

Job Profiles

Animal Care Worker

The Work

As an animal care worker you could look after animals in a number of different places, such as kennels & catteries, zoos, animal rescue centres, grooming parlours and animal sanctuaries/hospitals. Day to day tasks could include the following;

- Preparing food and feeding the animals
- Keeping animals clean and grooming them
- Exercising dogs in a yard or taking them for walks
- Cleaning out kennels, pens and cages and changing bedding
- Looking after animals who become ill or distressed
- Checking for signs of distress, disease or injury in animals
- Checking enclosures, cages and barriers for signs of wear or damage
- Answering visitors questions and sometimes giving talks or lectures
- In some jobs you may also have to keep records, take bookings and advise owners on looking after their animals

Hours and Environment

You would usually work around 40 hours a week. As animals have to be looked after seven days a week, around the clock you are likely to work on a shift system, often including early starts, weekends and sometimes evenings.

Although working with animals can be very rewarding, it can also involve physically hard work. You will need to be prepared for some unpleasant tasks – for example cleaning out animal pens, and cages can be smelly and dirty! You are also likely to be outside in all weathers.

Skills and Interests

- A real interest/passion for animals
- The ability to handle animals patiently, gently and confidently
- The ability to cope with upsetting situations like working with animals who have been ill treated or injured
- Willingness to complete dirty or unpleasant tasks
- Good observation skills
- Awareness of Health & Safety
- Stamina and physical fitness
- Good people skills for working with the public

Getting into the Industry

You may not need any particular qualifications for most animal care jobs, although individual employers may ask for GCSE's or previous experience.

Volunteering is a useful way to gain experience and shows employers that you are enthusiastic and interested in working with animals. Zoos often run these schemes but these can be popular and you may need to join a waiting list.

Animal qualifications, further information & useful contacts

Please note KEITS does not take responsibility for the content of external sites.

- 1) B-Tec First Diploma and National Certificate/Diploma in Animal Care or Animal Management – contact Lantra for more details www.lantra.co.uk
- 2) Apprenticeship & Advanced Apprenticeship in Animal Care – KEITS www.keits.co.uk
- 3) Foundation Degrees in Zoo Management – Sparsholt College www.sparsholt.ac.uk
- 4) Foundation Degrees in Zoo Resource Management – Reaseheath College www.reaseheath.ac.uk
- 5) Degree in Animal Management – Contact Lantra for more details

Further information and contact details

- 1) Lantra, Lantra House, Stoneleigh Park, Nr Coventry, Warwickshire, CV8 2LG
[Tel:0845 707 8007](tel:08457078007), www.lantra.co.uk
- 2) KEITS, Unit C, Houndswood Gate, Harper Lane, Radlett, Herts, WD7 7HU,
[Tel:01923 854586](tel:01923854586) www.keits.co.uk
- 3) RSPCA, Wilberforce Way, Southwater, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 9RS,
www.rspca.org.uk
- 4) Volunteering England – www.volunteering.org.uk
- 5) www.ajobin.com
- 6) www.afuturein.com
- 7) Association of British Wild Life Keepers (ABWAK) – www.abwak.co.uk