next, and that's what makes it interesting"

Tamara Hughes,
Caseworker, DoCS Helpline